**THE INEVITABLE CLASH? INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE
AND LOCAL POWER-SHARING IN NIGERIA**

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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(Co-advisers)

May 2013

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, intra-state or ethnic conflict has emerged as one of the most serious threats to the peace and stability of states in the international system. Inter-religious violence, in particular, and the politicization of new forms of resurgent religion are now a major challenge. Not all religiously pluralistic communities witness violence, however: what explains why inter-religious violence breaks out in some communities and not others? Under what conditions does religious identity – as opposed to other salient ethnic cleavages – become the fault line and mobilizing narrative of communal violence? Examining the variation in Muslim-Christian post-1980 violence in northern Nigeria, I suggest that a community's vulnerability to inter-religious violence is a function of pre-existing ethno-tribal power-sharing arrangements at the local level. While scholars and policy-makers are disappointed by the ability of formal, national-level power-sharing institutions to avert ethnic conflict and instability, they overlook the peacebuilding capacity of *informal local* government power-sharing. From nearly a year of case study research and original data collection in northern Nigeria, I find that religious change in Nigeria has introduced a powerful narrative of group identity and difference that, depending on informal local power-sharing arrangements, can be leveraged for violence or peace.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On August 29, 2011 at the end of Ramadan during the Muslim Eid-ul-Fitr holiday, the city of Jos was quiet, which is usually a bad sign when the indicator of normality is honking cars and the clatter and chatter of business and greetings on the streets. Indeed, a black smoke was rising over the Jos North area and marring the city skyline. Reports began flying around; Muslims and Christians are clashing. As it was later learned, a group of Muslims trekked into a predominantly Christian neighborhood to pray at an abandoned mosque – destroyed in previous inter-religious violence – against the warning of security personnel. Christians, questioning the intentions of the worshippers and threatened by the action, armed themselves as a warning to any troublemakers. In the subsequent few hours, over 100 vehicles were set ablaze and 24 people killed, and gruesome reports emerged that Christian youth beheaded some Muslims, even roasting and eating the flesh of their victims. Reprisal attacks in various neighborhoods around Jos were the predictable fall-out of this clash over the next two days. Some later reports blamed the Muslim worshippers for provoking trouble, others pointed to the provocative action of armed Christians surrounding the mosque and worshippers.

This is only one of a number of increasingly common stories of Muslim-Christian clashes in north-central Nigeria since the 1980s. Prior to 1986, Muslim-Christian communal violence was largely unheard of. Indeed, Plateau state, of which Jos is the

provincial capital, holds the title "Home of Peace and Tourism," a title now cited only for

its sad irony in light of major clashes repeated in 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010, not

to mention smaller scale clashes intermixed in Jos and surrounding areas. In other parts

of northern Nigeria, notably Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi states, inter-religious violence

has become the bane of communities, bringing cities and their business and educational

institutions to a screeching halt.[1] In Kaduna alone, the state estimates that they spent 10

billion naira (66 million USD) on security from April to December 2011 in the aftermath

of the post-election violence, and they spend approximately 200 million USD every

month in this one state.[2] This is money, one government official bemoaned in the *Daily*

Trust, diverted from development. Furthermore, even relatively "small" cases of inter-

religious violence can result in massive displacement of thousands of people. In cities

such as Jos, Kano, and Kaduna, populations that formerly lived together peacefully,

attending each others religious celebrations and family events, are now segregated by

religious identity – into their neighborhood "Jerusalems" and their "Afghanistans."

Nigeria is not the only country where inter-religious violence is now a more

frequent phenomenon. As Lijphart notes, since the 1990s "ethnic divisions have replaced

the cold war as the world's most serious source of violent conflict."[3] Coinciding with

rapid religious change in the global South and transitions to democracy, other countries

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[1] Although not limited to northern Nigeria or religious conflicts, Chukwuma (2009, vi) notes that "over 20,000 people have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands displaced in over 200 outbreaks of violence traceable to identity related disputes" in Nigeria. *See* Innocent Chukwuma, "Preface," in *Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria* (CLEEN Foundation/Ford Foundation, 2009).

[2] Sunday Isuwa, "Post-election violence costs Kaduna N10bn'," *Daily Trust* (Abuja, Nigeria, December 14, 2011).

[3] Arend Lijphart, "The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy," in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Reynolds, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 37.

such as India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia are now flashpoints of inter-religious violence. Formerly peaceful communities in Indonesia suffered a spate of Muslim-Christian violence from 1999 to 2002.[4] In one attack alone in 1999, clashes killed at least 200,[5] and mosques, churches, and religious minorities continue to be attacked.[6] In early 2012, Egypt began making headlines over clashes between Coptic Christians and Muslims.[7]

In other countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Ghana, although the lethal communal violence is minimal or absent, a vitriolic political-religious discourse infuses the public space, blurring the lines between the politics of church and state.[8] Furthermore, a recent survey by the Pew Forum indicates that fears of inter-religious violence are on the rise in a number of countries in the global South.[9] In 19 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, "sizable numbers (20% or more) of people in most countries surveyed see conflict

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[4] See Jamie S. Davidson, *From Rebellion to Riots: Collective Violence on Indonesian Borneo* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[5] Charmain Mohamed, "Justice in Jakarta," *Human Rights Watch*, November 26, 2006, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/11/19/justice-jakarta (accessed July 30, 2010).

[6] Camelia Pasandaran and Cameron Bates, "UN 'Disturbed' by Indonesia's Religious Violence," *Jakarta Globe*, May 17, 2011, http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/un-disturbed-by-indonesias-religious-violence/441540 (accessed May 23, 2011).

[7] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Muslims and Coptic Christians Clash Again in Egypt," *New York Times*, May 15, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/16/world/middleeast/16egypt.html (accessed May 16, 2011).

[8] Terance O. Ranger, "Afterword," in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Terence O. Ranger, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 237; Laurenti Magesa, "Contemporary Catholic Perspectives on Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Tanzania," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (April 2007): 165-173; Julian Rukyaa, "Muslim-Christian Relations in Tanzania with Particular Focus on the Relationship between Religious Instruction and Prejudice," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007): 189-204; Rabiatu Ammah, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007): 139-153.

[9] Pew Forum, "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Suharan Africa," *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, April 15, 2010, http://www.pewforum.org/download-the-full-report-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa.aspx (accessed August 4, 2010), 44. See also Jonathan Fox, "Religion and State Failure: An Examination of the Extent and Magnitude of Religious Conflict 1950-1996," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 1 (2004): 55-76; Monica Duffy-Toft, *Religion, Civil War, and International Order*, Discussion Paper (Cambridge, Mass.: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006), 12.

between religious groups as a *very big problem*."[10] There is also a deep concern among many people about religious extremism; In "17 of the 19 countries surveyed, 40% or more of the population says they are somewhat or very concerned about religious extremism within their country's borders."[11] In 2012, the Somali Al-Shabab Islamic extremist group targeted Kenyan Christian churches for the first time.[12]

At the same time, in states where politicization of religious identity is rampant, religious discord and violence do not transpire in *all* pluralistic communities. Inter-religious conflict only occurs in some otherwise similar religiously-divided countries and not others, only in some *parts* of religiously-divided countries and not others, and does not follow patterns of inter-*tribal* conflict, which is often rooted in struggles over land or other economic resources. In northern Nigeria, the locus of inter-religious or ethno-religious violence in Nigeria since the 1980s, many pluralistic communities, even in the volatile Middle Belt (north-central) states, are largely free of inter-religious violence with Muslims and Christians living together peacefully. For example, a number of local government areas (LGAs) *neighboring* volatile areas remain peaceful although they too have a mix of ethno-tribal and -religious groups. Despite the "us-versus-them" narrative of Muslim-Christian conflict prevalent in Nigeria today – with religion's politicization in

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[10] Ibid., Pew Forum, "Tolerance and Tension." The Pew Forum (2010, 4) survey also notes that "in four countries, roughly half or more of the population sees religious conflict as a very big problem. These countries include Nigeria, Rwanda (58% each), Djibouti (51%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (48%)."

[11] A large number of people surveyed (upwards of four-in-ten in most countries) also express concern over religious extremism in their nation. In general, concern about Muslim extremism outweighs concern about Christian extremism. In addition, the Pew Forum (2010, 47) survey finds that "substantial minorities (20% or more of the population) in many countries consider violence in defense of one's religion to be sometimes or often justified."

[12] Jeffrey Gettleman, "At Least 15 Die in Kenya Church Attacks," *New York Times*, July 1, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/02/world/africa/at-least-15-dead-in-attacks-on-2-churches-in-kenya.html (accessed July 18, 2012).

national politics, with Christianity's rapid growth, with the emergence of violent radical Islamic groups such as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad or "Boko Haram"[13] with the heated debate over and implementation of Shari'a law in northern states, and with the radicalization of Christians to repay "eye for eye" – the narrative and demonization of the religious "other" does not take root in every mixed Muslim-Christian community.

This puzzling variation in inter-religious violence – why it breaks out in some religiously pluralistic communities and not others – is the focus of this study. Under what conditions does ethno-religious identity as opposed to other salient ethnic cleavages become the fault-line of communal violence and the mobilizing narrative even if the "root" of the conflict is not religious ideas or beliefs? Why does a religious dispute or violence seem to so easily spillover and spark inter-religious conflict in some communities and not others? What institutions help to defuse this divisive and flourishing religious narrative and to prevent widespread Muslim-Christian violence? Scholars have yet to offer a satisfactory answer to this question.

I trace the *saliency* of Muslim versus Christian discord to shifts in the religious contours of many countries in the global South. That is, religious change in Nigeria and other countries, particularly with the rise of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, involves the rapid growth of Christianity and the increased political activism of adherents or churches. In recent decades both Islam and Christianity have gained tens of millions of new adherents – with the world witnessing an increase in the intensity of inter-religious violence. Hence, like ethno-tribal identity, religion is now a potent symbol of group

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[13] The name of this group, popularly known as Boko Haram, means "Western Education is Forbidden."

belonging, a politicized category in national and local politics, and a significant rallying point for violent mobilization in pluralistic communities.

The growth of religion and new forms of religion does not inherently spell violence, however. To explain the variation in inter-religious violence, I theorize that the likelihood that communities fall prey to a divisive narrative of religious difference – and thus to religiously-inspired violence – is shaped by informal power-sharing institutions at the local level. Power-sharing is a form of political inclusion that refers to "the participation of the representatives of all significant groups in political decision-making."[14] Recent scholarship questions, and even dismisses, the ability of power-sharing to ameliorate ethnic cleavages and conflict, and finds little empirical support for the effectiveness of this institutional mechanism. However, the conclusions follow from a focus on *formal*, *national*-level institutions exclusively. I reformulate this theory to test whether *informal* power-sharing among ethno-tribal groups in *local-level* government helps to explain the variation in inter-religious or ethno-religious[15] violence.

To test my power-sharing theory, I carried out 10-months of fieldwork (Feb-Dec 2011), constructing a wholly original dataset on the sources of communal violence in northern Nigeria (1979-2011), as well as conducting in-depth controlled case comparisons and gathering data on patterns of representation in local government councils. The north-central or Middle Belt states are an ideal site for comparative study (See Figure 1.1 below); they are characterized by ethno-tribal and ethno-religious

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[14] Lijphart, "The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy," 39.
[15] Note that I will use the designations ethno-religious and inter-religious interchangeably and am not referring to *intra*-religious violence unless otherwise specified. Ethno-tribal violence also refers to inter-tribal violence unless otherwise noted.

diversity, a shared colonial history, a rapid growth of Christianity, and an increase in
Muslim-Christian violence since the 1980s in a context of national politicization of
religious identity. In particular, I focus on tribally and religiously diverse communities –
ones that experience endemic inter-religious violence and ones that maintain relative
peace – in order to isolate the causal factors or mechanisms that explain the divergence.

Figure 1.1 Current map of Nigeria, northern and north-central Middle Belt states
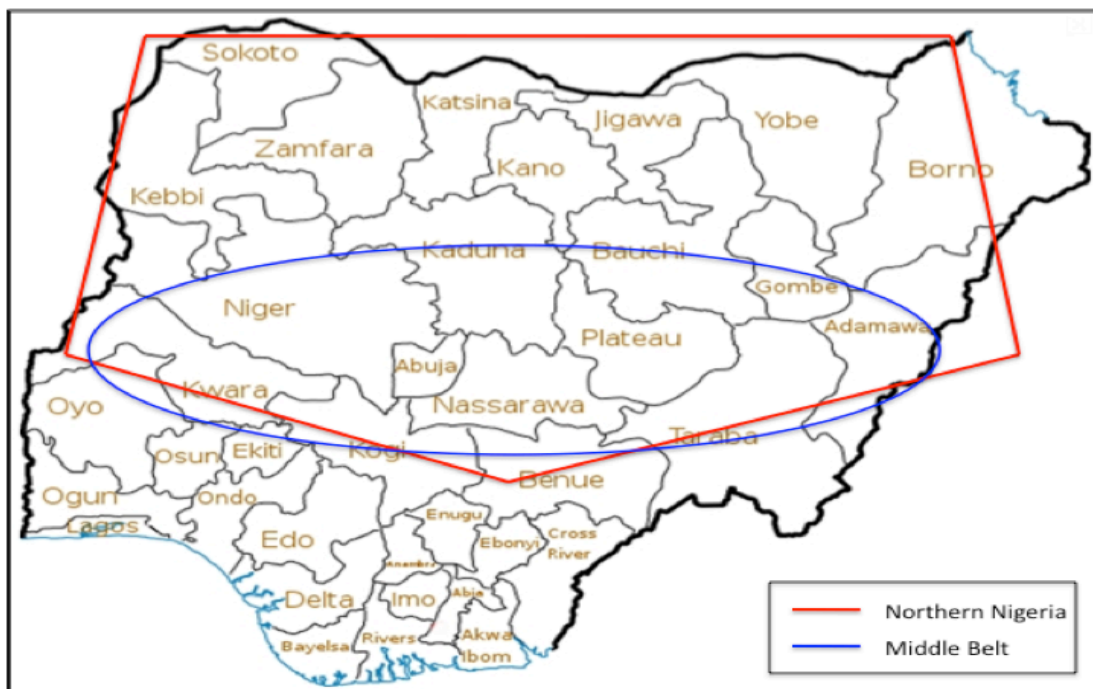
Supporting my theory, the data and case studies show that the variation in inter-
religious violence in the pluralistic LGAs in two states – Plateau and Kaduna – can be
explained by whether or not communities adopted ethno-tribal power-sharing
arrangements following decentralization and local government reforms in the 1970s and
1980s. In those cases where pluralistic communities adopted informal power-sharing
institutions, inter-religious violence over the subsequent decades has been far less
prevalent or non-existent compared to those areas that did not establish power-sharing

institutions. Power-sharing along ethno-tribal lines in this third tier of the federal government serves two functions: First, because ethno-tribal identities tend to coincide with a religious identity, the power-sharing institutions established early on, by default, generally resulted in rotation of local government leadership on a religious basis as well. A power-sharing arrangement between the largely Christian Gbagyi and the largely Muslim Hausa-Fulani, for example, means that both a Muslim and Christian are likely to share executive authority. Issues of rights or representation in power-sharing communities are thereby far more difficult to cast as a religious conflict.

The second key function of power-sharing at the communal level is that it creates the precedent for collaboration and coordination among members of different tribal and religious backgrounds. When it comes to peace-building and conflict-prevention, cooperation among youth, religious leaders, tribal elders, and government officials of different tribal and religious identities is easier to coordinate in communities with power-sharing institutions. From both a series of case studies and original empirical data, the findings are clear and highlight the significance of power-sharing at the sub-national level as an important determinant of communal peace or conflict.

The empirical findings beg the question, however: why did some local government leaders adopt power-sharing during the reforms or at the time of LGA creation while others did not? The decision to institute power-sharing, I argue, derived from elite assessment of the various costs and benefits of coordinating representation across ethno-tribal divisions. During the colonial period, ethno-tribal cleavages were primarily a product of patterns of assimilation and integration in northern Nigeria. Colonial rule elevated the Hausa-Fulani Muslims to proxy ruler status, furthering both

cultural assimilation (e.g., adoption of Islam and Hausa-Fulani language) and political

integration (e.g., adherence to traditional rule of Muslim emirs and political elite) in large

parts of the non-Muslim northern region, whether by force or willingly. Some non-

Muslim communities were able to avoid or resist full assimilation and integration due to,

for example, distance from the center of the northern colonial establishment, a prior

history of organized resistance, or the more lenient policy of local emirs. This colonial

legacy tells us what kinds of ethno-tribal relationships were likely to matter most in the

post-colonial iterations of communal politics.

Is it something about colonial institutions, then, that predicted future power-

sharing? Is it possible to identify one variable that predicted why power-sharing was

adopted? In other words, in explaining patterns of inter-religious violence in northern

Nigeria, perhaps it is colonial history or a colonial institution that is the key independent

or explanatory variable rather than power-sharing institutions – raising the issue of

endogeneity with this argument. To the contrary, while this colonial legacy of

assimilation and integration is important for understanding the ethno-tribal cleavages in

particular communities at the end of the colonial period, this legacy does not *predict*

power-sharing at the end of the 1970s and later. The likelihood that either the largely

assimilated/integrated or non-assimilated/non-integrated communities would adopt

power-sharing institutions was not pre-determined. Instead, the incentives for power-

sharing were largely shaped by the impact of exogenous post-colonial political, social,

and religious changes on the particular communities. The rise of a radical Islam and a

new politicized form of Christianity, the failures of the Nigerian constitutions to

adequately define citizenship and indigenous rights, the politics of new LGA and state

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creation, and patterns of migration, to name a few major political issues, were all critical

in shaping how prior ethno-tribal relationships evolved in a particular LGA and how

elites perceived the costs and benefits of power-sharing. A lack of power-sharing was not

inevitable in any one of the now violence-prone LGAs. In other words, the historical

legacy provides a framework for understanding subsequent group relations, but it does

not tell us how these relationships were transformed and evolved into a communal

politics of ethno-tribal and religious significance. To understand why some LGAs

adopted power-sharing while other, similar LGAs did not, one must explore the particular

socio-economic, political, and religious changes that occurred after independence.

Consider a case of "no power-sharing." The inability of leaders to establish

power-sharing in Jos, for example, was not predestined during the colonial era. Jos was

long known as one of the most peaceful local governments in the north – a popular

vacation destination, the supposed "Home of Peace and Tourism." While religious

identity had become increasingly politicized in Nigerian national politics from the end of

the 1970s onward, Jos remained peaceful, and the notion that conflicts would pivot on

religious identity was entirely foreign in the Middle Belt states. Yet the peace would not

last in Jos, as the politics of identity suddenly shifted when national military leaders

intervened locally in the early 1990s and changed the organization of local government,

providing more political autonomy to the Muslim Hausa-Fulani population living in the

area. Due to the re-drawing of state boundaries in the 1960s and 1970s, the Hausa-Fulani

argued that that they were marginalized in the new Plateau state and deserved greater

political representation. In 1991, General Babangida, the military leader at that time,

made the decision to "resolve" the long-standing dispute by carving out a new local

government called Jos North in which the Hausa-Fulani would constitute at least half if not the majority of the LGA population. These series of changes and policy decisions, which ignored the history of and recent changes in the local balance of power between ethno-tribal groups, exacerbated identity cleavages, made the costs of power-sharing too high for all parties, and sparked the initial violence. In short, exogenous political events exacerbated tensions and transformed a peaceful community into one driven by a narrative of irreconcilable political-religious differences. Even though colonialism shaped ethno-tribal relationships in Jos – as it had elsewhere – ultimately the colonial legacy proved irrelevant to the question of whether power-sharing would be established. The same is true elsewhere – in some cases post-independence politics helped foster power-sharing, while elsewhere it doomed such efforts.

Another example I discuss in further detail in subsequent chapters is Chikun LGA in Kaduna state. The territory of today's Chikun LGA was near the center of Hausa-Fulani political rule with a large Hausa-Fulani Muslim population, but the majority of the local population largely converted to Christianity (greater political integration, less cultural assimilation), offering a clear cleavage around which identity groups could mobilize. Relations in this LGA have nonetheless remained peaceful. Taking into account the local ethno-tribal context (a mix of those considered "indigenous" of both Christian ethno-tribal groups and Hausa-Fulani Muslims), their urban reality, and expectation of future demographic changes, local leaders negotiated an informal power-sharing arrangement that worked for the three main ethno-tribal groups of the LGA, including the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. Thus, the likelihood of power-sharing in the post-1970s was subject to different sets of incentives or hurdles that evolved in tandem with socio-

political and religious changes in the LGA. I find that the *routes* to power-sharing were at least smoother in those cases where these changes did not exacerbate local ethno-tribal relationships over time.

In sum, the colonial legacy does not tell us anything about the inevitability of power-sharing or the costs and benefits elites took into consideration. There is no one colonial institution or legacy from 1914-1960 that predicts why power-sharing was or was not adopted in any particular LGA in the 1970s and later. In fact, factors that varied across LGAs, took place after independence, and that *cannot be traced back to colonization* powerfully shaped how local elites perceived the relative costs and benefits of power-sharing – the rapid growth of Christianity, the radicalization of Christian and Muslim politics, missionary education of previously politically marginalized populations, the adjustment of state and local government boundaries, land pressures bringing groups into closer proximity/tensions with one another, constitutional changes affecting indigenous status. The historical context, therefore, does not present a uniform explanation as to why power-sharing arrangements were adopted in some places and not others. Colonialism did not determine the settlement patterns of the various tribal populations, nor did it determine conversion patterns of groups to Christianity from 1900-1980. That is, colonial-era factors did not determine the political events and changes that shaped post-independence assessments of the feasibility and desirability of power-sharing.

Ultimately, the clear relationship is that where power-sharing institutions were adopted following the major political decentralization in the 1970s and 1980s, inter-religious peace is more likely to be observed. With the rapid growth of Christianity since

the 1970s, its (new) overt political orientation, and a series of religio-political events that pitted Islam and Christianity against one another, religion is now one of the most salient cleavages and bases for identity mobilization. From data and case studies, I find that a strong case can be made for power-sharing in local-level political institutions in federal systems as an effective tool to maintain peace in pluralistic communities. Where such an institutional arrangement is present, pluralistic communities in Northern Nigeria are far less prone to the symbolic and political appeal of religion as a salient cleavage.

Before delving deeper into the significance of religious change in Nigeria, the pattern of ethno-tribal and -religious conflict, I first provide a brief discussion of the concepts employed in this study. Second, I address some of the major theories in the study of ethnic conflict, highlighting their inability to shed light on the variation in inter-religious communal violence in Nigeria. Third, I briefly present my theory of power-sharing, arguing that it holds significant explanatory power for why some religiously pluralistic communities experience inter-religious clashes while others do not. Fourth, I briefly discuss the methodology I employ to test the theory, and I then conclude with an outline of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

A number of terms employed in this study require conceptual clarification at the outset. What do I mean, for example, by "ethnic" identity versus "religious" identity? What are the conceptual parameters of "communal" and "violence," or "religious change" and "power sharing," for that matter? While my use of these terms will become clearer in subsequent chapters, I challenge standard conceptualizations in the current scholarship.

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Ethnicity

First, one of the foundational contentions of this study is that the concept of ethnic identity as it is generally used in studies of ethnic conflict is conceptually vague. While Horowitz's definition of ethnicity is the norm – ethnicity as the category to which racial, linguistic, religious, tribal, or caste-based identities belong – work that adopts this definition lacks specificity regarding the political logic of these potentially quite distinct forms of identity and their significance over time.[16] This is despite Horowitz's own acknowledgement that the conditions under which the different categories of ethnicity matter politically requires study.[17]

Religious identity, therefore, often becomes conflated with some vague notion of ethnic identity. Gurr refers to religious identity only briefly in his well-known *Minorities at Risk* project as a "communal" identity, but does not consider whether or how religious identities may function according to different mechanisms or principles of mobilization, as the Nigerian case highlights.[18] The designation of religion as a subset of ethnicity is not problematic in itself. However, it is potentially problematic to the extent that scholars have given short shrift to the distinctive political significance of different religious identities in domestic and international politics. Hence, scholars increasingly observe that, despite the abundance of work on ethnic identity and conflict, there is a scarcity of

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[16] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
[17] Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (2001), 365; Horowitz, 1985, 41-54; See also James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 845-877. According to Fearon and Laitin (2000, 848), "Ethnic identities are understood to be defined mainly by descent rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as religion, language, customs, and shared historical myths."
[18] Ted Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2000).

work on religion, politics, and conflict. As Wald and Wilcox observe, "it is hard to find a social science that has given less attention to religion than political science."[19]

Religious Identity and Religious Violence

In light of the above argument, it is important that I be clear what I mean by "religious" violence. I am not making an essentialist argument that religious adherents are inherently prone to violence or that violence is more likely to be propagated on religious grounds or as a product of religious beliefs than secular ideologies, the "secular" state, or nationalism. Cavanaugh's the *Myth of Religious Violence* exhaustively deconstructs any such claims.[20] Rather, I use the term religious violence to refer to violence ensuing between two groups in which religious symbols, religious discourse, and/or religious actors are mobilized or targeted as the repertoire for collective action. I am not looking at (and I cannot measure) the strength of beliefs or strength of "religious-ness" mobilized. Rather, I refer to the presence of a discourse and symbolism that characterizes and constructs the violence as Muslim-Christian. This does not mean that communities experiencing inter-religious violence do not debate the "religious-ness" of the conflicts, but the fact that this label is debated highlights its ascriptive identity, its social significance as a structuring characteristic or interpretive tool used to make sense of the violence that falls along Muslim-Christian lines.

Furthermore, discussion of religious violence is not meant to exclude other political, social, or economic variables or factors in the construction of group differences

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[19] Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, "Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006), 523. See also Clyde Wilcox, Kenneth Wald and Ted Jelen, "Religious Preference and Religion: A Second Look," *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 3 (2008), 874.

[20] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

and conflict. Indeed, as should become clear in the course of this study, political

representation and the political dimensions of religious identity cannot be separated from

the story of inter-religious violence in Nigeria. The intersection of religious identity,

tribal identity, and politics shapes the pattern of Muslim-Christian peace and violence in

Nigeria.

Communal Violence

Like Varshney and Wilkinson, this project draws on Olzak's definition of

communal riots. According to Olzak's work on race conflict in the USA, we might

identify an event as a communal riot if: a) there is violence, and b) two or more

communally-identified groups confront each other/members of the other group, at some

point during the violence.[21] In this study, I do not distinguish between communal

violence and communal *riots*, as both involve conflicting communal groups. This is in

accord with Horowitz's study of ethnic riots, which he defines as "an intense, sudden,

though not necessarily wholly unplanned, lethal attack by civilian members of one ethnic

group on civilian members of another ethnic group, the victims chosen because of their

group membership." He continues, "So conceived, ethnic riots are synonymous with what

are variously called 'communal,' 'racial,' 'religious,' 'linguistic,' or 'tribal'

disturbances."[22] I do, however, distinguish communal violence from civil war and

genocide, the former used to refer to conflict between insurgents and the state and the

later used to refer to an organized campaign to exterminate a particular group of people.

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[21] See Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 233-4. This citation refers to the definition noted in the coding methodology adopted by Varshney and Wilkinson. See Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[22] Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 1.

While scholars have focused a great deal of attention on civil war – its causes[23] and

duration,[24] peace-building after civil war,[25] insurgent actors,[26] mass violence and

genocide[27] – the prevalence and micro-dynamics *communal* violence and the role of

competing identities is comparatively overlooked, particularly as much of the research

focuses on large-N analyses without a precise enough grain to capture smaller scale

communal violence, as I will discuss in Chapter 5. The communal cleavage is not

[23] e.g.*,* Patricia Justino, "Poverty and Violent Conflict: A Micro-Level Perspective on the Causes and Duration of Warfare," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 3 (May 2009): 315-333; Kristin M. Bakke and Erik Wibbels, "Diveristy, Disparity, and Civil Conflict in Federal States," *World Politics* 59, no. 1 (October 2006): 1-50; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563-595; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (1998): 563-573; Edward Miquel, Shanker Satyanath and Ernest Sergenti, "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach," 112, no. 4 (August 2004): 725-753; James D. Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75-90; Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars have the Same Cause?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (June 2005): 259-282; Horowitz, 1985; Wilkinson, 2004; Gurr 1970; Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001); Barbara Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

[24] e.g., Michael Bleaney and Arcangelo Dimico, "How Different are the Correlates of Onset and the Continuation of Civil Wars?," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 2 (March 2010): 145-155; Abel Escribà-Folch, "Economic Sanctions and the Duration of Civil Conflicts," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 2 (March 2010): 129-141; Håvard Hegre, "The Duration and Termination of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004): 243-252; Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Måns Söderbom, "On the Duration of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004): 253-273; Julian Wucherpfennig, Nils W. Metternich, Lars-Erik Cederman and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Ethnicity, the State, and the Duration of Civil War," *World Politics* 64, no. 1 (January 2012): 79-115.

[25] e.g., Barbara F. Walter, "Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 127-155; Caroline Hartzell, Matthew Hoddie and Donald Rothchild, "Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War: An Investigation of Some Key Variables," *International Organization* 55, no. 1 (December 2001): 183-208; Matthew Hoddie and Caroline A. Hartzell, eds., *Strengthening Peace in Post-Civil War States: Transforming Spoilers into Stake-holders*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[26] e.g., Paul Staniland, "States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 243-264; Michael G. Findley and Joseph K. Young, "Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach to a Conceptual Problem," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 285-305; Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (April 2008): 436–455.

[27] e.g., Ernesto Verdeja, "The Political Science of Genocide: Outlines of an Emerging Research Agenda," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 307-321; Charles King, "Can There Be a Political Science of the Holocaust," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 323-341; Scott Straus, "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 343-362; Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

necessarily static, and may be more or less relevant or prominent at certain times or in particular historical periods.

I am particularly interested in lethal violence, but I also include in my dataset of communal violence cases involving injuries, displacement, or property destruction. While some datasets of ethnic conflict or civil war do not code cases where lethal violence is not reported, I do so for two reasons: First, it seems odd not to include as "violence" cases where, for example, the victims escape death but an entire village is burned to the ground. Such actions increase communal fear and entrench communal conflict, destabilize communities, create humanitarian and security nightmares, and are often connected to retaliation and subsequent deaths. These non-lethal cases are all part of the *story* of communal violence, the construction of an us-versus-them narrative. To only look at instances in which deaths are involved overlooks the interconnected nature of lethal and non-lethal violence in constructing and entrenching communal cleavages.[28]

THEORIES OF CONFLICT

In the literature on civil war and ethnic conflict, scholars offer a number of competing explanations for the conditions under which group conflict or violence is more likely. Yet, none of these theories adequately shed explanatory light on sub-national variation in communal violence or the mechanisms by which it sparks. Here, I briefly review some of these theories, highlighting their main theoretical points as well as their weaknesses when it comes to understanding the micro-level processes of communal violence.

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[28] Practically speaking, at the time of reporting on cases of violence, such as in newspapers, the deaths may not have occurred yet or been followed up on.

Structural Theory

A number of competing structural theories abound in studies of conflict and violence. These prominent rational-choice theories attribute the outbreak of civil war or violence to factors like state strength, poverty or economic deprivation, geography, and modernization, to name a few. As Cederman notes, such models "tend to explain outbreaks of civil war using materialist and logistical, rather than cultural, terms."[29] Yet these arguments also suffer from serious weaknesses. Indeed, Wilkinson argues, "We can point to significant empirical exceptions to almost any structural generalization we want to put forward.[30]

Economic explanations

The presence of economic inequality between groups is posited as a structural condition that can create societal rifts and lead to grievances, competition for resources, and, ultimately, to violent conflict.[31] Yet, there are problems with the statistical correlations between and explanations of the relationship between economic conditions and conflict. Simply put, violent conflict does not erupt everywhere there are economic

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[29] Lars-Erik Cederman, "Articulating the Geo-Cultural Logic of Nationalist Insurgency," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, eds. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 243.

[30] Steven Wilkinson, "Which Group Identities Lead to Most Violence? Evidence from India," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, eds. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 276.

[31] See Edward N. Muller, "Income Inequality, Regime Representation, and Political Violence," *American Sociological Review* 50, no. 1 (1985): 47-61; Edward N. Muller and Romain Wacziarg, "Inequality and Insurgency," *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 2 (June 1987): 425-452; Jeffery M. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution* (New York: Free Press/Macmillan Publishing, 1975); Bruce M. Russett, "Inequality and Instability: The Relation of Land Tenure to Politics," *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (1964): 442-454; Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); Ted R. Gurr, "The Revolution-Social-Change Nexus: Some Old Theories and New Hypotheses," *Comparative Politics* 5, no. 3 (1973): 359-392; Gurr 2000; Alberto Alesina, Enrico Spolare and Romain Wacziarg, "Economic Integration and Political Disintegration," *American Economic Review* 90, no. 5 (2000): 1276-1296.

inequalities between groups or poverty. As Boix observes, "the presence of economic resentments, ethnic antagonisms, and personal or clique grudges are too widespread to specify the cases in which political violence will erupt."[32] Or as Kalyvas contends, the correlation between poverty and high fatalities could be explained by any number of causal mechanisms, which are not specified.[33] Thus, large-N studies of conflict and economic inequality do not capture the micro-level dimensions or provide much explanatory power for sub-national variation in violence – why violence breaks out some times in some communities and not others where economic inequalities are present.

Nigeria is case in point. Measures of economic inequality do not shed light on the sub-national variation in or frequency of communal violence. Comparing my data on the frequency of Muslim-Christian violence in northern states with measures of state-level inequality, the provinces that suffer from higher levels of inequality or poverty are not necessarily more prone to communal violence. In the GINI index data for Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, and Plateau states – where the majority of inter-religious violence is concentrated – the inequality levels tend to track very closely with those of surrounding states, and these four often fair better than a number of states in some years (See Table 1 below).

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[32] Carles Boix, "Civil Wars and Guerrilla Warfare in the Contemporary World: Toward a Joint Theory of Motivations and Opportunities," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 197-8.
[33] Stathis Kalyvas, "Promises and Pitfalls of an Emerging Research Program: The Microdynamics of Civil War," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 402. See also Horowitz 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2003, 75-90; Collier and Hoeffler 2000.

Table 1. GINI Index Measure by state in northern Nigeria, disaggregated urban/rural figures*

States	1985/1986		1992/93		1996/1997		1998	2004	2007
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Overall	Overall	Overall
Bauchi	**0.38**	**0.36**	**0.39**	**0.32**	**0.41**	**0.34**	**0.2994**	**0.4256**	**0.4782**
Benue	0.53	0.39	0.37	0.38	0.54	0.42	0.3258	0.5528	0.545
Borno	0.39	0.36	0.37	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.2337	0.5177	0.3947
Gongola	0.46	0.36	0.35	0.4					
Kaduna	**0.44**	**0.35**	**0.37**	**0.35**	**0.46**	**0.45**	**0.3837**	**0.5075**	**0.4226**
Kano	**0.43**	**0.34**	**0.35**	**0.33**	**0.43**	**0.34**	**0.7218**	**0.4967**	**0.4318**
Kwara	0.45	0.36	0.38	0.42	0.42	0.43	0.5250	0.5386	0.4783
Niger	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.4327	0.5519	0.4619
Plateau	**0.38**	**0.38**	**0.36**	**0.39**	**0.52**	**0.40**	**0.4334**	**0.5101**	**0.4390**
Sokoto	0.48	0.36	0.34	0.43	0.39	0.43	0.6652	0.6020	0.3253
FCT			0.39	0.39	0.64	0.47	0.5153	0.5779	0.4368
Adamawa					0.49	0.48	0.4009	0.7190	0.4696
Jigawa					0.11	0.32	0.3227	0.5711	0.4397
Kebbi					0.26	0.42	0.5272	0.5605	0.4104
Kogi					0.34	0.45	0.4054	0.5505	0.5555
Taraba					0.39	0.51	0.5217	0.5917	0.5118
Yobe					0.45	0.37	0.3842	0.5106	0.4503
Nasarawa							0.4148	0.5991	0.4665
Zamfara							0.3481	0.6076	0.3366
Gombe							0.3237	0.5080	0.4343
Katsina							0.4349	0.5245	0.4110

Source: Rural and Urban GINI index data for 1985-1997 are from Aigbokhan (2000: 60-62). The overall 1998 and 2004 real income GINI scores are from Oyekalq et al. (2006: 49). The GINI Score for 2007 is from UNDP (2008: 148).

* Note: there are some data missing, as some territories were later split into different states. For example, Gongola became part of Borno.

The story is similar with GDP per capita and change in GINI scores from 1998 to 2004 (See Appendices A & B).[34] As these data indicate, indices of inequality gloss over local variation in the social, economic, and political rights and inclusion of groups in different communities, which shape the sub-national geographic and temporal dimensions of communal violence.

Demographic-instrumentalist argument

One of the strongest cases for the role of demography in ethnic cleavages and tensions arises in Posner's study of ethnic groups in Malawi and Zambia, which dismisses cultural differences and emphasizes the instrumental action of politicians who exploit identity (rendering it salient) to accomplish their political goals.[35] This argument raises a number of issues, however. First, the perspective dismisses identity-based factors that may be necessary to the story. If identity were not a salient category in the first place, politicians would not be able to mobilize cultural differences to advance their political agenda. Second, and perhaps more importantly, why did politicians appeal to one particular identity and not another? For example, why in so many cases is religious identity in northern Nigeria the fault-line of communal violence when ethno-tribal identity is also a salient identity to which politicians or elite-entrepreneurs could appeal?

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[34] Again the four states where the majority of cases of inter-religious violence are concentrated are not necessarily the worst performers. The GDP of Kaduna and Kano are middling, but they are better off than a number of other states in the north. Bauchi and Plateau states, in contrast, help to bring up the rear of states with the lowest GDP per capita. Regarding the *change* in a state's GINI score from 1998 to 2004, inequality in Kano declined somewhat, while in Kaduna, Plateau, and Bauchi inequality increased. However, apart from Kano, *all* northern states showed increased inequality from 1998 to 2004, and these four states have faired better than a number of their neighboring states. Other measures, such as the percentage growth in real income and the poverty incidence scores from 1998 to 2004 also do not reflect a pattern in which the four Middle Belt/north central states are worse off than their neighbors (See Appendices 1 & 2).

[35] Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 529.

Why is there segregation in towns along religious lines and not tribal lines?[36] A less static

theory of identity mobilization is necessary. As Varshney notes concerning instrumental

view of ethnicity,

> [it] runs into serious difficulty…if the masses were only instrumental about ethnic identity, why would ethnicity be the basis for mobilization at all? Why do the leaders decide to mobilize ethnic passions in the first place? Why do they think that ethnicity, not the economic interest of the people, is the route to power? And if economic interests coincide with ethnicity, why choose ethnicity as opposed to economic interests for mobilization?[37]

While politicization may certainly be part of the story, and a prominent part at that, this

discussion calls for attention to the processes of identity construction or change that

render one identity or another more salient for communal differentiation. In the case of

Muslim-Christian violence in northern Nigeria, the process of religious change in the

post-colonial period is an essential part of the story.[38]

State Weakness & Legitimacy Theories

Various state-level explanations are also posited as predictors of violent conflict:

lack of state legitimacy can make it difficult to obtain the consent of the governed, and

weak states lack the institutional capacity and organization to prevent groups from

mobilizing, providing greater opportunity for groups to seek redress for grievances or

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[36] I asked these question to a number of subjects where it seems ethno-tribal identity (indigenous vs. non-indigenous tribal groups) would theoretically be a more useful cleavage to exploit politically but where religious identity is the main cleavage.

[37] Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, 88.

[38] One might also ask, is it possible that the self-understanding of the groups' ethnic identity restricted certain types of mobilization and enabled others types? That is, it is not clear from Posner's account whether politicians had to work with a narrative that fell within certain parameters. For example, there are cases where politicians have attempted to mobilize religious identity for political ends in Latin America and Africa, but their efforts have been unsuccessful due to the presence of other competing identities or the failures of the politicians to present their political project within the justifiable scope of the religious beliefs. *See* Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Paul Freston, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

assert demands.[39] Another variant argues that states' divergent policies toward different

ethnic groups explain the likelihood that religious or ethnic identity differences will spiral

into deeper conflict.[40]

Nonetheless, these arguments are also subject to critique. First, while it may

indeed be true that weak states may be more prone to communal violence and civil war, a

state-level argument does not explicate why regions, provinces, or communities with

similar characteristics are more or less prone to violence of one type or another. Nigeria

certainly falls into the category of a weak state according to the Failed States Index and

the State Fragility Index, but this assertion does not explain why neighboring

communities with similar ethno-religious diversity and a shared colonial history in

northern Nigeria can have such different trends – inter-religious harmony versus

violence. Instead, the gaps in the state-level argument point to the potential importance of

local political dynamics that may distinguish these communities.[41]

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[39] See Courtney Jung, Ellen Lust-Okar and Ian Shapiro, "Problems and Prospects for Democratic
Settlements: South Africa as a Model for the Middle East and Northern Ireland?," in *Order, Conflict, and
Violence*, eds. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, (New York: Cambridge University Press,
2008), 141; Fearon and Laitin 2003, 75-90; Lucy Chester, "Factors Impeding the Effectiveness of Partition
in South Asia and the Palestine Mandate," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian
Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, 75-96 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gurr 2000; Kevin
Quinn, Michael Hechter and Erik Wibbels, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War Revisted." (Working
Paper. Seattle: University of Washington, May 6, 2004); Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Paul Collier and Anke
Hoeffler, *Justice-Seeking and Loot-Seeking in Civil War*, (World Bank, 1999).

[40] Wilkinson, "Which Group Identities." See also Wilkinson, 2004; Michael Hechter and Nika Kabiri,
"Attaining Social Order in Iraq," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and
Tarek Masoud, 43-74 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Daniel Philpott, "Explaining the
Political Ambivalence of Religion," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 505-525.
Wilkinson (2008, 272, 291), contends that the violence is "probably due more to specific historical and
institutional factors that influence state policy than to any broader structural relationship between identities
and violence of the kind Laitin outlines," since the "the state at some times regards some ethnic-mobilizing
identities as illegitimate, and therefore uses force against them, while taking a relatively benign view of
other ethnic demands."

[41] For further critiques, see Nicholas Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil
War," *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (2004): 259-279; Sambanis 2001; Cederman, 2008. Regarding, large-N
statistical findings of a relationship between state weakness and internal violence, Sambanis (2004) points

Individual-level Explanations

Grievances and greed

In contrast to structural or state-level explanations, other theories stress the role of

grievances and greed as more proximate causes of violent mobilization. In the case of

greed, the premise of the argument is that violent conflict can erupt between

groups/insurgents and the state over competition for resources, especially where there are

lootable natural resources such as oil and diamonds.[42] Grievances may arise from group

discrimination or differentiation, motivating groups to mobilize to seek redress.[43]

Recently, Cederman et al. made the case again for *group* grievances as a mobilizing

factor. Grievances that lead to civil war, they argue, are a product of inequality in access

to economic resources (above or below the state average) and state power.[44]

On the other hand, scholars point out that not all grievances spark violence or

civil war, and conflict does not occur everywhere there are scarce resources.[45] Why in

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out that the causal mechanisms posited as central to the explanation largely do not hold up in empirical investigations, and the analysis of civil wars should be disaggregated to account for different causal mechanisms underlying ethnic as opposed to non-ethnic civil wars. Citing Kalyvas, Cederman (2008, 244) notes that it is "equally plausible that several mechanisms, rational or not, may coexist in the same civil war."

[42] See Colin Kahl, "Demographic Change, Natural Resources, and Violence: The Current Debate," *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 1 (2002): 257-282; Ian Gary and Terry L. Karl, "Bottom of the Barrel: Africa's Oil Boom and the Poor," Catholic Relief Services (2003); John McMillan, "Promoting Transparency in Angola," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (2005): 155-169.

[43] Gurr, *People Versus States*.

[44] Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils Weidmann, and Kristine Gleditsch, "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison," *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (August 2011): 478-495.

[45] Boix, "Civil Wars and Guerilla Warfare." See also Carrie Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004): 205-228; Kenneth D. Wald, Adam L. Silverman and Kevin S. Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Political Life," *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 121-143. As Boix (2008, 197-8) points out, "More recently scholars working on civil wars have offered a strong critique of the central assumption made by the former generation of scholars that rebellious activities occur when 'grievances are sufficiently acute that people want to engage in violent protest' (Collier and Hoeffler 2001, 2). According to this position, the presence of economic resentments, ethnic antagonisms, and personal or clique grudges are too widespread to specify

some cases does the conflict spiral? One line of argument is that grievances are "latencies, tools that are available for exploitation by stronger aspiring leadership."[46] Nevertheless, greater specification is needed in three respects: a) What incentives do groups have to buy into the narrative propounded by the political entrepreneur when it requires costly action? b) Drawing on events in Nigeria, why does the violence sometimes take a religious dimension as opposed to a tribal dimension? c) Finally, why, as in some Nigerian communities, do political entrepreneurs actively promote cooperation and adhere to power-sharing arrangements rather than seek the political benefits that could come from exacerbating differences? While Cederman et al.'s argument resurrects, to some degree, the grievances argument, it highlights the need for qualitative case study work that explains the mechanism that translates grievances into mobilization.[47]

Networks and Integration

Finally, another argument, particularly an anti-institutionalist argument, asserts that the strength of networks and civic associationalism in communities explains the likelihood of violence, since greater interaction, integration, and information shared about

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the cases in which political violence will erupt. Similarly they claim that maintaining that all cases of violence point to the existence of *exaggerated* grievances is useless since the concept (and presence) of 'acute grievances' is particularly difficult to pin down." See also Francisco Gutierrez Sanin, "Clausewitz Vindicated? Economics and Politics in the Colombian War," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, 219-241 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). While there is empirical evidence for the greed thesis, Sanin (2008) argues that greed is not a strong recruitment measure of insurgents or a good predictor of mobilization.

[46] Ibid., Wald et al., 129, 131. See also Gurr 2000; Wickham 2004; and Carrie Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). For example, although not looking at violence, Wickham (2002, 6) contends in her study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that the movement's successful mobilization depended on the strategic activism of elite leadership and the emphasis on religious values or ideas as opposed to a "natural result of accumulated grievances."

[47] Cederman et al., "Horizontal Inequalities."

and among ethnic groups is key to maintaining cooperative relations or peace institutions and averting violence-inducing "exogenous shocks."[48]

These arguments by Fearon and Laitin and by Varshney are problematic for two reasons. First, they assume some well-defined division between ethnic groups and that a single conception of "ethnic" identity divides them into insulated spheres. Instead, the question is why a particular identity cleavage takes on political significance at a given point in time.[49] Second, the arguments imply that groups that live in integrated communities and that have long interacted, intermingled, and even intermarried are not conflict prone. To the contrary, one could cite a number of cases in northern Nigeria where ethnic groups have lived in integrated communities for decades or even generations but where the bonds of community broke down along some ethnic cleavage in a short span of time. What is it that led to a disintegration of communal relationships? What social or political changes occurred that ate away at the bonds of formerly peaceful and integrated ethnic groups? Finally, these scholars do not address the symbolic significance of identity, such that groups wholly unconnected with cases of communal violence in other communities or states would take up arms against fellow community members in retaliation for attacks on their co-religionists elsewhere. The symbolism of

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[48] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 715-735; Varshney 2002: 46. Fearon and Laitin (1996, 730) observe that "Because social networks are better developed and interactions more frequent within groups, individuals have easier access to information about their coethnics than they do about ethnic others. Better info and more frequent interactions allow coethnics to develop and maintain *individual* reputations for cooperative behavior that are more difficult to sustain in interethnic interactions. In addition, due to cultural familiarity, people are better able to distinguish opportunists among coethnics, which facilitates peaceful interaction within and hampers it across ethnic groups."
[49] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* 41-54; Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 397-424.

belonging to this or that group seemingly drives the retaliatory violence and even overwhelms what inter-ethnic group relations do exist.

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What scholars overlook, I suggest, is the role of local government institutions formed in communities to coordinate group relations and adjudicate between perceived needs, rights, and demands. In societies where access to resources and rights is often times determined by which group is in power at the local-level, the lack of a power-sharing arrangement may lead to or enhance the perception of socio-economic inequality and deficient political representation. In such a scenario, I argue, communal violence is more likely.

Hence, as this dissertation will contend, a theory is needed that incorporates local institutional arrangements into the explanation, how they come into being, and the conditions under which they are sustainable. The assumption of a "free-space" in which actors are not constrained or empowered by their institutional context (formal or informal) leaves out an important cog in the explanatory logic. One should not overlook the institutional arrangements that shape group relationships, rights, distribution of resources, and the incentives for political entrepreneurs and groups to mobilize around identity cleavages in the first place.

DISSERTATION ARGUMENT: A THEORY OF POWER-SHARING

To explain the rise of communal inter-religious violence in Nigeria – why it is that one particular ethnic identity becomes the locus of violence over another and why only some ethno-religiously mixed communities seem prone to inter-religious violence – I make the

following two contentions: First, I argue that the religious change that occurred in the latter half of the 20th century in Nigeria is central to understanding the construction of Muslim-Christian identity as the locus of political contention and communal violence. More specifically, the politics and discourse of religious difference became both more prominent and rigid concurrent with the rapid expansion of Christianity. This religious change involved not merely growth in the number of adherents, but also the emergence of a more educated and politically influential Christian political class and a shift among denominations toward active political engagement. This doctrinal shift coincided with the rapid spread of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. Church leaders formed the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), a major Christian umbrella body, during this time to advocate on behalf of Christian political interests. A series of post-1970s religio-political disputes – including disputes over Nigeria's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the implementation of Shari'a law in northern states – also served to reify political identities along religious lines. Whereas before, identity disputes had coalesced around major ethno-tribal blocs, religious identity emerged as a primary form of ascriptive political identity useful not only for making sense of socio-economic poverty and inequality, but also political inequality, exploitation, and deficits in representation at the communal as well as the national level. Hence, broad changes in Nigeria's religious landscape have been pivotal in shaping both the political debate and the terrain upon which community disputes and identities are negotiated, even if the "root" causes of inter-religious violence are not always overtly religious.

Second, however, an argument about religious change alone does not explain the sub-national *variation* in Muslim-Christian violence. Religion does not become the

flashpoint of violence or symbolic trigger of conflict everywhere there is ethno-religious pluralism. In Jos, Kaduna, and Kano in north-central Nigeria, inter-religious violence has been endemic since the 1980s. Yet in neighboring areas – such as Bassa, Chikun, and Kanam – with similar diversity, a shared colonial history, and the potential for Muslim-Christian conflict, the communities pride themselves on having avoided such violent upheaval. Thus, while religious change elucidates the process through which religious identity emerged as a significant basis of self-identification and repertoire of collective action, a further step is needed to explain the conditions under which the narrative of religious difference takes root and forms the potential and rationale for Muslim-Christian violence.

It is here that I make my primary theoretical argument. I suggest that vulnerability to a divisive narrative of religious difference and inter-religious violence is a function of pre-existing inter-tribal power-sharing arrangements at the local government level. I operationalize power sharing as the formal or informal agreement among tribal groups to rotate the most important seats in a local government council in a new election or appointment cycle. Although top scholars typically question or even dismiss the idea that formal, national level power-sharing institutions promote democracy and peace in pluralistic societies, I reformulate this argument to explain that power-sharing, when instituted at the *local* level and even on an *informal* basis, is not only an effective mechanism for resolving ethno-tribal disputes, but also for averting religiously-imbued disputes.[50] As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, local government councils are

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[50] Local government authority is an important sight of contestation, as domination of a local government will likely result in favors or benefits to the ethnic group primarily heading the LGA.

the third tier of the federal government and the governing bodies closest to the people, constituted of members of the community – both elected and appointed – to preside over the development of their communities. Consequently, they have become a site of greater contestation for power and influence in Nigerian politics.

Against the thrust of prominent recent scholarly findings, I present strong evidence that ethnically divided communities with power-sharing arrangements among major ethno-tribal blocs are less susceptible to divisive *religious* conflict. Furthermore, I find that power-sharing at the local rather than the national level is a more effective mechanism for maintaining peace. LGAs in which these power-sharing institutions were established following the 1970s democratization and decentralization of local government are less prone to inter-religious violence, since the arrangement helps to defuse claims of religious discrimination in socio-economic and political communal life.

Elucidating the link between power-sharing and peace, I also find that local religious, traditional, and political leaders are more effective at peacebuilding and defusing tensions among religious groups in LGAs with a power-sharing arrangement, since power-sharing provides a foundation for leaders to build trust across ethno-tribal and ethno-religious divides. On the basis of political equality, leaders may more effectively appeal for calm and understanding, since their involvement is less likely to be viewed as a political ruse by one group or another. Looking at the communal or LGA level, local traditional or religious leaders are also more likely to be known by the population, be better respected, and hold more sway than national political "leaders." National level politicians, in contrast, are more likely to be disconnected from and never interact with most members of the community. For example, in Bassa LGA, which

neighbors the volatile Jos North LGA, ethnic groups have rotated leadership positions in the local council since its formation, enabling the community's religious, traditional, and youth leaders, as well as peace activists, to foster peaceful relations and counteract any divisive religious narrative. In contrast, the original conflict in Jos North was fueled by disputes over local government leadership (i.e. the lack of power-sharing), which was exacerbated and took on the volatile guise of a Muslim-Christian religious conflict.

Regarding the origin of power-sharing institutions, however, one might counter that communities that were demographically and socially more integrated (greater "civic-ness") could be expected to establish power-sharing arrangements. In other words, strong institutions are the product of strong civic integration rather than vise versa. Contrary to what Varshney might assume, however, there are cases of ethno-religiously mixed communities disintegrating into communal violence despite Muslims and Christians living together for generations. By way of example, Jos, the capital of Plateau state, had strong levels of integration in civic associations – such as in the mining union in the 1960s – and communities were seemingly very integrated up until the mid 1990s; Muslims and Christians engaged in every day interaction, living and socializing together in mixed neighborhoods and buying/selling together in the market. This pattern persisted up through the mid-1990s. Even while Kano state and Kaduna state were experiencing repeated bouts of both intra- and inter-religious violence, Jos remained peaceful. It was not until 1994 and 2001, in particular, that disputes between the mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulani population and the other mainly Christian ethnic groups arose over political ownership of Jos, which led to a breakdown of communal relationships and subsequent communal segregation and endemic violence. It was not the lack of civic

associationalism, *per se*, that led to conflict, but, rather, the perception by the significant Hausa-Fulani Muslim group that they were under-represented and lacked the political and socio-economic rights of their ethnic counterparts in the local government. This was not a problem of integration, but a problem of power-sharing at the local level. In communities with no or low levels of communal violence, the findings suggest that they are better able to forge integrated civic relationships *because* there are stronger more inclusive power sharing institutions in place.

Of course, as noted before, this raises the question of why some localities adopted power-sharing arrangements in the first place. While there is no one key determinant, I show that patterns of colonial relations, religious change, group settlement or migration, and other factors played a role in shaping the levels of assimilation (adoption of culture, language, and religion of Muslim Hausa-Fulani) and integration (adherence of local ethno-tribal groups to Hausa-Fulani proxy rulers and emirs) in various LGAs over time and, thereby, the perceived *routes* to power-sharing with the decentralization policies of the 1970s and later. I find that informal power-sharing institutions were more feasible to local ethno-tribal leaders in pluralistic communities where levels of assimilation and integration among the local ethno-tribal groups and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani were higher and were not exacerbated by subsequent socio-political and religious changes *following* independence.

Figure 1.2 Representation of argument and power-sharing factors
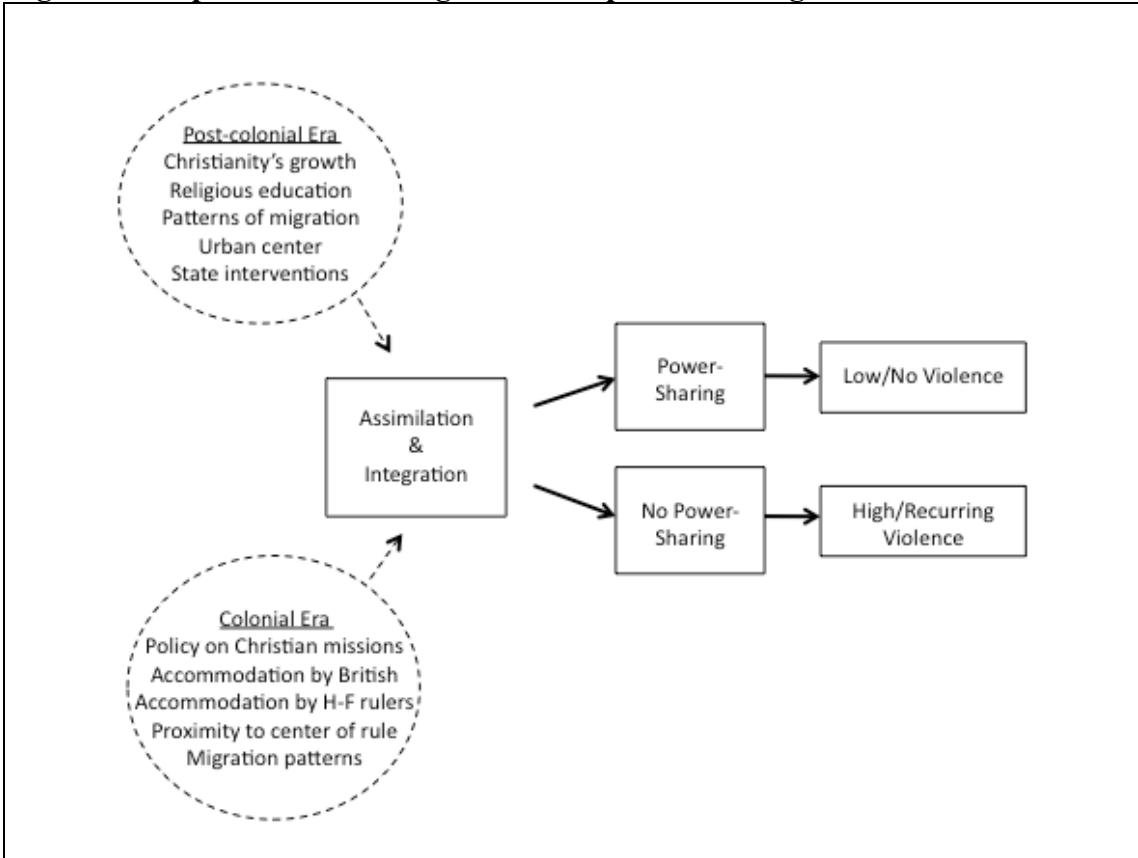
That is, there is no one institutional or historical condition that *determined* future power-sharing across all LGAs. Rather, a host of historical and contemporary social, political, and religious forces and policies shaped the degree of ethno-tribal cohesion in Middle Belt communities (See Figure 1.2 above) and the subsequent perceived feasibility of a negotiated informal power-sharing arrangement among the major ethno-tribal groups in any one LGA.

Contemporary inter-*religious* relations, consequently, are at least partly a result of inter-*ethnic* relations established long ago, particularly patterns of assimilation and integration among the ruling and ruled ethno-tribal groups. When the 1970s local

government reforms accorded local indigenous ethno-tribal groups the possibility of representation in their local governments, dominant power shifted away from the colonial-era Hausa-Fulani Muslim elite or chiefs. In this context, elites of local groups were more likely to opt for power-sharing in order to assert a stronger bloc to achieve self-governance and autonomy. In contrast, power-sharing was a less attractive option where the local ethno-tribal group(s) could not form a significant enough bloc to guarantee self-representation. Power-sharing with Hausa-Fulani people identified with the former "overseers" was also untenable and less likely in areas characterized by a history of resistance – lack of assimilation and integration – among the local population and where post-colonial changes had only exacerbated the cleavages.

This is not to argue that the power-sharing arrangements are impervious to, in Grief and Laitin's language, exogenous shocks and endogenous parameter shifts. Indeed, there are pressures threatening the sustainability of these power-sharing institutions in some of the Nigerian LGAs I studied.[51] However, it is the sustainability of these *informal* power-sharing arrangements that is most surprising. My dissertation explores the institutional self-enforcing mechanisms that have succeeded in maintaining ethno-religious harmony in a context of rampant religious disharmony. Some of these factors include the networks of coordination and collaboration that derived from the power-sharing arrangements, the potential costs of deviating from the precedent, and the opportunity for local ethno-tribal group to garner greater representation than they might otherwise achieve in the LGA, as well as the opportunity for larger ethno-tribal groups to

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[51] Avner Grief and David Laitin, "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 633-652.

avoid political alliances among their smaller counterparts. I argue that the re-enforcing mechanisms are easier to coordinate and monitor at the local level as opposed to the national level due to 1) their proximity and targeted relevance to the population in question, 2) the greater familiarity of local leaders with their counter-parts in the community, and 3) the ability of local leaders to act more promptly to dispel trouble when it does arise, thereby reinforcing the sustainability of the informal institution.

In sum, my dissertation shows that areas characterized by ethno-tribal power-sharing arrangements have been and are better able to combat the divisive narrative of religious polarization and avert the inter-religious communal violence that has become the bane of Nigerian society since the 1980s. The insights of this study potentially apply far beyond the Nigerian context. Many post-colonial countries in the global South have a federal system with local government representation. Local governments are part of a logic of decentralization, a sphere of government designed to be closest to the needs and concerns of its citizens. In countries in which politicization of religious identity infuses political and communal space, local government patterns of representation are all the more critical in shaping communal relationships and either exacerbating or quelling religious conflict through the pattern of representation. This is the argument I put forward in this study. As one of the world's largest oil producers, the most populous country in Africa and rapidly growing in the world, Nigeria is not only a suitable site to test the theory, but also an important country in sub-Saharan Africa and globally.

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW & APPROACH

Constructing an Ethnic and Religious Violence Dataset

In light of the problems with extant data on communal violence for Nigeria and elsewhere, as I discuss in Chapter 5, I constructed a wholly original dataset of communal violence in northern Nigeria, drawing on the methodology employed by Varshney and Wilkinson in their construction of a communal violence dataset for India.[52] With the help of research assistants, I reviewed 32 years (1979-2011) of *The Guardian,* an independent Nigerian national daily newspaper, considered by local scholars to be a fairly unbiased source with good coverage of events in northern Nigeria.[53] I present the analysis of this data in Chapter 5 where I discuss the scope and pattern of over 500 cases of ethno-tribal and ethno-religious communal violence.

Constructing Original Power-sharing Data

As I will delve into more deeply in Chapter 6, apart from in-depth case studies and interviews, I also collected original data at the local government level to test the power-sharing theory. This task involved gathering the election and appointment records of 17 Plateau state LGAs and 23 Kaduna state LGAs, which, because hard copies of these records for past years are not generally maintained, required reconstruction through

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[52] See Wilkinson 2004; Varshney 2002.

[53] The number of newspaper editions across the 32 years amounts to over 13,000 editions. Currently, the dataset is based on an approximately 90 percent completion rate of the total number of editions (i.e., I and research assistants reviewed over 11,000 daily editions in the construction of the dataset). Prior to 1987 inter-religious violence was largely unheard of and intra-Muslim violence was more common, but I select 1979 as the start date for coverage as a buffer in order to capture any cases that were perhaps overlooked prior to 1987Note that during the years (1979-1983) when *The Guardian* was not yet publishing, I gathered data from two other newspapers – *The New Nigerian* and the *Nigerian Standard*. I selected these two newspapers for balance, as the former is considered more Muslim/northern biased and the latter more Christian/southern biased. Note that while research assistants were trained to help identify potential cases, I coded each case myself. For 1994 and 1995 in which sparse editions of the Guardian were available, I also used the *New Nigerian* and the *Nigerian Standard* to supplement.

interviews with current and former officials in some cases. These data allowed me to confirm the presence or lack of power-sharing information gathered in interviews with local officials. The data also shed light on the *form* power-sharing takes, such as rotation of the chairmanship every election among the major ethno-tribal groups. I selected Plateau state and Kaduna state for their considerable variation on the dependent variable in their LGAs (endemic communal violence versus relative peace), controlling for factors such as ethnic pluralism and colonial legacy.[54]

Constructing Original Church Growth Data

To further supplement data on the rapid spread of Christianity in Nigeria, I implemented a data-gathering project with one of the largest and oldest churches in northern Nigeria – Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) – to supplement information from the World Christian Database and World Religion Database on the growth of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. These ECWA data include the founding date for ECWA churches in northern state, which allows me to show and support the broad claim that Christian churches have multiplied at a rapid pace in the post-1970s period as part of a process of rapid religious change.

Qualitative Case Studies

Finally, the qualitative portion of my fieldwork adopts a controlled comparison case study approach combined with historical process tracing. I adopt Mill's method of difference or a "most similar case design" in that I compare LGAs that are similar in as

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[54] Generally, the religious and ethnic identities of each local government representative in any one cycle of rule were obtained for the LGAs, but in some cases only the top officials – Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary – could be obtained. This is not a major issue, however, since these top three positions are the most important seats in local government councils. Hence, the most important evidence of power-sharing will be at this level.

many theoretically relevant ways as possible but that have different outcomes on the

dependent variable – inter-religious violence. I explore the selected communities' history

of ethnic group settlement, group relations, representation, and pattern of peace or

conflict, conducting interviews with traditional tribal chiefs, local government officials,

peace activists, religious leaders, and youth leaders. In a series of three paired

comparisons, I test my theory in each pair against one community where there has been

endemic inter-religious violence and another where violence has been largely absent.[55]

The case studies were conducted in LGAs in Plateau and Kaduna states in the religiously

and tribally pluralistic Middle Belt region, although two of the case studies relied more

on extensive secondary sources. In Chapters 7, 8, and 9 I present the findings of these

cases studies. A number of other LGAs will also be referenced in the course of this study

for their theoretical insight or for illustration.

Figure 1.3 Sites of power-sharing analysis: Kaduna and Plateau state LGAs

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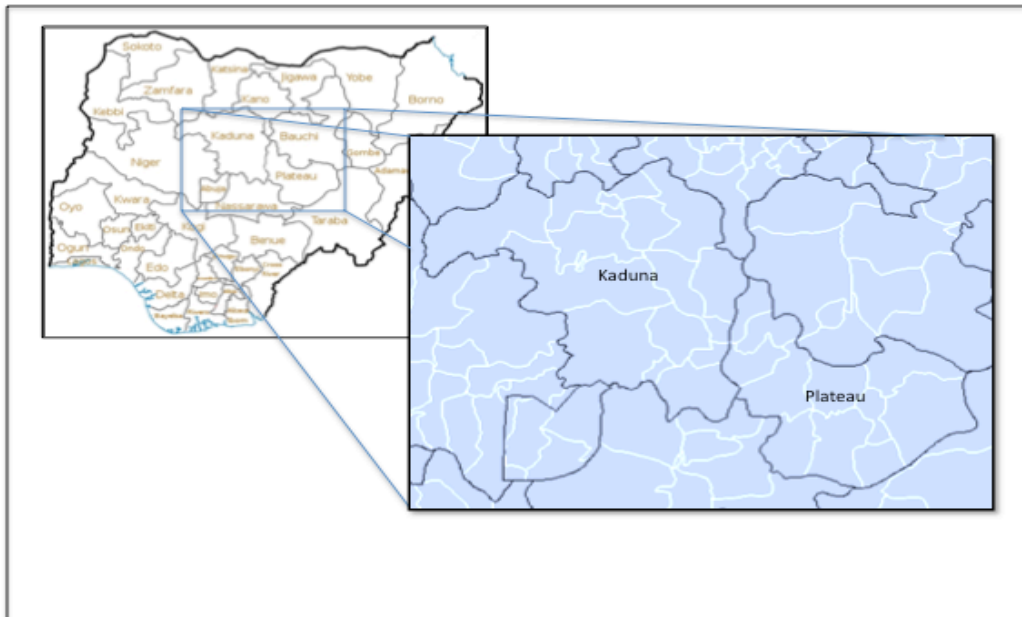
[55] Note that this is similar to the "most tightly controlled" case selection methodology adopted by Varshney (2002) in his study of Hindu-Muslim violence in India.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

This study is organized as follows: In chapter 2, I lay out in more detail the power-sharing literature and make the case for my revised theory of power-sharing to answer the main puzzle of this dissertation – why it is that despite the increase in Muslim-Christian violence in northern Nigeria over the last few decades, only some religiously pluralistic communities are prone to inter-religious violence. I make the case for the importance of informal and local-level power-sharing institutions in shaping communal relations and the volatility of religious identity.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the importance of local government institutions in shaping communal relations. Here, I provide background on the emergence of Nigerian local government, and I explain why it is that power-sharing at this level can be a significant force for warding off communal disputes that could otherwise evolve into lethal and endemic violence.

In Chapter 4, I return to the evidence for the first part of my argument that religious change – the growth in the number of Christian adherents as well as a more politically activist orientation – fed into the politicization of religious identity and the increase in inter-religious violence since the 1980s (not unique to Nigeria). The history of religious change from the pre-colonial period to the present is critical for understanding the saliency of religious identity as a repertoire for collective mobilization and communal violence.

In Chapter 5, I present evidence of the growth in and divergent pattern of inter-religious as opposed to ethno-tribal communal violence. Although tribe and religion are both "ethnic" identities, these two types of communal violence respond to very different

logics of mobilization – much ethno-tribal violence is over access to or control over

resources, while religious violence is triggered by religiously symbolic events. Current

studies largely fail to distinguish between ethnic *identities* – such as religion and tribe –

and thereby fail to differentiate the conditions under which one or the other is likely to be

a salient cleavage.

Chapters 6 through 9 provide the bulk of the support for my theory of power-

sharing. Chapter 6 present the empirical data gathered on power-sharing arrangements in

LGAs in Plateau state, supporting the hypothesis that LGAs that adopted power-sharing

arrangements following the 1970s reforms are less susceptible to inter-religious violence.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 extend the support, presenting in-depth paired-comparison case

studies of select LGAs in both Plateau state and Kaduna state. These states are a good site

for comparative analysis; they share a similar colonial history, have a mixed ethnic

makeup, were less integrated and assimilated into the Hausa-Fulani Muslim colonial rule,

and Kaduna is a Muslim majority state overall while Plateau state has a Christian

majority. The case studies allowed me to get at the "black box" of power-sharing, the

strategic reasons and factors that shaped why some local leaders opted for power-sharing

agreements and others did not, as well as why the informal institution can be sustainable

over time. In the final chapter, I summarize the overall arguments and findings and

highlight the broader applicability of this study to other unstable democracies in the

global South that have also seen an increase in inter-religious violence in recent years.

CHAPTER 2

A Power-Sharing Theory:

Explaining the Pattern of Inter-Religious Violence

For the past few decades, international observers and scholars have affirmed and been active in promoting power-sharing or consociationalism as a tool to end violent intra-state conflict or civil war and to create a stable peace. Power-sharing, its proponents argue, offers representatives of the conflicting parties in post-civil war states or unstable democracies a stake in the national pie and decision-making process, thereby conferring greater legitimacy on the state and reducing the incentives for insurgent groups to re-mobilize. In Chad, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Angola, Zimbabwe, Benin, South Africa, Sri-Lanka, Lebanon, and the Philippines, as well as a number of other countries, leaders negotiated some manner of formal power-sharing arrangement. Yet, despite its prominence among international actors and peace negotiators as a solution to intra-state conflict, power-sharing's track record, according to recent scholarship, leaves much to be desired. Why is this? What explains the failure of power-sharing to prevent the re-emergence of conflict in the long-term? Can power-sharing be salvaged as a prescription for ending conflict, and how does it apply to communal conflict that does not involve the state?

This chapter delves into the theory of power-sharing, reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of current scholarship on national power-sharing institutions, but it goes beyond merely a review of the literature. Taking up the main puzzle of this research –

why it is that inter-religious violence breaks out in some pluralistic communities in northern Nigeria and not others – I propose a theory of local-level and informal power-sharing to explain the pattern of inter-religious *communal* violence in northern Nigeria. Ultimately, I contend that a national-level theory of power-sharing and ethno-federalism does not and cannot adequately explain the pattern of inter-religious violence in Nigeria – why it is that some local government areas (LGAs) are more prone to inter-religious violence than others. Instead, I suggest that tribally and religiously diverse communities that adopted inter-tribal power-sharing arrangements following 1976 local government reforms introduced an institutional mechanism to defuse the inter-religious conflict that would increasingly come to characterize other communities since the 1980s. Although ethno-religious cleavages were not as politicized or pronounced in the 1970s, the construction of these agreements along *tribal* lines created a system of representation that would be *religiously* neutral – since religious and tribal identities often overlap – despite the subsequent politicization of religion in Nigerian national politics. Thus, the principle of power-sharing in local government is critical for policy-makers and governments intent on fostering both local – and by association – national stability.

POWER-SHARING: THE IDEAL

In Lijphart's 1977 seminal work on power-sharing in divided societies, he makes the case that regimes characterized by formal power-sharing or consociational institutions are more likely to achieve successful democratization and avert ethnic conflict. Power-sharing, as Lijphart defines it, can take the form of executive power-sharing, mutual veto, proportionality, and group autonomy, and refers to the "participation of the

representatives of all significant groups in political decision-making, especially at the executive level."[56] Or as LeVan summarizes, power-sharing is a political form of inclusion,

> a range of distinct constituent interests whose representation is necessary in order to legitimate the exercise of aggregate political authority. This broad understanding intentionally encompasses inclusion accomplished through fixed political processes, such as coalition governments formed through elections. It also applies to consociationalism, which entails a combination of specific institutional arrangements under unusual conditions.[57]

As Rothchild and Roeder note, the power-sharing model may take different forms, such as a "inclusive decisionmaking" approach which aims for representation of all major ethnic groups in a central decisionmaking body (e.g. the legislature), or a "partitioned decisionmaking" model that accords ethnic groups their own communal agencies or bodies to administer policies for their members and give voice to their ethnic group's interests.[58] Additionally, Gates and Strom observe that the power-sharing components identified by Lijphart "can in many contexts exist independently of one another" and that "these features do not fully specify or exhaust the world of possible power-sharing arrangements."[59] These formal institutional procedures or institutions have been adopted in many ethnically divided societies, and, in the case of Nigeria, official or

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[56] Arend Lijphart, "The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy," in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Reynolds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39.

[57] A. Carl Levan, "Power Sharing and Inclusive Politics in Africa's Uncertain Democracies," *International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* 24, no. 1 (2011): 33.

[58] Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roeder, "Power Sharing as an Impediment to Peace and Democracy," in *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, ed. Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roeder, 29-50 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). Ian Spears, "Africa: The Limits of Power-Sharing," *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 133.

[59] Scott Gates and Kaare Strom, *Power-sharing, Agency and Civil Conflict: Power-sharing Agreements, Negotiations and Peace Processes*, Policy Brief (Oslo: Center for the Study of Civil War (CSCW), 2007), 4.

formal power-sharing takes the form of ethno-federalism.[60] In essence, power-sharing

regimes are "those states which are characterized by formal institutional rules which give

multiple political elites a stake in the decision-making process."[61] The concept, therefore,

largely refers to a political or electoral strategy to construct stable national government in

an unstable or post-conflict society in a way that reinforces government legitimacy across

group cleavages.

The adoption of power-sharing agreements is most often discussed in relationship

to countries that have recently emerged from civil war. The assumption is that without

some sort of power-sharing arrangement, aggrieved groups will reject the regime in

power, further entrenching conflict and perhaps (re)creating the conditions for ethnic

violence. While the power-sharing arrangement may take different forms, the institution

can ensure stakeholders from different ethnic blocs a share in the decision-making power

of the state, thereby averting potentially divisive political competition and encouraging

democratic stability. If parties or groups feel that they have a stake in the democratic

process, power-sharing may be the short-term strategy to long-term democracy and

peace.[62] As Norris highlights, in contrast to a majoritarian electoral system of "winner-

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[60] Drawing on the immigration policy literature, these are essentially the assimilation vs. the multicultural policy methods of power-sharing, where the former attempts to coalesce interests across groups and minimize perceived differences and the latter recognizes group differences and adopts policy approaches that address the particularities of the group needs. See Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, "Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State?," in *Cultural Diversity versus Economic Solidarity*, ed. Philippe Van Parijs, 227-284 (Brussels: Deboeck Universite Press).

[61] Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roeder, "Dilemmas of State-Building in Divided Societies," in *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil War*, ed. Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roeder, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 23.

[62] Spears, "The Limits of Power-sharing." Spears in this instance is citing Zartmen and Ohaway. See also Matthew Hoddie Caroline Hartzell, "Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (April 2003): 318-332; Pippa Norris, *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

take-all outcomes," the argument is that "more inclusive power-sharing regimes are likely to develop stronger support from stakeholders and thus generate stable institutional equilibrium."[63] All of the following are cited as possible benefits of power-sharing arrangements: Elites have the incentive to bargain or collaborate, to accept rules of the game, and to moderate demands, thereby maximizing the number of stakeholders, dampening the affect of ethnic intolerance, increasing the perception that the rules of the game are fair and legitimate, convincing leaders of different blocs that they have a say or their constituents' interests are represented, and enhancing consensus building in post-conflict situations.[64]

POWER-SHARING: THE LIMITATIONS

Despite the value attributed to the power-sharing model and Lijphart's work on the effectiveness of power-sharing and consociationalism, recent scholarship finds little ground for optimism. To the contrary, the problems of power-sharing highlighted in the literature form an impressive list: it concentrates power in a few critical decision-making arenas, it can be used as a mutual veto weapon, conciliatory policy commitment diminishes over time, it creates government rigidity, it is difficult to enforce the rules because of opportunistic leaders, it merely postpones rather than resolves conflict, it leads to incumbent manipulation, it is subject to the whims of self-interested and power-hungry politicians unwilling to accommodate rivals, the personality differences of actors hinders effectiveness, the incumbency advantage makes inroads difficult, it can be used as a

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[63] Ibid., Norris, *Driving Democracy*, 27
[64] Ibid., 24-5; Gates and Strom, "Power-Sharing, Agency," 3-5.

political tool for one group to accumulate more power, it assumes static rather than fluid

political interests, it leads to changes in government without new elections, and it

emphasizes rather than diminishes ethnic differences.[65] Hardly cause for optimism.

In practice, therefore, the goals that power-sharing attempts to accomplish seem

to be the conditions necessary for its success. For power-sharing to succeed, the

literature emphasizes the need for a political culture of accommodation, economic

prosperity, equality, demographic stability, strong government institutions or a strong

state, stable hierarchical relations, a supportive international environment, elite

dominance/enforceability, and a constructive relationship with the international

community – all of which are unlikely to be present after severe conflict or in unstable

democracies.[66] As Spears concludes,

> [W]hile power-sharing or inclusion has been cited as a necessary direction which
> African leaders should follow, it remains relatively unproven as a means of
> conflict resolution. There are, in fact, relatively few examples of successful,
> formalised power-sharing in Africa which warrant its advocacy. Even those
> developing world examples cited by power-sharing's main proponent, Arend

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[65] See Ian Spears, "Understanding Inclusive Peace Agreements in Africa: The Problems of Power Sharing," *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (Feb 2000): 105-118; Spears 2002; LeVan 2011; Nic Cheeseman and Blessing-Miles Tendi, "Power-Sharing in Comparative Perspective: The Dynamics of 'Unity Government' in Kenya and Zimbabwe," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, no. 2 (2010): 203-229; Walter O. Oyugi, "Coalition Politics and Coalition Government in Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, no. 1 (2006): 52-79; Rothchild and Roeder 2005; Denis M. Tull and Andreas Mehler, "The Hidden Costs of Power-Sharing: Reproducing Insurgent Violence in Africa," *African Affairs* 104, no. 416 (July 2005): 375-398; Anna Jarstad, "The Logic of Power Sharing after Civil War," Presented at Power-sharing and Democratic Governance in Divided Society, PRIO, Uppsala University, Oslo, Norway, August 21-22, 2006; Tomothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1996).

[66] See Rothchild and Roeder 2005, 41-47; Donald Horowitz, "Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Processes," in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Reynolds, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20; Rene Lemarchand, "Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *African Affairs* 106, no. 422 (2006): 1-20; Spears 2000, 106; Spears 2002; Gates and Strom 2007, i-15; Anna K. Jarstad, "The Prevalence of Power-Sharing: Exploring the Patterns of Post-Election Peace," *Africa Spectrum* 44, no. 3 (2009): 41-62.

Lijphart, tend to be relatively few and, with the exception of South Africa, none of them has been initiated in the past 25 years.[67]

Although Lemarchand highlights Burundi as something of a carefully crafted success case for consociationalism that has managed to keep the peace (for the time being), he ultimately questions whether power-sharing is to thank or the societal conditions or context that enable the relative success of power-sharing.[68]

Rothchild and Roeder cite 12 out of 16 power-sharing experiments that were not sustainable – Burma, Chad, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Guyana, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sri-Lanka, and Sudan.[69] Other questionable experiments include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Czechoslavakia.[70] Spears notes that parties were unable to sustain a power-sharing arrangement that allocated seats between the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front and a number of other ethnically-based parties after the overthrow of the Dergue regime in 1991. The arrangement collapsed after a year. Similarly in Angola, parties to a 1991 peace agreement did not consider power-sharing a viable option. In 1994, they were "finally induced to sign a power-sharing agreement," but it "became severely strained" and fell apart with renewed war in 1998.[71] Despite Norris' contention of a relationship between power-sharing and democratic consolidation, Vandegingste finds that, in the case of Burundi, power-sharing institutions successfully helped to end war, but they "has so far not been able to make a difference" in working toward the institutionalization of democratic institutions, as the country has tended "towards

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[67] Spears, "Understanding Inclusive Peace," 106. See also Spears 2002.
[68] Lemarchand, "Consociationalism and Power-Sharing," 16, 20. For example, Lemarchand (2006, 20) notes that a "power-sharing solution to the Burundi crisis proved utterly unworkable in 1994 but reasonably promising in 2005."
[69] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State Building," 41.
[70] Norris, *Driving Democracy*, 39.
[71] Spears, "Understanding Inclusive Peace, 106.

increased electoral authoritarianism and…the use of violence as a way of exercising political authority."[72] Similarly, Traniello's analysis of South Africa and Rwanda finds that power-sharing failed in Rwanda due to the lack of the following: a committed leadership, a concept of a shared destiny, and a desire among elites to accommodate one another.[73] Ultimately, as Mehler notes in his discussion of recent power-sharing agreements, important questions of who represents the parties at the negotiating table and how or whether these agreements address local security and conflict generation and management are generally overlooked.[74]

In the end, despite the international community's penchant for advocating power-sharing as a solution to ethnic conflict or civil war, a number of recent studies find that power-sharing limits democracy, can lead to a renewal of conflict, and, ultimately, is not the solution to long-term instability as policy practitioners had hoped.[75] "Much of the [African] continent," Lemarchand notes, "has become a graveyard of consociational experiments…a point on which most observers would agree."[76]

"Post-Civil War" vs. "Ethnic Conflict" vs. "Communal Violence"

Current scholarship is limited in its level of analysis as well. Scholars tend to focus on the immediate post-civil war context in which groups are attempting to form a stable peace or democratic arrangement that will convince parties to relinquish their

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[72] Stef Vandeginste, "Power-Sharing, Conflict and Transition in Burundi: Twenty Years of Trial and Error," *Africa Spectrum* 3 (2009), 81.
[73] Marisa Trianello, "Power-Sharing: Lessons from South Africa and Rwanda," *International Public Policy Review* 3, no. 2 (March 2008), 28-43.
[74] Andreas Mehler, "Peace and Power Sharing in Africa: A Not So Obvious Relationship," *Affrican Affairs* 108, no. 432 (2009): 472.
[75] e.g., Tull and Mehler 2005; Lemarchand 2006; LeVan 2011; Oyugi 2006; Cheeseman and Tendi 2010; Spears 2000; Spears 2002; Horowitz 2002; Rothchild and Roeder 2005; Trianello 2008; Vandeginste 2009.
[76] Lemarchand, "Consociationalism and Power-Sharing," 2. Also Horowitz (2002, 21) notes, "consociational regimes in the developing world are, to be generous about it, few and far between."

arms. These studies that focus on the role of power-sharing in the immediate aftermath of major upheaval, therefore, overlook whether the power-sharing strategy is better able to stem or avert persistent forms of small-scale *communal* violence rather than civil war.

At the same time, however, the scholarship appears to be confused, often inter-changing in their analysis post-civil war states with those characterized by ethnic conflict or cleavages. Indeed, in a befuddling empirical move, Rothchild and Roeder state that because generalizability is inhibited by the "relatively few examples of successful consolidation of peace and democracy after domestic conflicts, particularly after civil wars, through power sharing or power dividing," the "authors [in this study] have often had to examine most nearly comparable cases – such as ethnically divided societies that have not recently experienced intense conflict, let alone civil war."[77] In this sense, the scope of the cases itself is unclear. Ethnic conflict is not necessarily inter-changeable with civil war, as the former may include inter-ethnic *communal* violence while the latter generally refers to insurgents versus the state. The nature and impact of power-sharing institutions in these different types of conflict may be very different.

Another confusing element is the empirical relationship scholars are testing when they examine the effectiveness of power-sharing institutions. As Jarstad and Gates and Strom note, some scholars refer to power-sharing as a means to end civil war while others as a means to develop democratic governance in plural societies or both.[78] These analyses potentially require very different research designs and assumptions about what serves as effective power-sharing, yet they are rarely kept distinct by scholars who study power-

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[77] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State Building," 21.
[78] Jarstad, "The Logic of Power-Sharing," 3; Jarstad 2009, 46; Gates and Strom, 5-6. Note, however, that Gates and Strom are not clear what type of "civil conflict" their analysis refers to.

sharing. While Jarsted argues that "we know very little about which type of power

sharing works to accommodate conflict and why," I argue that we know very little about

which type of power-sharing works to ameliorate which *type* of conflict and why.[79]

Either way, discussions and analyses of power-sharing institutions often defacto

refer to post-civil war states (recent or not so recent) when it is clear that scholars in some

cases treat the two interchangeably, rendering their unit of analysis and the

generalizability of their findings unclear. Furthermore, as Gates and Strom emphasize,

"the empirical literature has suffered from selection bias, as studies have focused much

more on societies that have actually experienced civil conflict than on societies that have

faced similar challenges but avoided overt conflict."[80]

My analysis does not fit neatly into either the civil war or ethnic conflict literature

on power-sharing. In contrast to studies that assess power-sharing only as a tool to end

civil war and to establish a stable national government, or as a tool to bring peace to some

broadly defined "ethnic conflict" states, my focus is on states characterized by ethnic

communal violence and, in particular, inter-religious violence where control of the

national government is not one of the objects of the conflict. In states characterized by

sub-national violence between warring religious groups, is power-sharing an effective

means of avoiding inter-religious disputes and maintaining peace? Scholars have yet to

test the power-sharing theory in cases of communal violence at the local government

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[79] Ibid., Jarstad, "The Logic of Power-Sharing," 4.
[80] Gates and Strom, "Power-Sharing Agency," 1, 6-7. For example Gates and Strom (2007, 7) note that studies that find that power-sharing is effective at prompting peace and good governance, such as Hartzell and Hoddie (2003), Binngsbo (2005), and Reynal-Querol (2002) tend to "suffer from sample bias and possible endogeneity problems. Case studies are notorious for selecting on the dependent variable, and case studies of power-sharing may have had a tendency to concentrate on the more durable and successful cases."

level and through an informal mechanism. Do the critiques or negative findings hold in

analysis of communal violence as opposed to post-civil war contexts?[81] What can

patterns of power-sharing in ethnically pluralistic communities teach us about the

importance of power-sharing not merely as a post-hoc peace strategy, but as an everyday

form of peace-building to help communities avoid conflict in the first place? As Spears

notes, "the construction of coalitions among willing partners can be an important means

to broaden a political base or to manage ethnic diversity in places where extreme violence

has yet to break out…"[82]

A REFORMULATION OF THE POWER-SHARING THEORY

While the verdict on power-sharing is clearly tilted toward the negative, I contend that

the level of analysis may be misplaced and breadth of study stunted. First, the literature

on power-sharing only looks at these institutions at the national level, overlooking both

the presence of power-sharing arrangements at the sub-national or local government level

and their capacity to provide representation and ameliorate the group cleavages that

spawn ethnic conflict and feed into larger scale violence or civil war. Second, along with

their limited focus on national level institutions, scholars concentrate on *formal* codified

agreements, such as those regarding electoral rules, portioning of legislative seats, and

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[81] e.g., Stephen Saideman, David Lanoue, Michael Campenni and Samuel Stanton, "Democratization, Political Institutions, and Ethnic Conflict: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis, 1985-1998," *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 103-129. Recent work by Cheeseman and Tendi (2010) and LeVan (2011) makes this move, examining the success or failure of power-sharing in unstable or uncertain political environments, though they do not look at local-level power-sharing.

[82] Spears, "The Limits of Power-Sharing," 126.

constitutional guarantees.[83] In contrast, I find that power-sharing arrangements in local

government institutions in Nigeria are negotiated on an *informal* basis as an "unwritten

memorandum of understanding" rather than a codified rule or regulation, and they are

sustainable over time. What mechanisms sustain these agreements when the formal

variant is found so wanting or ineffective? Scholars of comparative politics have not

studied the conditions under which such an informal arrangement could be maintained

when there are clearly incentives for parties to defect. Why, as I find, do power-sharing

arrangements persist in some of the pluralistic Nigerian communities when the informal

institution is subject to the same potential weaknesses as those at the national level – e.g.,

issues of inadequate enforcement, potential for elites to compromise or take advantage of

the agreement, shifting incentives to comply, changes in social conditions? Finally,

scholars do not look at how these institutions interact with different ethnic cleavages.

Why is it that, as I show, ethno-tribal power-sharing provides a foundation for

ameliorating inter-religious tensions?

I address each of these points in the following discussion to highlight and

hypothesize the importance of each of these dimensions – power-sharing as it relates to

local, informal, and communal inter-religious violence – referring by way of illustration

to the Nigerian pattern. My hypothesis is as follows: *Ethnically pluralistic communities*

with mechanisms of inclusion or power-sharing in local government institutions are less

likely to experience communal violence than those that lack power-sharing institutions.

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[83] Note that Rothchild and Roeder (2005, 19, 20) observe that power-sharing can also refer to informal compromises, but that "[i]n the interest of precision" they "invoke the narrow list of more formal arrangements," such as "federalism, collective executives, communal legislative chambers, reserved seats in legislatures, the list system of proportional representation with a low threshold, and formal rules mandating proportional presidencies…and schemes of nonterritorial federalism."

In contrast to national level power-sharing mechanisms, I argue that local level power-sharing institutions are more likely to be effective or sustainable since local elites and communities can more directly observe the benefits of power-sharing and better reinforce compliant behavior or "punish" defectors. Informal power-sharing institutions in pluralistic communities can also help to effectively mediate and mitigate perceived ethnic/political inequalities and cleavages by providing broader representation in local government to otherwise underrepresented ethnic groups. In what follows I will discuss the two key elements underlying this theory – the importance of local and informal institutions.

Local-Level

In Varshney's study of communal violence in India, he contends that an institutional explanation of the causal factors is problematic. "If the political system and institutions are the same right across the length and breadth of the country," he argues, "institutional arguments cannot by definition account for why *different parts of a country* tend to have very different patterns of ethnic violence and peace."[84] Like Varshney, I argue that a national-level institutional argument is incapable of explaining the regional and sub-state variation in inter-religious violence. It is not necessary, however, to throw out an institutional theory altogether. Although he concludes that consociationalism/power-sharing or electoral design cannot explain local or regional variation, and "something other than the institutional configuration of the polity" must

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[84] Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 38.

explain patterns of communal violence, he does not consider *local* level institutional arrangements.[85]

Instead, I theorize that the goals of power-sharing can be better achieved when pursued through representative institutions at the sub-national level. A focus on national-level institutions suffers from the following inconsistencies. First, the notion that power-sharing, as a national level institutional arrangement, is sufficient to address group inequalities at the sub-national level seems counter-intuitive, particularly in a federal system where power is decentralized through local institutions of representation. A top-down model of power-sharing, even through ethno-federalism, does not take into account how grievances, or socio-economic and political cleavages are constructed as an identity issue and may vary sub-nationally. Local level political institutions are closer to the direct concerns, fears, and needs of the people and more likely to impact group relations. In Nigerian society, for example, access to resources and socio-economic rights (or lack thereof) are influenced in important ways by group representation in local political institutions.

The importance of the local-level is confirmed in recent scholarship on patterns of conflict or governance in Africa. As MacLean argues in her study of patterns of ethnic conflict in Coˆte d'Ivoire and Ghana, "In order to understand how ethnic conflict may be mobilised or mediated in national politics, we must first examine how the potential for conflict is managed at the local level,"[86] as "local-level institutions may shape individual

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Lauren Morris MacLean, "Mediating Ethnic Conflict at the Grassroots: The Role of Local Associational Life in Shaping Political Values in Cote d' Ivoire and Ghana," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 42, no. 4 (2004), 590.

values and identities, mediate conflict at the grassroots, and support national cohesion, preventing widespread ethnic conflict in the first place."[87] Similarly, in Boone's work on decentralization in West Africa, she stresses analysis of "continuities in sociopolitical relations at the local level in order to highlight cross-*regional* variation, and to show that these variations have long-term institutional effects,"[88] and, as such, one of the key "implication is that rural communities and localities must be understood as political arenas that vary in their structure, hierarchy, cohesion, and capacity for collective action (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999)."[89]

Second, the coalition-building that Lijphart discusses is often centered on *external* threats. In contrast, the "literature on conflict in Africa has established," Spears notes, "that most threats to postindependence African states have come from within."[90] While the potential value of local power-sharing institutions in creating conditions for peace or conflict is largely recognized in passing in the literature, Spears observes that "[a]t the subnational level, a more piecemeal collection of territorially limited agreements involving local actors should also be struck" wherein "power is decentralised down to a series of satellite agreements."[91]

Power-sharing institutions may take different forms in conjunction with local elections. My research revealed all of the following forms of power-sharing in the Nigerian local context:

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[87] Ibid., 592
[88] Catherine Boone, "Decentralization as Political Strategy in West Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003), 364. Boone (376) goes on to note, "Thinking seriously about institutional choice in the rural areas as political strategy helps to correct for the state-centric bias in most of the literature. It also suggests new ways of theorizing the social origins of the modern African state."
[89] Ibid., 375.
[90] Spears, "The Limits of Power-Sharing," 125.
[91] Ibid., 115.

- Zoning of districts: Leadership of a local government council rotates among its districts/wards, which are generally formed around an ethno-tribal majority. Political parties abide by an understanding or informal agreement to only run candidates from the district whose turn it is to lead the local government council. This arrangement thereby ensures rotation of local government leadership among the ethno-tribal blocs in the LGA.

- Rotation of the Chairmanship by ethno-tribal identity: Leadership of the local government council rotates according to ethno-tribal identity such that the Chairman of a local government council does not come from the same ethnic group twice in a row. In this scenario, contesting political parties will, based on the informal institution, only put forward a candidate from the ethno-tribal bloc whose turn it is to lead the council.

- Rotation of council leadership by ethno-tribal identity: Leadership within the top tier of the local government council rotates such that the top two or three positions – the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary – are not all filled by the same ethno-tribal bloc. Instead, the seats are of mixed ethno-tribal representation reflecting the major ethno-tribal groups in the LGA. Based on the informal institution, political parties agree to run candidates of mixed ethno-tribal affiliation. For example, a candidate for Chairman of the local government will only run on a campaign ticket with a candidate for Deputy Chairman who belongs to one of the other major ethno-tribal blocs. In some cases, and depending on the ethno-tribal composition of the local government, the Chairman might always be represented by a single ethno-tribal group (i.e. because they are the strong

majority), the Deputy by another specified group, and so forth. In other cases

where the population is more mixed, these three positions may rotate between the

local ethno-tribal groups.

What should perhaps be considered a fourth form of power-sharing is the creation of new

districts within an LGA, which are used to provide autonomy and representation to

groups that otherwise do not form a significant enough ethno-tribal bloc in the LGA to

achieve local representation in the leadership of the local government council.

In essence, these forms of power-sharing exist side-by-side with the electoral

system, compensating for claims of marginalization that might emerge – despite

democratic processes – and accommodating the democratic ideal. How these institutions

come about and the conditions under which they are sustainable and effective are not

currently studied. Thus, I theorize that representation in local power-sharing institutions –

in local government electoral and appointed positions – is a key determinant of patterns

of sub-national communal contestation and the likelihood of violence.

Formal vs. Informal

Finally, I focus on power-sharing as an *informal* strategy of group negotiation and

cooperation, which does not fit the standard definition or analysis of power-sharing as a

formal institution. I adopt Helmke and Levitsky's definition of informal institutions as

"*socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced*

outside of officially sanctioned channels."[92] While studies of informal institutions in

relationship to the negotiation of group relationships and conflict are not abundant,

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[92] Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research
Agenda," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 4 (2004), 727.

scholarship highlights their significance (both in democracies and non-democracies) in structuring socio-political life in conjunction with formal institutions.[93] As Azari and Smith note, "Changes or gaps in formal institutions, or tensions between them, can stimulate political actors to create or revise informal institutions—in order to stabilize expectations, neutralize incipient conflicts, or settle points not resolved by the written rules. In the opposite direction, violations of or dissatisfaction with informal rules can motivate actors to redress the perceived problem by altering or creating formal institutions."[94]

Regarding power-sharing, traditional studies of power-sharing focus on formal agreements that define the allocation of legislative seats, committee or commission seats, and electoral seats among ethnic groups. Instead, I theorize that power-sharing need not be a formal institutional mechanism in order to succeed. Rather, power-sharing can complement formal institutional arrangements, strengthening their intended democratic purpose. As Helmke and Levitsky note, informal institutions can either be complementary or competing with formal institutions, as well as accommodating and substitutive. Informal power-sharing institutions in this study fall into the category of "accommodating," as they "create incentives to behave in ways that alter the substantive effects of formal rules, but without directly violating them; they contradict the spirit, but

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[93] See Julia R. Azari and Jennifer K. Smith, "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (March 2012): 43; Henry E. Hale, "Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *World Politics* 63, no. 4 (October 2011): 581-617; Kellee S. Tsai, "Adaptive Informal Institutions and Endogenous Institutional Change in China," *World Politics* 59, no. 1 (October 2006): 116-141; Lily L. Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Provisions in Rural China," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (May 2007): 355-372; Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 137-152.
[94] Ibid., Azari and Smith, "Unwritten Rules," 43.

not the letter, of the formal rules," helping to "reconcile these actors' interests with the existing formal institutional arrangements."[95] In a context in which LGA electoral rules could exclude the representation of significant ethnic blocs, power-sharing may mitigate cleavages by providing a route for smaller ethno-tribal groups to achieve representation while at the same time, as will be discussed below, offering political incentives for larger ethno-tribal groups to comply.

This emphasis on the importance of informal and local level institutions is not merely abstract theorizing. In post-colonial African states struggling to establish a stable form of democracy, informal relationships and institutions continue to play a role in structuring life in local communities and the relationship between local and national politics. As Boone summarizes,

> Meanwhile, political society at the local level is structured by informal institutions that define community hierarchy, cohesion, and control over access to local resources and to the state. In much of rural Africa, access to some key economic resources, adjudication of ordinary civil disputes, and brokering relations with national-level politicians and state agents remains in the hands of local notables. As Mamdani insisted, "big men" of one sort or another still wield prerogative and power over the lives of most ordinary people. Dynamic factors in the equation are precisely how economic changes and the rollback of some state functions affect established forms of local power and privilege and whether established authority is thereby reinforced, or subject to new challenge. It is clear that the cast of characters constituting the local-level elite has broadened since the 1970s and that education, position in the state itself, and pure financial prowess are more common (and even more legitimate) sources of local clout and influence than they were in the earlier period. However, given some probing, it nearly always becomes apparent that new local elites usually navigate within contexts structured by older patterns of communal hierarchy and authority (or the absence thereof).[96]

In the case of local government power-sharing arrangements in Plateau state and Kaduna state in northern Nigeria, methods of zoning and rotating power among ethno-

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[95] Helmke and Levitsky, "Informal Institutions," 729.
[96] Boone, "Decentralization as Political Strategy," 369-370

tribal groups may not be democratic in the strict or official electoral sense, but the informal institutions essentially attach a condition to electoral arrangements to ensure more representative local government. This form of power-sharing is, as Azari and Smith describe, a "Parallel" informal arrangement in which informal institutions operate parallel to formal institutions, exerting joint but separable effects on behavior in a given domain. When written and unwritten rules work in parallel, this does not mean actors choose between them; instead, behavior is governed simultaneously by formal and informal precepts."[97] But the informal power-sharing also plays a "Coordinating" role, "creating stable expectations where there would otherwise be conflict or uncertainty" and functioning as the "unwritten rules by which political actors resolve, or at any rate contain, inter-institutional tensions and conflicts."[98] Similarly, in her study of endogenous institutional change in China, Tsai refers to the informal institutions adopted alongside the formal ones as "adaptive" institutions because they "represent creative responses to formal institutional environments that actors find too constraining," and, "with repetition and diffusion, these informal coping strategies may take on an institutional reality of their own."[99] Not only may they fit a strategic logic, but they may also comply with a communal normative logic – not by cancelling out the formal institutional arrangement, but by re-constructing its outcomes to comply with a normatively as well as strategically acceptable goal.

Informal institutions, I find in my case studies, can also be self-reproducing or re-enforcing, by spawning new informal arrangements that further buffer the institution.

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[97] Azari and Smith, "Unwritten Rules," 42.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Tsai, "Adaptive Informal Institutions," 117-118.

One of the key peace-preserving mechanisms in power-sharing LGAs in northern Nigeria is that it provides a foundation for inter-religious and inter-tribal collaboration. In Chikun and Bassa LGAs, for example, the political power-sharing arrangements help to dispel tensions among Muslim and Christian leaders and among the traditional rulers or elite, rendering them better prepared to jointly act to quell any inter-religious tensions threatening to spill over from neighboring areas. In Chikun LGA, Muslim and Christian traditional leaders instituted an early warning system in which they jointly mobilize to quell any trouble among their youth who are tempted to react to the inter-religious conflict elsewhere. In Bassa LGA, integrated Muslim-Christian youth vigilante groups patrol communities at night to ensure peace; by patrolling together in each other's neighborhoods they help to dispel claims that one side is against the other, and they protect against accusations of religious partisanship in the case of any incidents. In contrast, these offshoot informal peace-keeping institutions could hardly be imagined in LGAs such as Jos, which lacks a power-sharing institution and is far more prone to inter-religious conflict.

The goal of power-sharing is to foster ethnic harmony, as "democracy" is not always synonymous with "representative." In this sense, while "power-sharing arrangements are seldom fully inclusive because the dominant political elite typically leaves the leaders of small groups – who lack bargaining leverage – out of the decisionmaking process," the main objective, rather, "is to include all groups that can threaten political stability if kept outside the arrangements."[100] Informal power-sharing can be accommodating to the democratic ideal, helping to create stability in communities

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[100] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State Building," 31; Gates and Strom 2007.

characterized by a mix of ethno-tribal and -religious groups. Although such institutions "violate the spirit of the formal rules, they may generate outcomes (democratic stability) that are viewed as broadly beneficial."[101] This potential for promoting peace and stability in pluralistic communities goes overlooked when only studying formal, national-level power-sharing arrangements.

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To recap, the discussion thus far presents a reformulation of the power-sharing theory. In doing so, I argue, first, that scholars have yet to assess the effectiveness of power-sharing institutions in warding off local-level communal violence. Second, there is reason to believe they may be more effective in negotiating communal differences and reinforcing cooperative behavior among groups at this level. Third, this project challenges the notion that formal institutions are the only kind of power-sharing. Informal power-sharing can shore up democratic representation where formal institutions would otherwise fall short. The discussion thus far, however, does not address specific critiques that scholars level at power-sharing institutions. How is it that, as I argue, local and informal power-sharing institutions are less prone to problems of coordination, trust, and collaboration among disparate ethnic leaders and groups? I address these critiques in the following section, making the case that informal and local patterns of power-sharing may avoid the crippling critiques leveled against the effectiveness of power-sharing institutions.

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[101] Helmke and Levitsky, "Informal Institutions," 730.

ADDRESSING MAJOR POWER-SHARING CRITIQUES

While I make the case that the level of analysis and emphasis on formal power-sharing

institutions may be misplaced, once power-sharing institutions are established in LGAs

what is to keep populist leaders from reneging on their agreement or using their positions

to further exploit ethnic cleavages to their own group's advantage? As Sisk observes, the

issue of political engineering in divided societies goes to the question of "how can the

incentive system be structured to reward and reinforce political leaders who moderate on

divisive ethnic themes and to persuade citizens to support moderation, bargaining, and

reciprocity among ethnic groups?"[102] In this case, what is the incentive structure of local

and informal power-sharing that renders it less prone to the shortcomings of formal and

national-level power-sharing institutions? I contend that the primary critiques of power-

sharing are less likely to hold (or simply do not apply) at the local government or

communal level.

Power Sharing *Accentuates* Ethnic Divides?

On of the main criticisms of power-sharing, especially in the case of electoral

institutions, is that it rigidifies or accentuates ethnic cleavages rather than minimizes

them. Thus, political contestation will by design take an us-versus-them form and

heighten the rhetoric to a potentially volatile level, since politicians have less "electoral

incentive for cross-group cooperation."[103] This argument emerges in debates over the

effectiveness of proportional as opposed to majoritarian electoral institutions in

promoting peace in an unstable or post-civil war society. Proportional representation,

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[102]Sisk, "Power-Sharing and International Mediation," 33.
[103] Norris, *Driving Democracy*. As Norris (2008, 28) notes, this is Horowitz's primary critique of the proportional representation system.

according to Lijphart, ensures that legislative representatives are drawn from significant ethnic communities, promoting stability by giving them all a stake in the political pie. Yet, although Norris finds at least some evidence for a relationship between levels of democracy and the representation of ethnic minorities through electoral strategies, she notes that it is not clear that inclusion of more ethnic identities in Parliament leads to stronger satisfaction with democracy.[104]

The failure of such electoral representation strategies to create long-term peace, I contend, may be due to the level at which these arrangements are instituted. How connected are the national representatives to the various and dispersed ethnic groups that they apparently represent? Is there good reason to presume that the day-to-day issues of poverty, economic inequality, and local access to rights and representation are adequately addressed by having a member of one's ethnic group in the national parliament? Furthermore, in countries such as Nigeria with high levels of ethnic diversity, the ethnic cleavages vary not just from state to state but from community to community. Thus, there appears to be little reason or evidence to hypothesize that national level electoral power-sharing would address the local inequalities or disputes fueling communal conflict. Instead, I hypothesize that electoral strategies of inclusion at the local level are more likely to have an observable impact and ameliorate the grievances where inequalities play out in people's every-day lives.

Also, in contrast to Jarstad's assertion that "in divided societies power sharing freezes the ethnic conflict lines, and the parties do not need to compete for votes among their former foes," the argument assumes that ethnic parties only form on an ethnic basis

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[104] Ibid., 130; See also Rothchild and Roeder 2005; Jarstad 2006; Gates and Strom 2007.

and that power-sharing institutions cannot help to avoid this outcome.[105] In contrast, power-sharing in some Nigerian local governments is based on shared representation of the main seats of local government authority such that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman who run on the *same* ticket cannot be from the same ethno-tribal group. Hence, parties and candidates in this scenario cannot merely form around one ethno-tribal identity if they want to have a chance of winning an election.

Another problem with this debate about electoral engineering and whether power-sharing accentuates identity divides is that the debate assumes a static and ahistorical understanding of identity and power-sharing. Ethnic categories are not engineered and imposed by foreign outsiders or advisors *upon* construction of power-sharing institutions. Instead, as the discussion of Nigeria will highlight, there can be "organically grown" forms of power-sharing attuned to the political construction of local identities over time. This argument takes into account current constructions of identity and power that, based on their colonial or historical antecedents and recent political shifts, render certain cleavages more relevant as a basis for power-sharing and representation. Power-sharing, it is important to remember, is a response to ethnic cleavages that are *already* politicized. This is not to argue that identities are fixed; they are still malleable, but it would make little sense to expect local communities to adopt power-sharing institutions that do not accord with their current political reality. While power-sharing may be subject to pressures and reconsideration as the politics of identity changes over time, the question of how institutions respond to these changes is an important research question in its own right. As my analysis of power-sharing case studies in Nigerian LGAs highlight, power-

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[105] Jarstad, "Consociationalism and Power-Sharing," 23.

sharing on the basis of ethnic cleavages can provide a framework for inter-religious and ethno-tribal peace rather than conflict.

Power-Sharing is Anti-Democratic?

Another broad critique of the power-sharing model is that it is not truly democratic or that it suffers from transaction costs or agency costs, such as the moral hazards problem.[106] Yet, this argument assumes that politicians, democratically elected absent power-sharing institutions, will not also use their positions to exploit resources to the advantage of their own ethno-tribal community, friends, and family members. Democratic elections do not *necessarily* inspire democratic politics and discourage misuse of resources once a politician is elected into office. While power-sharing is not a solution to corruption in office, a power-sharing model that rotates ethno-tribal representation in the executive seats of local government leadership can help to avoid the tendency toward exploitative control by the majority ethnic group and potentially encourage greater accountability. Furthermore, it is not clear from Gates and Strom's discussion why transaction costs or agency costs are *particularly* associated with power-sharing institutions and not democracy in general.[107]

In the case of local government power-sharing in Nigeria, the population is not bound to vote for a particular representative, even if it is "the turn" of one particular ethno-tribal group to hold the Chairmanship position. Parties can run various candidates or Chairman-Deputy combinations even if from the same set of tribal identities. In this

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[106] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State Building," 36-7; Gates and Strom, 6-9. See Jarstad (2006, 18-19) and (Lemarchand 2006) for discussion of critiques of power-sharing that incorporate (i.e. reward) leaders of rebel or an armed insurgency group.
[107] Lemarchand, "Consociationalism and Power-Sharing,"

sense, the candidate who wins the election is not necessarily pre-determined by the power-sharing arrangement. Voter choice is still involved.

Power-Sharing Raises the Stakes too High?

Power-sharing institutions, scholars also argue, can lead to a game of brinkmanship between leaders of ethnic groups who can use a mutual veto or threaten defection if their demands are not met.[108] However, this argument does not take into account various incentives for groups to abide by power-sharing agreements or the self-enforcing mechanisms that may seemingly cement the informal institution in place. In some cases of local government power-sharing in northern Nigeria, leaders have an incentive to abide by informal power-sharing agreements that rotate local government leadership, since their group may not otherwise have the political clout to ensure significant representation. There can also be historical incentives for leaders to form power-sharing institutions to avoid being dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, their former colonial proxy rulers.

Broadly speaking, I find that power-sharing discourages divisive inter-religious and inter-tribal politics. There is less cause for conflict since each ethno-tribal community knows that their group will get a chance to lead or hold important positions in the local government, and re-election or appointments may be more likely if leaders perform well for the broader community. Patterns of coordination and trust also develop from this institutional arrangement, I find, as political, religious, and tribal leaders are more likely to coordinate and interact with one another. Furthermore, I contend, that the gains from power-sharing are more observable and leaders more easily monitored (in terms of

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[108] e.g., Rothchild and Roeder 2005, 37; Jarstad 2006; Gates and Strom 2007.

results) at the local government level. Thus, while there may be challenges to sustaining

power-sharing institutions, one must recognize that there are nonetheless incentives for

leaders *not* to play a game of brinkmanship. As Horowitz notes, "politicians who benefit

from electoral incentives to moderation have continuing reason to try to reap those

rewards, whatever their beliefs and whatever their inclination to toleration and

statesmanship. Politicians who are merely exhorted to behave moderately may be left

with mere exhortations."[109]

Power-Sharing Creates Sub-optimal Outcomes?

A fourth critique is that the principle of proportionality in power-sharing

institutions can lead to a sub-optimal outcome in candidates selection, as well as constant

competition and renegotiation over the national pie that accentuates ethnic cleavages.

Rothchild and Roeder give the example of Nigerians in the Niger-Delta oil-producing

regime being irked that their resources are redistributed to the less wealthy regions of the

country.[110]

First, there is no guarantee that the *lack* of power-sharing institutions ensures

optimal selection of representatives. Second, while negotiation and renegotiation of

allocation of resources may be part of the politics of power-sharing, it is not clear why

this is presumed to be a challenge limited to power-sharing scenarios. In any democratic

electoral arrangement, there will be contestation over rights and resources. The goal of

the power-sharing arrangement, on the other hand, is to put an institution in place to help

defuse claims of marginalization or discrimination. Finally, local government power-

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[109] Horowitz, "Constitutional Design," 25.
[110] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State-Building," 36.

sharing may be an effective means of preventing communal violence by providing a basis for inter-ethnic negotiation and distribution of resources. As Horowitz notes, "If the units are heterogeneous, they may provide an experience in political socialization for politicians of different groups who become habituated to dealing with each other at the lower levels before they need to do so at the centre."[111] At the local government level, community members can also more directly observe any positive outcomes associated with the inter-ethnic power-sharing. While the institutional arrangement may by nature emphasize or highlight ethnic differences, it can also *lessen* the perception that ethno-tribal communities are being discriminated against on the basis of their tribal identity.

A Second-Generation Problem?

A fifth critique is the "second-generation problem," whereby the incentives that held at one point in time may not hold in the future under new leaders and the original incentives or compromises may be more difficult to sustain or appear less desirable. The main critique here seems to be that "[u]nder pressure from their constituents to pursue the community's narrow self-interest, the political leaders of the majority community in particular will find it harder to compromise in order to realize the common interest of all ethnic groups and to uphold a long-term commitment…"[112] The problem with this argument is that it does not explain why or the conditions under which the original power-sharing incentives are likely to subside over time and self-enforcing mechanisms fail. In other words, the second-generation problem is not an inherent symptom of power-sharing political systems; it is an empirical question that requires exploration of the

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[111] Horowitz, "Constitutional Design," 25.
[112] Rothchild and Roeder, "Dilemmas of State Building," 38.

endogenous or exogenous factors that may re-enforce or undermine the conditions necessary for sustainable power-sharing. Again, it may be that national politics is more prone to the second-generation problems. My research suggests that local government power-sharing arrangements are "sticky." The fact that *informal* power-sharing in local governments in Nigeria could be sustainable in the face of strongly politicized ethno-tribal and -religious cleavages calls into question the validity of this critique, or at least calls for further research into the condition under which the second-generation problem may emerge.

Prone to Inefficiency, Rigidity, and Enforcement Problems?

Finally, I find that the following critiques do not apply in my analysis of informal local government power-sharing arrangements in Nigeria: 1) that power-sharing institutions create greater government inefficiency with more government bureaucracy and agencies, 2) that it also creates government rigidity by not being amenable to changes in social conditions following conflict, and 3) that there is inadequate enforcement mechanisms when leaders want to defect from an agreement.[113]

First, power-sharing arrangements do not necessarily imply more bureaucracy; mechanisms of greater representation can be instituted within or supplementary to *existing* institutions or democratic arrangements. The stipulation in Nigerian power-sharing LGAs that candidates from different ethno-tribal groups run for office together does not create a new bureaucracy, rather it redefines the premise of the electoral competition and renders it more normatively acceptable to pluralistic LGAs. Second, in contrast to formal arrangements, informal power-sharing may perhaps be easier to adjust

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[113] Ibid., 39-41; Jarstad 2006, 29; Jarstad 2009, 42-43.

to changes in demographic or social dynamics since it is not constitutionally entrenched, but, rather, is based on bottom-up or grassroots negotiation among the concerned parties who have an interest in stability to some degree.[114] Third, lack of formal enforcement mechanisms, as my research highlights, simply does not imply the doom of power-sharing arrangements in local government. This general assertion overlooks the incentives and re-enforcing mechanisms that can build up over time once power-sharing institutions are formed or that may help, at a socio-cultural level, to reinforce agreements. Defecting from a power-sharing institution is not cost-free.

Relationship to Inter-religious Violence?

While the discussion thus far presents problems with the current studies of power-sharing and calls for a reformulation, it leaves open the question: what do inter-*tribal* power-sharing arrangements established in the 1970s and 1980s have to do with the emergence and frequency of inter-*religious* violence since the end of the 1980s? I suggest that communities with power-sharing institutions in place to represent the diverse ethno-tribal groups in their LGAs are less prone to *inter-religious* violence. Communities with power-sharing arrangements shift disputes away from identity-based cleavages, as power-sharing institutions by nature help to negate claims that one group is not being fairly represented. Additionally, by representing groups in Nigerian LGAs on the basis of tribal identity, religious cleavages, I find, have been minimized and do not play into the dominant narrative of inter-religious conflict playing out in the country. It is more difficult to legitimately claim that one ethno-religious group is dominating local

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[114] See Jarstad (2006: 17) where she notes that as power-sharing attempts to mitigate conflict over the balance of power between conflicting groups, changes in demographics can give groups incentives to demand a new arrangement and thereby jeopardize the power-sharing arrangement.

political office to the detriment of another ethno-religious group, since the power-sharing arrangement does not discriminate on the basis of tribal and, thereby, religious identity.

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In sum, it is by no means clear that the weaknesses identified with national power-sharing institutions are generalizable to informal power-sharing in local government politics in federal systems, particularly in a context of communal violence rather than civil war. My findings suggest that power-sharing in pluralistic communities can help to prevent the emergence of inter-religious and inter-tribal communal violence. As Horowitz contends in his critique of Lijphart's logic of consociationalism, incentives and not elite statesmanship explain the success or failure of power-sharing.[115] I find this to be true, offering support in subsequent chapters that power-sharing institutions at the local level are more likely to offer the benefits touted by its proponents.

In contrast to Horowitz, however, I argue that more goes into the incentives structure than simple majority and minority electoral calculation, although this is also an important dynamic. In a context where one group forms the majority, Horowitz contends, there is no incentive for them to concede domination they would otherwise gain from majoritarian politics.[116] As highlighted in my subsequent analysis, this logic does not entirely hold up. The local governments I discuss in which power-sharing did or did not emerge are characterized by varying balances of ethno-tribal groups. In Jos North LGA, a site of recurring inter-religious violence where power-sharing failed to emerge, for example, the two main groups battling for control of political power each make up

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[115] Horowitz, "Constitutional Design."
[116] Ibid., 20.

around 50 percent of the population. In Kanam local government, on the other hand, the two main ethno-tribal groups successfully instituted a power-sharing arrangement. In short, Horowitz's argument overlooks the historical context of group relations that also affects incentives for power-sharing. For this same reason, while Horowitz notes that "multipolar fluidity makes inter-ethnic accommodation easier, since, by definition, it lacks a majority," I find that there *are* LGAs that adopted some degree of power-sharing even though they have less "multipolar fluidity."[117]

THEORIZING THE ORIGIN OF POWER-SHARING INSTITUTIONS

Having previously argued that power-sharing institutions are not a product of civic networks or integration, this raises the question: Where then do power-sharing institutions come from? If power-sharing institutions are key to explaining patterns of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria, as I will argue, what explains the "black box" of why power-sharing institutions were adopted in some communities and not others?

Figure 2.1 Relationship between Power-sharing and Violence

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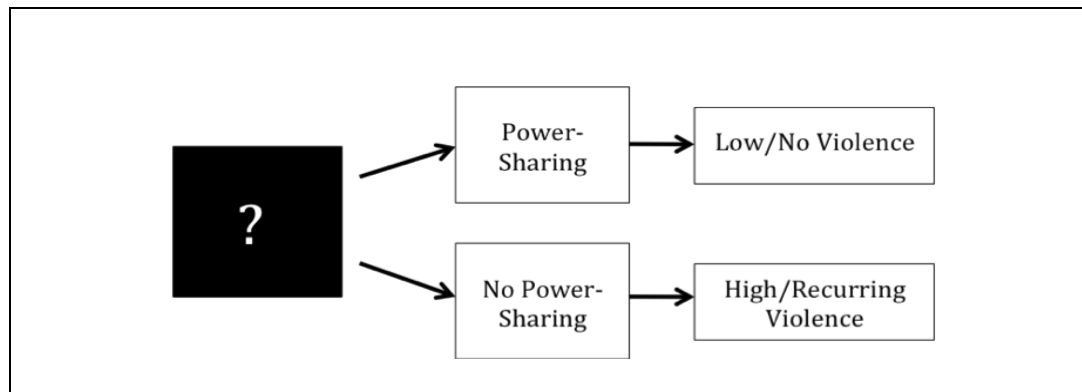
[117] Ibid., 24.

As Helmke and Levitsky emphasize, "because the comparative politics literature has focused primarily on formal institutions, it risks missing many of the 'real' incentives and constraints that underlie political behavior."[118] The origin of informal institutions often goes overlooked, failing to identify the empirically and substantially important question of "why and how such institutions emerge" or the "mechanisms by which they were created."[119]

While I aim to identify some of the strategic reasons that elites did or did not create power-sharing arrangements in the communities that are the subject of my case studies, as well as the conditions under which power-sharing is sustainable, I do not claim to provide an exhaustive study of the motivations for power-sharing in *every* context. That is, the context matters, and the context must include the history of colonial relationships in the area in question and subsequent political, social-economic, religious, and demographic changes or conditions. In this sense, I present neither a simple demographic argument nor a simple historical determinist account. I do, however, contend that attention to the interaction of these various factors will shed light on the incentives for power-sharing and the mechanisms by which it is either self-reinforcing or self-undermining.

In general, I trace the construction of power-sharing institutions in northern Nigeria to ethno-tribal leaders' strategic efforts to ensure political representation for their tribal group at this transition point in Nigerian local governance. With the 1976 reforms, the power of tradition leaders or chiefs was circumscribed in the north, greater authority

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[118] Helmke and Levitsky, "Informal Institutions," 734.
[119] Ibid., 730.

for development allocated to local government, and an opportunity created for the ethno-tribal groups to seek greater representation and access to the resources associated with local government leadership. As noted previously, the reforms represented a major shift in local government policy and structure, and some communities in the Middle Belt or north-central region were quick to act to create power-sharing arrangements that would protect their group's rights where they had previously been marginalized. I contend, therefore, that the power-sharing arrangements were a product of strategic action by tribal elite to assert the right of self-governance in response to limitations imposed on group representation during colonial rule and subsequent changes prior to the 1970s. As Ukiwo notes regarding the colonial pattern of rule imposed on some communities in northern Nigeria,

> …the superimposition of the paramount ruler of one group as permanent native authority even when there was no pre-colonial history of dependent relations, encouraged local separatism. Most of the groups joined in such non-consensual matrimony agitated for separation and independence. The agitation was born out of fears of cultural assimilation and political domination. If the objective of native administration was to administer the native through his own culture, the agitators for separate native administrations wondered why the colonial officers whose 'Intelligence Reports' had sometimes documented stark cultural and physical differences between them and the other group decided to put them under the leadership of a separate customary authority.[120]

For each LGA, however, the *particular* factors that went into that assessment of strategic incentives varied. Developments – such as shifts in the balance of religion with the expansion of Christianity, advancements in education among non-Muslim ethno-tribal groups, patterns of migration, and expectations about future demographic changes in

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[120] Ukoha Ukiwo, "Creation of Local Government Areas and Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria: The Case of Warri, Delta State," *CRISE: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity*, 2006, www.crise.ox.ac.uk/copy/decentralization%20conference/ukiwo.pdf (accessed 2012 Nov 2), 4.

more urban areas, to name a few – and their impact on the strategic negotiation or non-adoption of power-sharing took different form depending on the community in question. The relative impact of post-colonial social, religious, and political changes on particular communities is most important for understanding elites' perceptions of power-sharing as a feasible or strategic move. More specifically, my hypotheses are as follows:

> H1a: Power-sharing was less likely to be perceived by local ethno-tribal groups as an affront or major concession of political representation to a group identified with former colonial masters where A) post-colonial changes and political events did not exacerbate local ethno-tribal cleavages, *and* B) where there was greater cultural assimilation and political integration during colonial-era Hausa-Fulani Muslim rule or where the Hausa-Fulani made up a relatively small proportion of the local population.

The opposite should then hold true as well, such that power-sharing was less likely in areas where pluralistic ethno-tribal communities were less culturally assimilated and politically integrated under colonial Hausa-Fulani Muslim proxy rule *and* where subsequent socio-political and religious changes exacerbated these cleavages, as power-sharing would be perceived as a major concession to former colonial rulers. Accordingly,

> H1b: Power-sharing was less likely to emerge where A) independence-era politics and religious changes reinforced ethno-tribal cleavages in the less assimilated and integrated communities where Muslim Hausa-Fulani rulers/people had settled in greater number and B) where partnership among ethno-tribal groups would not necessarily guarantee greater self-rule for the local population with the new democratization of local politics.

In H1b I expect the incentives for power-sharing to be less prominent for two reasons: First, where post-colonial politics and changes exacerbated colonial-era cleavages and where local ethno-tribal group(s) could not form a significant enough bloc to guarantee self-representation even with power-sharing, such an arrangement appears less likely. In communities in Kaduna state, for example, there were indigenous Christian populations (previously adherents of African Traditional Religion) that resisted colonial imposition of Hausa-Fulani rule, but they nonetheless were subjugated to Muslim Hausa-Fulani emirs in a Muslim majority state. Where post-colonial politics and events did nothing to ameliorate these prior cleavages, the incentives for elites to negotiate an informal power-sharing arrangement would be hard to come by. Implicitly, power-sharing with the Hausa-Fulani in this context would defeat the purpose: to rewrite or democratize the pattern of rule and representation.

In the Middle Belt states or fringe areas of the north, as previously noted, it was more difficult for the Hausa-Fulani to impose their British sanctioned rule and, in some cases, the emirs allowed limited political and religious autonomy, or the British were forced to intervene to quell resistance to Hausa-Fulani authority (resistance that had been present even prior to the British conquest of northern Nigeria). Consequently, ethno-tribal cleavages were different in nature in these areas where Hausa-Fulani Islamic culture/religion and attendant forms of political rule were not broadly accepted (or enforced). Following colonial rule, significant political and religious changes occurred. In many cases, the non-Muslim or animist ethno-tribal groups largely converted to Christianity after independence when the barriers to evangelization fell and with the rapid growth of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity from the 1970s onward. While there were

other important socio-political and religious changes that occurred that shaped communal politics in the north, as I discuss in subsequent chapters, the significance of the decentralization reforms of 1976 (and later) is that they chipped away at the persistent dominance of Hausa-Fulani traditional political rule, creating a new opportunity for self-representation. In those areas where education through Christian missionaries expanded among the non-Muslim population, for example, new educated local tribal leaders could now mobilize politically to pursue self-rule.

In terms of political incentives for power-sharing, these vary from one LGA to another depending on how inter-group relationships evolved with post-colonial changes. For some communities, aligning with their local counterpoints (even Hausa-Fulani) through power-sharing served as a better means of achieving self-representation. Also, the smaller parties to power-sharing agreements in some communities found incentive to commit to power-sharing since they might not otherwise have had much of a chance to gain seats in local government leadership. For leaders in LGAs where demographics of the population were likely to shift over time (such as LGAs with a large urban area), thinking long-term, they had incentive to entrench institutional representation through power-sharing.

The argument can be represented as follows:

Figure 2.2. Likelihood of power-sharing in pluralistic Middle Belt communities

	High Post-Colonial Integration	Low Post-Colonial Integration
High Colonial-Era Integration/Assimilation	(A) Higher likelihood of Power-Sharing	(B) (indeterminate)
Low Colonial-Era Integration/Assimilation	(C) (less contentious)	(D) Lower likelihood of Power-Sharing

As the Figure above illustrates, communities with a significant population of Hausa-Fulani (pluralistic) that were less assimilated and integrated I expect to be less likely to have adopted a power-sharing institution with local government reforms if post-colonial changes did not alter the perceived ethno-tribal cleavages and inequality (Cell D).

In contrast, communities where the Hausa-Fulani Muslims were more assimilated and integrated with the local ethno-tribal populations and this relationship was maintained in the post-colonial period, the issue of power-sharing would be less contentious in the first place since the relationship between the ethno-tribal groups would be more seamless (Cell A). In some pluralistic LGAs of this type where the Hausa-Fulani have a low presence in the LGA, however, they may not rotate into the top positions of the local government, as these posts are more likely to be divvied up between the major ethno-tribal groups.

In a different scenario, where there was greater resistance to Hausa-Fulani Muslim rule in the Middle Belt during the colonial-era (low degree of assimilation/integration), but socio-political events and religious changes – such as migration patterns or demographic changes and the spread of Islam in a still largely non-Muslim area – promoted greater political integration even if not full cultural assimilation, I expect power-sharing to be a less contentious alternative among local elite (Cell C). In this scenario, power-sharing is not necessarily ruled out based on the colonial-era legacy, as subsequent changes may have altered the inter-group relationships and incentive structure for power-sharing.

In contrast, in an LGA where communities were largely assimilated and integrated during the colonial era, but experienced greater differentiation due to events and changes in the post-colonial era, power-sharing may be more difficult to either negotiate or to maintain if already in place (Cell B). This cell better represents those cases that, in contemporary Nigerian politics, face new pressures on inter-religious cohesion due to the prominent acrid Muslim-Christian political relationship of more recent years and the violence between Muslims and Christians in surrounding LGAs. Some pluralistic Niger state LGAs, for example, may fit this bill. Formerly part of Sokoto state, the site of the Islamic Caliphate, Muslim elite and emirs dominated the political sphere without the resistance prominent in other non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt. With the stronger political foothold in Niger state, cultural assimilation (adoption of Islam and the culture) was also stronger than other parts of the northern fringe. Inter-marriage for example, is a normal part of communal life even though Christianity grew strongly in the post-colonial period. In the last 5-10 years, however, pressure for self-representation among the

Christian population appears to be growing, and the state government has sought to keep inter-religious violence at bay in the face of a handful of small incidents. One of the reasons cited by interviewees for this shift is the increasing education among the Christian population, which is bringing "enlightenment" or political self-awareness and causing them to be more involved in contesting for political positions and influence. In the current relio-political environment in northern Nigeria and with an unsettling of the local political status-quo, this scenario may create challenges for the formation of power-sharing arrangements. The history and long-standing cultural assimilation may, however, offer incentives for a power-sharing solution to potential tensions.

In sum, I expect power-sharing to be a more contentious issue and less likely in local government areas where assimilation and integration is low (exacerbated by events and changes over time) and where the population of Hausa-Fulani is fairly significant. Power-sharing, in those contexts, possesses greater representational costs to the local ethno-tribal groups seeking a "new era" of post-colonial self-autonomy and representation. This is not to say that power-sharing arrangements do not exist in other communities, such as more religiously homogeneous communities with a mix of ethno-tribal groups. They do, but they are less likely, of course, in communities where one major ethno-tribal group predominates and they are religiously homogenous. Again, some sort of zoning rotational system may be in place, but not as a power-sharing arrangement between disparate ethno-tribal groups. Power sharing in these contexts is targeted more at the geographical representation of the local government. However, my focus is on pluralistic communities where one finds both an ethno-religious and ethno-

tribal mix and where one would expect the tension between Muslims-Christians should be most volatile.

The Colonial Legacy in Context – A "Clash of Civiliations" is Not Inevitable

To reiterate the argument regarding the colonial legacy, there was no one colonial institutional arrangement that can be pointed to as a sufficient condition for the adoption of power-sharing institutions decades after independence. After all, colonial institutions did not "determine" the advent and rapid spread of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in Nigeria and the attendant politicization of religion. Nor did colonialism determine the policy decision to create a system of local government and further democratize and decentralize political power with the 1970s and later reforms. In other words, there is no clear relationship between one colonial institution and inter-religious or ethno-tribal violence. Rather, the colonial legacy, shaped by different types of political and cultural interactions that varied greatly from one locale to another in northern Nigeria, tells us what kinds of ethno-tribal relationships were likely to matter most in post-independence communal politics. Overall, the particular incentives for power-sharing decades later were largely shaped by the impact of exogenous post-colonial political, social, and religious changes on particular LGAs. A range of phenomena – e.g., the rapid growth of Christianity in the north, the radicalization of Christian and Muslim politics, missionary education of previously politically marginalized populations, the adjustment of state and local government boundaries, land pressures bringing groups into closer proximity/tensions with one another, migration patterns, and constitutional changes affecting indigenous status – were all critical in shaping how prior ethno-tribal relationships evolved in any one LGA and how elites perceived the costs and benefits of

power-sharing in the post-1970s era. These factors varied across states and LGAs and cannot be traced back to colonization. In other words, the historical legacy of assimilation and integration provides a framework for understanding subsequent group relations, but it does not tell us how these relationships were transformed and evolved into a communal politics of ethno-tribal and religious significance or whether the incentives for power-sharing would outweigh the disincentives.

In this sense, a lack of power-sharing was not inevitable in any one of the now violence-prone LGAs. The identification of LGAs with a more fragmented historical relationship with the Hausa-Fulani Muslims does not imply the impossibility of power-sharing in later decades; a legacy of lack of assimilation and integration is not a sufficient condition for inter-religious or ethno-tribal violence and political deadlock. To understand why some LGAs adopted power-sharing while other, similar LGAs did not, one has explore the particular socio-economic, political, and religious changes that occurred after independence, as I do in my comparative case studies in later chapters. Contemporary political events and decisions, including national intervention in local processes, had just as much a role to play in shaping the acceptance of a power-sharing arrangement. Jos is case in point, as the failure of the national government to recognize the significance of these historical and contemporary variables led to ineffective political intervention that resulted in tragic and recurring violence. The deterioration of Jos into a case of recurring inter-religious violence was not, however, inevitable.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, I argue that communities that made the strategic choice at time *t* to adopt

power-sharing arrangements put in place an institutional precedent that, at time *t+1*, would prove better able to withstand the communal tensions and the politicization of religious identity in contemporary Nigerian politics. Although the political arrangement was based on ethno-tribal rather than religious representation (as indigenous groups were in some cases composed of both Muslims and Christians), my research finds that the power-sharing arrangements help to neutralize claims of inequality or exploitation in religiously pluralistic communities as well.

This argument does not presume that the power-sharing arrangements are impervious to, in Grief and Laitin's language, exogenous shocks and endogenous parameter shifts.[121] Indeed, there are pressures threatening the sustainability of these power-sharing institutions in some of the Nigerian LGAs I studied. Greif and Laitin's work contends that institutions may be more or less subject to change in response to endogenous parameter shifts or exogenous events depending on the self-reinforcing or self-undermining mechanisms of the institution itself. Hence, "If an institution reinforces itself, more individuals in more situations would find it best to adhere to behavior associated with it," such that "[w]hen self-reinforcing, exogenous changes in the underlying situation that otherwise would have led an institution to change would fail to have this effect."[122] Depending on the institution and its ability to subsume or adapt to new conditions or pressures, it will be more or less likely to survive. These self-reinforcing or self-undermining factors are important when examining not only the formation of informal power-sharing institutions in Nigeria, but also their sustainability

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[121] Avner Grief and David Laitin, "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 633-652.
[122] Ibid., 634.

over time. As with formal institutions, Helmke and Levitsky note that "informal institutions may also change as the status quo conditions that sustain them change. Development in the external environment may change the distribution of power and resources within a community, weakening those actors who benefit from a particular informal institution and strengthening those who seek to change it."[123] The potential gains for groups to go outside the institutional rules and framework places pressure on power-sharing arrangements, testing whether or not the informal institution is flexible enough or incentivizing enough for groups to compromise and work together for a more significant long-term payoff.

Yet, it is the sustainability of these *informal* power-sharing arrangements that is most surprising in the Nigerian context of politicization of religious identity and the rise in inter-religious violence. As I will attempt to show in the subsequent chapters, some of the self-reinforcing mechanisms include the networks of coordination and collaboration that derive from power-sharing arrangements, the potential costs of deviating from the precedent, and the opportunity for ethno-tribal groups to garner greater representation than they might otherwise achieve in an LGA. The following chapter delves into the example of Nigeria's local government system in more detail. I explore both its emergence and its form to demonstrate the importance of local government as an institution that shapes group representation, contestation, and competition over state or local resources.

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[123] Helmke and Levitsky, "Informal Institutions," 732.

CHAPTER 3

Local Government Reforms & Politics in Nigeria

The process of decentralization through local government administration is not unique to Nigeria or Africa in the post-colonial context. During the 1980s and 1990s, governments pursued decentralization policies to encourage democratization and put greater control of development in the hands of local leaders.[124] Development driven from the bottom up, leaders hoped, would spur overall national development. While Boone notes that the implementation of decentralization policies has been uneven with results mixed,[125] the study of the formation of power-sharing institutions in Nigeria reveals local government's importance as a site of contestation and representation. As I argue in this first section, it is at the level of this third tier of federal government that communal competition and demands for rights and resources play out in the daily lives of Nigerians (with various ethnic identities). In the second and third section, I highlight the significance of the decentralization policies of the 1970s and 1980s – their profound impact on local governance in northern Nigeria in terms of contestation for local

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[124] Catherine Boone, "Decentralization as Political Strategy in West Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003): 355-380; Richard C. Crook and James Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa: Participation, Accountability and Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Dele Olowu and James S. Wunsch, *Local Governance in Africa: The Challenges of Democratic Decentralization* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004); Timothy M. Mead, "Barriers to Local-Government Capacity in Nigeria," *American Review of Public Administration* 26, no. 2 (June 1996), 161; Akpomuvire Mukoro, "The Evolution of a Democratic Local Government System in Nigeria," *Journal of Social Science* 7, no. 3 (2003): 171-179.
[125] Ibid., Boone, 356.

government control and representation. The importance of power-sharing institutions in local government councils becomes clearer with this background in mind.

ESTABLISHMENT & REFORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The evolution in local authority and the emergence of the contemporary structure of local government in Nigeria highlights its importance as a site of contestation. The current contours of Nigeria's local government system are a product of a series of reforms. The British colonial administrators first established a formal system of local government under the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916, which prescribed a Native Administration for governance of Nigeria. This system of Native Authority, also known as Indirect Rule, meant that the British ruled through select local elites – a system designed to save the colonial masters the trouble and cost of directly administering the local populations. In northern Nigeria, it elevated and entrenched the traditional authority of Hausa-Fulani and Muslim chiefs and emirs as powerful political figures with colonial authority to oversea the day-to-day functions of colonial administration. Unfortunately, local figures entrusted with this authority were not always leaders in their community and were often found to be corrupt and exploitive of their own people.[126]

In subsequent reforms, such as the Native Authority Ordinance of 1933, Galadima notes that the "law enhanced the duties of the local authorities, although only for those

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[126] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contempoary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 104-5.

traditional leaders recognized by the colonial administration."[127] The 1950s and 1960s

also saw reforms to local administration with the political changes or reorganization that

came with the establishment of regional governments and, following independence, the

introduction of a state system. The Nigerian state adopted a federal system, Galadima

notes, due to the "aggressive subnationalism, which emerged between 1954 and 1969."[128]

A federal system, however, did little to change the Native Authority system in the north

even though the south was moving the route of a liberal British model of local

administration with an emphasis on popular participation and decision-making by

majority vote.[129] "Indeed, the creation and dissolution of local councils became the

responsibility of the military governors," notes Galadima, but the system was blighted by

corruption and mismanagement to the anger of local communities.[130] Additionally, the

system was still hierarchical with traditional leaders controlling the authority to maintain

peace and order in their communities.[131] Ukiwo notes that during the Gowon regime

(1967-1975), "[i]n the Northern states, the Emirs retained some of their powers and

influence because the councillors appointed by the military governors were traditionally

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[127] Habu Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Vol. VI, in *Global Dialogue on Federalism: Local Government and Metropolitan Regions in Federal Systems*, eds. Nico Steytler and John Kincaid, (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 239.

[128] J. Isawa Elaigwu and Habu Galadima, "The Shadow of Sharia Over Nigerian Federalism," *Publius: Journal of Federalism* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2003), 124; Lohdam Ndam, ed., *The Challenge of Developing Nigeria's Local Government Area*, ed. Lohdam Ndam (Jos: Mgbangzee Ventures Limited, 2001), 15.

[129] Ibid., Ndam. As Ndam (15) notes, the Nigerian local government administration was formalized under the "Local Government Ordinance…enacted by the Colonial Administration in 1950 which was patterned after the English system of Local Government." Mamdani (1996, 104) also notes that while the same reforms were adopted for the whole of Nigeria, the agenda "set a different pace for the north than for the south, so that while the electoral principle was introduced in the entire country, elected representatives were confined to a minority in the north but were allowed a majority in the south."

[130] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 239.

[131] Oyeleye Oyediran and E. Alex Gboyega, "Local Government and Administration," in *Nigerian Government and Politics under Military Rule 1966-79* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 175.

and spiritually expected to defer to the authority of the Emir."[132] Thus, despite the fact

that, as Oyediran and Gboyega observe, "the entire local government system of the

Northern Region rested upon a philosophical belief that the major and perhaps sole

purpose of a local government system was the promotion of socio-economic

development, in addition to the mandatory maintenance of law and order," the system

was characterized by corruption and mis-use of power and the persistence of colonial

forms of local authority.[133]

LANDMARK REFORMS & DECENTRALIZATION

In 1963 in post-colonial Nigeria, the government adopted reforms to initiate elections for

some members of the Native Authority councils. With the divvying up of the northern

region into more states in 1967, Plateau and Benue states in the north-central area were

quick to assert greater popular participation in local government elections.[134] By 1970 a

shift toward greater popular representation began in the north, designed to weaken the

authority of traditional rulers. For example, chiefs could no longer wield veto power over

council decisions, but were subject to majority vote (much to the chagrin of the chiefs),

and district heads had to be indigenous to the districts they represented.[135] It was the 1976

reform and 1979 constitution that largely standardized the local government structure in

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[132] Ukoha Ukiwo, "Creation of Local Government Areas and Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria: The Case of Warri, Delta State," *CRISE: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity*, 2006, www.crise.ox.ac.uk/copy/decentralization%20conference/ukiwo.pdf (accessed 2012 Nov 2), 7-8.
[133] Oyediran and Gboyega, "Local Government and Administration," 175.
[134] Note that during this period the designation "native authority" was dropped, as it was considered pejorative (See Oyeleye 1979).
[135] Ibid., 187.

Nigeria and enshrined local governments as a third tier of the federal government.[136]

Galadima describes the 1976 reforms as a "watershed in the history of the evolution of

the local government system in Nigeria" such that, "[a]lthough the states retained power

to enact laws for local government administration, they were compelled to adhere to

uniform guidelines…set by the federal military government."[137] The national government

instituted financial and administrative functions for the local governments, providing

them some level of autonomy from the state governments, as well as prescribing

democratic elections for local government council seats.[138] Ukiwo describes the series of

changes, noting,

> The reforms were revolutionary in the sense that it was the first time a uniform
> local government was being initiated for the entire country. The reforms were also
> revolutionary in the sense that by one stroke, local governments were equipped
> with political, administrative and fiscal capacities. Local Government became a
> third tier of government with constitutional functions and responsibilities. They
> would be constituted through elections for a fixed term. Revenue was guaranteed
> because federal and state government were statutorily mandated to devote a
> specific percentage of revenue to the local government. Traditional rulers could
> only serve the councils in advisory capacities. Local government service boards or
> commissions were constituted at the state level for the recruitment, promotion and
> discipline of staff. Above all, the 301 local government areas were listed in the
> 1979 Constitution to guarantee their perpetual existence. In creating these local
> government areas, the military government emphasised the need for viability and

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[136] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 245.
[137] Ibid., 240.
[138] As Mamdani (1996, 106) notes, "When the military handed power back to civilians in 1979, local
government was for the first time constitutionally entrenched in the Nigerian political system. It is
important here to say a word about the contemporary structure of local government, which posseses a mix
of elected and appointed officials. The elected leadership is composed of the Chairman of the LGC, the
Deputy Chairman, and a number of councilors commiserate with the number of wards in a LGA. The
Chairman may also appoint a Deputy Secretary and a handful of Special Advisors, as well as a Supervisory
Committee whose members oversee projects or departments of public works, education, social services,
and others. Finally, while not an official electoral or government appointed position, the positions of chiefs
are also very influential in the coordination of and negotiation among the tribal groups when issues arise in
the local community. They may work closely with the local government as district heads to resolve issues
as they arise, especially the Paramount Chief who presides over all the chiefs in any local government area.
The number of chiefs may vary, depending on the number of tribal groups in an area. In some cases,
disputes over whether or not to grant a "chieftancy" right to a tribal group have erupted into violence.

administrative efficiency. The minimum population for an area to qualify for local government was 150,000 while the maximum was 800,000.[139]

Up until this period, local governments did not have autonomy, serving instead as administrative wings subject to the whim of state government officials. Suberu summarizes the effects of the reform, noting,

> Apart from promoting the financial and functional empowerment of the localities, the reforms established a more uniform system of local government throughout the federation, circumscribed the formal political roles of traditional rulers and other unelected bodies in local government affairs and generally sought to institutionalize the localities as the third axis of the federal administrative grid. These reforms of the local government system were presumably designed to lay the foundation for a stable system of participatory democracy, facilitate the achievement of broad-based grassroots development, ease the unrelenting pressures for the creation of new states, and provide some venue for population participation under military rule pending the full restoration of civilian democracy."[140]

In other words, the 1970s reforms were a watershed moment in the constitution and democratization of local government authority and representation. However, local government, invested with new opportunities for representation and greater resources, also became a new arena for ethno-tribal groups to compete for control.

The Reality and Outcome of the Reforms

Decentralization and the creation of a new local government system did not, unfortunately, remove incentives for misuse of power. Instead, local government council positions became a tool of politicians, especially state governors, who used local government seats for patronage, accumulation, and vote-seeking as they sought to

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[139] Ukiwo, "Creation of Local Government," 8-9.
[140] Rotimi T. Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 34-5.

increase their own political power and personal wealth.[141] Also, although the reforms

stipulated that a percentage of federal funds were required to go to the local governments,

confusion over the state's role in the allocation of those funds has resulted in the

siphoning off of funds or their allocation only upon nefarious conditions stipulated by the

state government leadership. Due to the "confusions in allocation of functions between

the federal, state and local government councils," Ukiwo explains, "many state

governments took advantage of this ambivalence to either take over local government

functions or funds to finance responsibilities they were supposed to share with the

councils. It also became common for state governors to withhold funds to local

government."[142]

In practice, local government still did not represent the democratic ideal following

the 1970s reforms, as local election administrations were at times replaced by "caretaker

committees" or, during military regimes, "sole administrators," and the state governments

continue to infringe on the authority and administrative power of the local

governments.[143] For example, during the rule of Alhaji Shehu Shagari from 1979-1983,

local elections did not occur and "many state governments sacked the local government

officials and replaced them with their protégés, while the recognized local government

establishment process was subverted, leading to a proliferation of local governments" and

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[141] Ukiwo, "Creation of Local Government"; Mead 1996.
[142] Ibid., Ukiwo, 9.
[143] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 105-6. Indeed, the lack of a stable government and the constitution of military rule has at times interrupted the electoral process of local governments, giving state governors or military rulers influence over the election process and, in some cases, the power to remove local government chairman of whom they disapprove. Recently, a legal dispute has arisen over just such an abuse of power by Governor Jang of Plateau state who decided to remove the recently elected chairman of Kanam local government from office because the chairman changed political parties, abandoning the governor's PDP party.

a reduction in "statutory funding sources…as many state governments took over taxes or revenue-yielding activities that were constitutionally the preserve of the local councils."[144] From 1983-1987 during the brief military regime of General Muhammadu Buhari and then under General Ibrahim Babangida, the Nigerian military government administered local government, appointing management committees and sole administrators and deriving the local government system of its electoral democratic function.[145] In 1987, however, General Babangida ordered the renewal of local government council elections, which were then carried out successfully.[146] Local governance shifted yet again in 1993, as General Abacha proceeded to disband local government leadership and replace it with military appointees following his takeover.[147]

Despite these interruptions in the democratization and democratic processes of local government administration, the reforms of the 1970s did reduce the power of traditional rulers to more of an advisory function and elevated the "middle strata" in a constitutionally established third tier of local-level governance. Traditional leaders remain respected and important leaders in their communities with some degree of social and political legitimacy, but they no longer held the political authority and veto power as

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[144] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 240.
[145] Mead, "Barries to Local Government," 162; Galadima, 240.
[146] Ibid., Mead, 162.
[147] Ibid., 160-1. Galadima (2009, 260) highlights the inconsistency in elections that have occurred (elections took place in some fashion in 1976, 1987, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007), with even elected councils' tenure being cut short due to delays in elections or the appointment of caretaker committees filling in between election cycles (or at the whim of governors abusing their authority) or with the appointment of sole administrators by military regimes. Mukoro (2003, 175) observes that during military rule, "the little democratic elements left in the local governments [had] taken flight. The management of local governments now became based strictly on appointments by the state governments and the viability of local governments began to deteriorate alarmingly in the country which led qualified personnel abandoning the place for mediocres to handle. This position is supported by Ayoade (1951:19) who observed that local government more or less became agents of the central government."

in the past.[148] As Galadima notes, traditional rulers now "play advisory roles and are still seen as very important vehicles in the maintenance of peace and order in their respective domains."[149] The reforms and iterations of the constitution since the end of the 1970s did, however, shift formal local political authority away from traditional rulers – especially among the communities with politically dominant Hausa-Fulani in the north – to elected civilian representatives. Furthermore, in 1989 the Babangida military administration instituted Decree No. 15, which came into force in 1989 and granted further definition and balance of power in the executive and legislative functions of local governments. Mead notes that, "LGAs were structured following the lines of the presidential system in the United States, complete with a separation of powers and legislative impeachment and removal of the elected executive. An elected chair of the LGA was to head the executive branch. A separately elected council, with its own officers, constituted the legislative branch."[150] The Chairman and Vice-chairman of the local government are directly elected by the population, and they then appoint the Secretary and a handful of Supervisory Councilors who are tasked with oversight of local government departments such as health, agriculture and development, and education.[151] The respective wards or districts in a LGA directly elect the Councilors to the legislative assembly.

The role of the national center in the distribution of resources did not disappear, however. In terms of representation and resource competition, the decentralization of local government administration also had a centralizing tendency, making local

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[148] Ibid., Mead, 166-7
[149] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 245.
[150] Mead, "Barriers to Local Government," 163
[151] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 249.

governments more dependent on and competition fiercer for the resource allocation from the center. According to a local historian at the University of Jos, "the creation of states was intended to at least lessen the war at the center…and take the resources to these local centers of development if you like, or local centers of accumulation to reduce the infighting at the center."[152] In reality, however, local government councils became dependent on the center or national government for their funding, with 70 to 80 percent coming from national coffers.[153]

Perhaps most indicative of the role of the national government in LGA politics was the proliferation of requests for the creation of new local governments. The number of LGAs ballooned from 301 in 1976 to 781 in 1981, an attempted reversal to 301 in 1984, and steady growth to 774 in 1999 (now enshrined in the current constitution), as the ethno-tribal groups in various states clamored for their right for local governance.[154] Genereal Babangida's solution to the "pressures for additional LGAs" was to allow "LGAs to establish up to seven development areas."[155] Ultimately, the creation of new LGAs (as well as the national government's nullification of waves of ad-hoc LGA creation and re-creation) reformed the ethno-tribal balance in many communities, in some cases creating new tensions between the presumed indigenous and non-indigenous majorities and minorities. As Alubo notes, the "agitations for the creation of more states and local councils, or simply spaces over which groups could exercise more control and influence, [were] unrelenting," and "these exercises create[d] additional theatres for

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[152] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (September 7, 2011).
[153] Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict.*
[154] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria,* 240; Ukiwo 2006, 1, 11. According to Mukoro (175), in 1984, the Buhari regime sought to cut-back the number of LGAs to the original 301, but the intended reforms never came to fruition due to the 1985 coup that brought General Babangida to power.
[155] Mead, "Barriers to Local Government," 164.

contestations, as new majorities and minorities [were] created in the process."[156] Alubo

goes on to observe that the chiseling out of new states and LGAs sometimes exacerbated

the politics of indigeneity in the north,

> Thus, whenever new states are created, some who were hitherto indigenes of the
> previous states cease to enjoy that status. In this way, the creation of states, ipso
> facto, redraws the borders and also reconstructs identities. From past experiences,
> people who lorded it over others as fellow indigenes became bitter enemies. State
> and local council creations construct and re-construct identities because
> indegeneity is based on claims to having an ethnic territory within a state.[157]

The relationship between local government councils and their state governments

also challenges the original intention of independent and democratic local governance.

One report criticizes the 1999 constitution as, once again, binding the local governments

to the whims of the state governments, since much of "their establishment, structure,

composition, finances and functions are left to the State Governments to decide, thereby

rendering the Local Government Councils mere extensions of the State…"[158] The funds

coming from the *national* coffers are still distributed through the *state* governments.

Indeed, as emphasized by a scholar at the University of Jos, the percentage of the national

budget allocated to the local governments is funneled through the state governments, but

the state governments can use their control over those finances intended for the local

government to siphon off the funds, peddle the funds for influence, and other purposes

not intended by the constitution. "The local governments do not have autonomy," he

argues, "It is the states that provide for their functions, provide for their finances, for their

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[156] Ogoh Alubo, "Chapter One: Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria," in *Workshop on Citizenship
and Identity Politics in Nigeria* (Lagos: CLEEN Foundation/Ford Foundation, 2009), 7.
[157] Ibid., 7.
[158] Ndam, *The Challenge of Developing*, 17.

structure, and so on and so forth. So you can see clearly that the…local governments are just mere stooges of whoever is in government at the state level. It has no clear sphere of influence in which it is autonomous."[159] As a result,

> Most of the time, the resources meant for governance, are cornered by the governors and a token is given to pay salaries at the local government level, and you find it difficult for projects to take place. There is no salaries delivery at that level of government, no accountability at that level, and that breeds a lot of conflicts, because most of the time people don't have access to…education, people don't have access to agricultural support facilities, they don't have access to basic needs, they don't have access to income generating activities...[160]

Thus, local governments can be severely hampered in their governance capacity by the control that the state government has over their finances after it is distributed from the national center. While the purse strings can be subject to the whims of the state government administration, the resources that do make their way to the local level are critical in shaping what development projects are implemented and who benefits.

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In sum, the emergence of a more representative form of local government in northern Nigeria in the 1970s elevated its importance in the lives of the citizenry. Representation meant control over resources and influence in resource distribution. In other words, with the expansion of access to local representation, *who* has power now mattered a great deal more for the local ethno-tribal groups, or, as Ukiwo observes, "local government creation became a metaphor for power and powerlessness."[161] Even with the national and state governments' interference and interventions in resource allocation,

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[159] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (September 14, 2011). See also Mead 1996.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ukiwo, "Creation of Local Government," 12-13.

control over the key seats of representation emerged as new focus for contestation and competition.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – CONTESTATION & COMPETITION

Despite, or rather, *because* national and state politics stunts the ability of local government leaders to effectively devote resources to a wide range of local government development projects, leadership of local government councils is the site for greater communal competition and contestation for scarce resources (and, hence, power). Citing a number of conflicts between ethnic groups, Suberu notes that these conflicts are "[m]ostly rooted in long-standing intercommunal competition for scarce resources and political control at the local level…often aggravated by the sectionally manipulative or provocative policies of political authorities in the period before and after the inauguration of the [current] Fourth Republic."[162] Indeed, one indicator is that the local government reforms spawned appeals by ethnic groups for the carving out of even more local governments as previously noted previously.[163] Suberu goes on to argue, "If the imbroglio over local government reorganizations convey a lesson for Nigeria, it is that the pressures for new localities in the country are bound to remain insatiable and intractable as long as they are linked to the communal struggle for access to an expanded share of central resources, opportunities, and representation rather than to the quest for local self-governance and self-reliance."[164]

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[162] Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict*, 43.
[163] According to Suberu (2001, 106) there were 301 LGs in 1976, this number rose to nearly 1000 by 1979, retracted again to 301 in 1984 and then to 450 in 1989, 589 in 1991, and 774 in 1997.
[164] Ibid.,108.

Due to the limitation on resource distribution at the local level, representation in a key seat of local government leadership can be an important determinant of whether an ethno-tribal group obtains the benefit of allocations (or corruption), such as development and education funds. This is why, as one scholar notes,

> Local government councils have become a center of conflict. In many cases, the local governments, depending on where the chairman comes from – which ethnicity or which group the chairman comes from – favors his ethnic group and his community to the disadvantage of other people. And in many cases, the local government chairman favors his friends from his communities, not the entire community. And so, that's why there's fierce competition over who becomes the local government chairman, because the local government chairman will obviously not take everyone aboard, but will prefer to favor his cronies at the local level.[165]

As a result, "local elections see a high degree of popular mobilization, as many people are interested in who becomes the local government chairperson. Prominent people, including professors, now aspire to local government leadership."[166] How local governments navigate the competition over rights and representation in ethnically pluralistic communities is, therefore, an important subject of study, as it may help to explain patterns of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria.

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This arena of local level politics and ethnic cleavages is the realm of contestation that goes entirely overlooked in power-sharing arrangements that only elaborate such

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[165] Ibid., Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (September 14, 2011). See also Galadima (2009, 254) in which he highlights the extensive problems, noting, "There are numerous cases of financial mismanagement, misappropriation, recklessness, bloated contracts, invisible projects, violation of budgetary provisions, claims for nonexistent journeys, and massive fraud. Other forms of the mismanagement of council funds include overinvoicing for contracts, payment for jobs not executed at all, and raising multiple payment vouchers for jobs already paid for, among many others."
[166] Galadima, *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 259.

strategies or institutions at the national government level. It is perhaps telling that there have repeatedly been demands from groups within states or standing LGAs for increasingly *more* LGAs to represent local ethno-tribal groups and enhance the provision of inadequate resources. Indeed, at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, there was a debate about what body had the right to sanction LGA creation – the state governments or the national government – with the national government claiming that prerogative and occasionally dissolving renegade LGA creation. Thus, due to inadequate provision of resources and poor economic viability in states, local government administration – the conduit of any resources that are distributed at the local level – is an important site for political contestation. It is no wonder, therefore, that, hundreds of communal conflicts have disrupted the lives of thousands of Nigerians since the 1980s despite Nigeria's arrangement of ethno-federalism. Here at the local level, then, I expect power-sharing institutions may be more effective in ameliorating ethnic conflict.

In sum, the local government reforms in Nigeria reflect a process of decentralization – an attempt to create administration that more effectively meets the socio-economic and development needs of local populations and provides greater local representation and participation in the democratic process. The reality is something else. The emergence, dysfunction, and, yet, centrality of local government in northern Nigeria highlights its importance as a potential site for communal conflict. It is at the level of local power relationships that representation and its disparity are most felt by communal ethnic groups, since local governments are envisioned as the sphere of government more attuned to the basic needs of their communities. Their "proximity…to the people makes their activities to have direct and immediate impact on the people in the locality,"

observes a scholar of local government.[167] Furthermore, "[b]ecause of their relatively small size, most indigenes know the entire Area Council. Consequently, the can see, touch and feel the effects of any development programme first hand," and they therefore "follow the activities of Local Governments with keen interest and are quick to judge their performance."[168] Thus, attention to how local governments fail or succeed in adjudicating the demands among ethno-tribal groups for representation and resources may help to better explain the sub-national variation in communal violence. Why is it that some communities are more effective than others in quelling tensions and providing representation? To answer this question, I point to the importance of power-sharing institutions in not only averting ethno-tribal violence but also preventing a divisive inter-religious narrative from taking root and spawning Muslim-Christian communal violence.

CONCLUSION

Ushered in by the local government reforms of the 1970s, representation took on new meaning. Traditional authorities no longer presided unquestionably over local government communities, and the population could now vote for the local government leaders they desired to serve as their Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen, and Legislative Councilors. While the number of LGAs within the states of Nigeria has fluctuated over time, from around 300 in the 1970s to over 700 since 1999,[169] an interesting feature of the pattern of representation in these local governments is that some adopted power-sharing

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[167] Ibid., Interview with Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (September 14, 2011).
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.; Ukiwo, 2006; Jackson Akpasubi, "Plans to Make Councils Second-tier of Govt," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, July 8, 1990), 1, A2.

arrangements at inception while others did not. As argued previously, in scholars' and policy-makers' preoccupation with the success or failure of national-level power-sharing arrangements, they have overlooked the formation and effectiveness of local-level power-sharing arrangements at the sub-national level. As I will expound on in subsequent chapters, power-sharing emerged in some communities as a viable strategy for significant ethno-tribal groups to assert their right to self-representation where they were formerly marginalized by colonial-backed rulers or ethnic groups and where the colonial pattern of local politics persisted. In these cases, there was incentive for leaders of these significant ethno-tribal blocs to agree to power rotation as a way to ensure that divisive electoral strategies would not negate the new possibility for representation. In pluralistic communities, I find that the initial formation of these power-sharing arrangements subsequently provided the basis for communal peace and coordination in the face of divisive religious narratives. Local elite adopted power-sharing arrangements for various reasons following the 1970s reforms, but, fundamentally, their goal was to ensure representative stability in a context of new formal institutional changes to Nigeria's local government system. As for power-sharing's effectiveness in quelling ethno-tribal and Muslim-Christian conflict, this issue will be looked at in-depth in the case studies in Chapters 7, 8, and 9.

It is important to remember, however, that rather than formal rules written into electoral laws that local communities are bound to observe, the power-sharing arrangements adopted by many communities in northern Nigeria are informal. They are unwritten agreements to which no party is legally bound. Nonetheless, as my research finds, parties or leaders of ethno-tribal blocs, who would seemingly have many reasons to

defect, adhere to the agreements made as far back as the 1970s. This finding calls attention to the sustainability or "staying power" of informal power-sharing institutions and their capacity to mitigate disputes and quash external ethno-religious tensions that, in the northern Nigerian context, tend to spillover from surrounding LGAs. These informal institutions are an important site for further comparative research.

Power-sharing, as this discussion highlights, is not merely applicable to state emerging from civil war. Nigeria is not generally treated as a post-civil war case in the power-sharing scholarship, since the Biafran civil war ended in 1970 and the most prevalent form of violence is now communal, not ethnic group insurgency against the state. LeVan's research extends the study of power-sharing to unstable democracies (i.e. Kenya and Zimbabwe) that have experienced ethnic violence in response to a flawed or contentious election. What about states where the violence is communal and ongoing, flaring up at unpredictable times and in various communities – not necessarily as a response to national events? In this sense, communal violence and the relevance of power-sharing to these sub-national disputes is overlooked in current scholarship, despite its prevalence in the post-Cold War world. In the next two chapters, however, I return to analysis of the other components of the argument – religious change and differentiating ethnic identities – without which the importance of power-sharing in ameliorating inter-religious crises would make little sense. The religious change in Nigeria, particularly with the rapid growth of Christianity since the end of the 1970s, was central in constituting Muslim-Christian religious identity as a salient political narrative of difference and conflict.

CHAPTER 4

The Politics of Religious Change, Identity, and Violence

Over the past half-century, a phenomenon referred to as a revival or resurgence of Christianity has unfolded in countries across the global South despite Christianity's waning presence in the West. While other religions, such as Islam, are also growing, Christianity is the fastest growing religion in the global South, particularly its Pentecostal-charismatic variant. Despite this trend and its increasing recognition in current scholarship, the political implications receive relatively minor attention.

In this chapter, I discuss the importance of religious change in both national politics as well as in the rise of inter-religious contestation and violence in Nigerian local government areas (LGAs). Following a brief discussion of the significance of the general global pattern, I look at the process of religious change in Nigeria from the colonial period to the present to explain how religious identity came to be a prominent cleavage in Nigerian politics. I contend that the construction of political power is intrinsically bound up in the story of religious power in Nigeria, and the increase in inter-religious communal violence cannot be understood outside of this framework. While the spread of Christianity does not explain why some communities devolve into conflict and others do not, a discussion of religious change in Nigeria is still integral for understanding how religious identity became a major fault line of inter-religious violence in the first place.

This chapter is organized as follows: I first present the global trend and its political significance, as well as discuss the limited attention it receives in the political

science discipline. Second, I provide data on the pattern of religious change in Nigeria over the last four decades. Finally, I explore the process and politics of this religious change in Nigeria, explaining how independence in 1960 opened new doors to the rapid growth of Christianity and how the rise of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity introduced a shift in the religious community – a shift away from spurning politics to encouraging active Christian political participation. Within this context, a series of religio-political disputes heightened political tensions around Muslim-Christian identity, setting the stage upon which subsequent communal violence would play out.

RELIGIOUS CHANGE: A GLOBAL TREND

Prophecies within academia that religion declines as societies secularize or modernize have not been fulfilled and cannot explain the rapid growth of Christianity outside the West.[170] The geographical saturation of Christianity has shifted southward. By 2025, scholars predict that there will be more Christians in the global South than the North with the most in Latin America (640 million) followed by Africa (633 million) and Asia (460 million).[171] In contrast, there have been "massive losses in the Western world over the

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[170] See Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few, and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); John Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs: Political Challenges," *SAIS Review* 18, no. 2 (1998): 19-24; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[171] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2-3. See also David Barrett, George Kurian and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5; Todd Johnson and Sun Young Chung, "Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity," *International Review of Mission* 93, no. 369 (2004), 171. In contrast to Jenkins' projection, Johnson and Chung (2004, 173) observe that the number of Christians in the South surpassed the North in the early 1980s. Authors' calculations of the World Christian Encyclopedia figures may vary depending on the denominational categories that they include under the term "Christian."

last sixty years…an average of 7,600 [adherents] every day."[172] It is Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, in particular, that has seen unparalleled growth since the 1970s and 1980s, rendering it "the most dynamic and demographically dominant force" in Christianity in the global South.[173] Of the total number of Protestant churches in Latin America, for example, around two-thirds of them are Pentecostal.[174] Figure 4.1 below highlights the upsurge of Christian adherents in the latter part of the 20th century.

Figure 4.1 Increase in total number of affiliated Christians,[175] 1900-2025
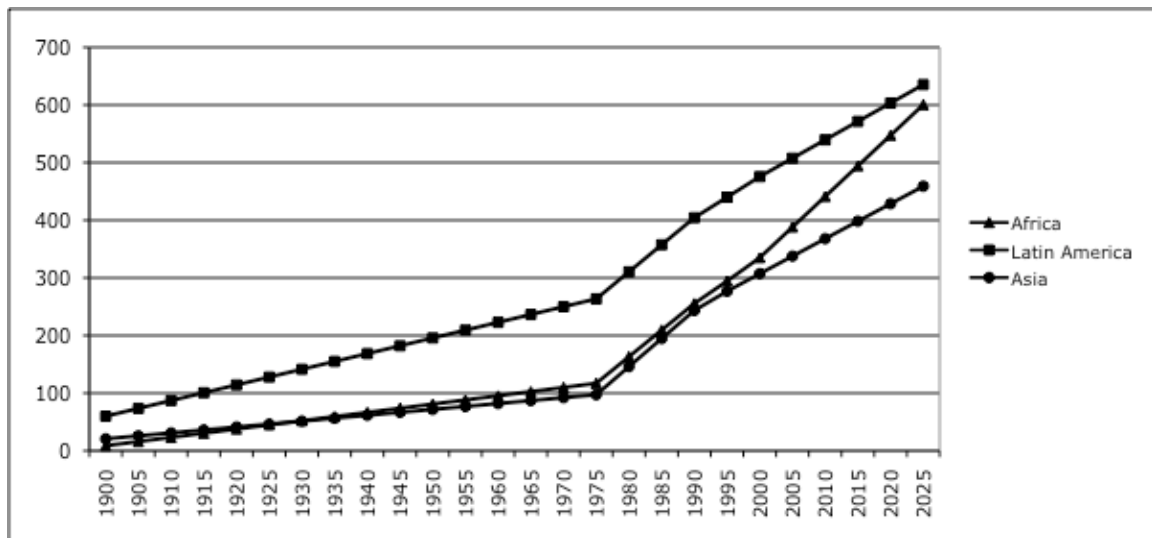
Source: Data derived from World Christian Database, interpolated by Thaut.

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[172] Ibid., Barrett et al., 5.

[173] Timothy Samuel Shah, "Preface," in *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Asia*, ed. David H. Lumsdaine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).x-xi.

[174] Andrew Chesnut, "Specialized Spirits: Conversion and the Products of Pneumacentric Religion in Latin America's Free Market Faith," in *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religous Change in Latin America*, ed. Timothy J. Steigenga and Edward L. Cleary (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 83. See also Paul Freston, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Freston (2008, 15, 18-19) also notes that "Perhaps two-thirds of Latin America's fifty million or so Protestants are Pentecostals" and that "[i]n Brazil alone, the number of evangelicals has tripled in the last thirty years."

[175] Note that the increase in the number of affiliated Christians from 1900 to 1975 was interpolated. Also, "affiliated Christians" refers to "Church members: all persons belonging to or connected with organized churches, whose names are inscribed, written or entered on the churches' books, records, or rolls" (Barrett et al. 2001, 27). This includes the six main blocs of Christians – 1) Roman Catholics, 2) Protestants, 3) Independents, 4) Orthodox, 5) Anglicans, and 6) Marginal Christians.

Figure 4.2 shows the increase in the percentage of adherents who identify as Pentecostal-charismatic in the three regions (See Appendix C. for percentage of affiliated Christians in general in the three regions over time).

Figure 4.2 Percentage of Pentecostal-charismatic population,[176] 1900-2025
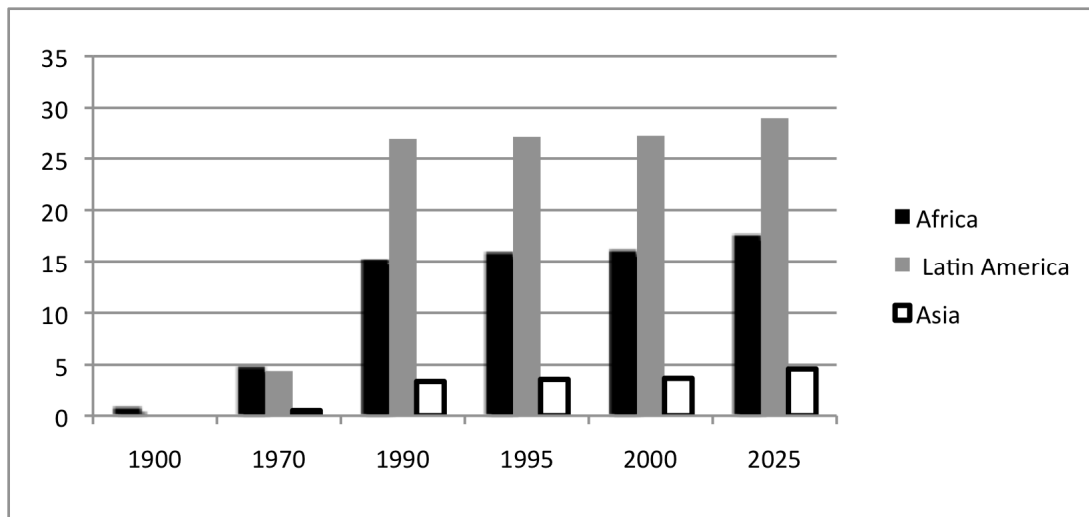
The Moving of the Spirit? What Explains the Trend?

Attempting to identify the cause of the rise of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity across Latin America, Africa, and Asia is difficult. This difficulty is not due necessarily to the geographical and historical dissimilarities, but, rather, to the challenge of substantiating any one theory to explain a similar trend across these three continents. Some scholars point to the dislocation produced by globalization and modernization.[177] That is, people turn to religion to find comfort in their material struggles, since other

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[176] This graph refers to the percentage of Pentecostal and charismatic Christians across the Christian "mega-bloc;" that is, the six "major ecclesiastico-cultural subdivisions of affiliated Christians and their churches" (Barrett et al. 2001, 29).

[177] Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*; Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

avenues have not helped to improve their conditions.[178] Others point to the

disappointment with the political systems in their countries – the corruption,

mismanagement, and failed or failing democratic experiments since the Third Wave of

democratization. In a recently published edited volume *Religion and International*

Relations Theory, Jack Snyder notes that one of the prominent explanations for the

"global resurgence of religion in politics is the rising demand for mass political

participation," and he goes on to note that "[i]n the face of a perceived failure of the

secular state to address popular needs, especially in the developing world, religion has

become a banner for movements demanding more responsive government, whose effects

have dramatically spilled over into international politics."[179] In politically or

economically dilapidated circumstances, therefore, the church may represent a moral

community to which people may appeal for stability. Gifford, noting the parallel between

the disenchantment with the promises of modernization and the rise of these churches,

observes that "Pentecostal Christianity is answering needs left entirely unaddressed by

mainline Christianity" and, "[f]or this reason, countless thousands are leaving the

mainline to join new Pentecostal churches."[180] Or, as Anthony Gill argues, the success of

Pentecostal-charismatic churches is explained by their stronger appeal over their

competition, the mainline churches.[181] At the same time, other scholars point to the

material and status benefits that derive from being associated with the Pentecostal-

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[178] See Pippa Norris and Richard Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Pippa and Norris (2004) present a version of modernization theory advancing this perspective.
[179] Jack Snyder, "Introduction," in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack Snyder, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3.
[180] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 328.
[181] Anthony Gill, *Rendering unto Ceasar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

charismatic churches, as well as their links to Western money and Western religious figures.[182]

One should note, however, that the expansion of Pentecostalism in the South is widely considered an indigenous phenomenon whose *success* is not a product of Western imposition or driven by foreign missionaries or religious organizations.[183] As Cleary and Stewart-Gambino point out, "contrary to a common Latin American stereotype, Pentecostalism is not a North American invasion. It did not begin with a pervasive outside missionary effort, nor are major groups sustained by personnel or money from the United States or Europe."[184] Although Gifford argues that transnational ties between African Pentecostal-charismatic churches and U.S. churches or evangelists has increased the prominence of African churches, it is a stretch to argue that their growth or stunning success has been dependent upon these ties between a few prominent local church leaders and Western churches.[185] "Third World Protestantism," notes Freston, "is thus largely

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[182] Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*; Gifford 1998. As Gifford (1998, 334) notes, "Today in Uganda and Zambia, becoming born-again actually brings one close to power; elsewhere, though it may indicate some turning against the political elite, it can be a way of linking into other material benefits." Similarly, Marshall (2009, 215) contends, "From the strict rejection of participation in political activities or seeking of political office, from the early 1990s pastors have increasingly used their status as spiritual authorities and the wealth thus acquired not only as a means of access to the state and channels of accumulation, but also as means of political influence."

[183] See Paul Freston, "Evangelical Protestantism and Democratization in Contemporary Latin America and Asia," *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (2004), 22-23; David Dixon, "The New Protestantism in Latin America: Remembering What We Already Know, Testing What We Have Learned," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (1995): 479-492; Timothy J. Steigenga and Edward L. Cleary, eds., *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino, eds., *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998); Anthony Gill, "Religion and Democracy in South America," in *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Ted Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, 195-221 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[184] Ibid., Cleary and Stewart-Gambino, 7.

[185] See Gifford's (1998, 308) analysis of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity's success in Africa in which he argues that "[t]hrough these [external] links the churches have become a major, if not the greatest single, source of development assistance, money, employment and opportunity in Africa." Furthermore, he observes, "history indicates that the growth of Christianity in Africa was never unrelated to its relations

evangelical-pentecostal" and "overwhelmingly an indigenous movement rather than one funded and run from the West."[186]

In sum, as Marshall concludes, "The genealogy of the movement's rise and the reasons for its success are complex, even if the themes of corruption and insecurity, understood in their broadest senses, appear to be central to its self-positioning."[187] While there is indeed debate over the causes of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity's revival, it is the homogeneity of its political theology across countries that is remarkable.

The Political Significance of the Trend

Concurrent with this religious change in the global South, Christians have become increasingly participatory in the political sphere over the past 30 to 40 years. What follows is a brief discussion of this political transformation, emphasizing the importance of taking seriously the changing boundaries or forms of religio-political practice propelled by this religious change. While in some cases it may be relatively benign and democratic, in others cases shifts in the teaching and strength of a religious bloc can create new socio-political tensions and incentives to politicize religious identity in contestation over political power. In fact, such religio-political change can be both enhancing to democratic participation and contestation as well as a rallying point for violent confrontation. For this reason, one must explore the *conditions* under which religious change and the construction of ethno-religious identity takes the form of one and not the other, as I do through a sub-national study of inter-religious violence in

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with the wider world; externality has always been a factor in African Christianity" (318). At least in its initial stages, Steigenga and Cleary (2007, 8) also note that the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America starting in the 1960s was "related to intensified missionary movements form North America.
[186] Freston, "Evangelical Protestantism," 12.
[187] Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 8.

Nigeria. First, however, a brief discussion of the parameters and political significance of the religious change itself is necessary.

Mainline and conservative Christian denominations, especially those falling within the Holiness tradition, have generally emphasized the 'eternal' as the all-encompassing concern of Christians, necessitating a 'turning away' from the world's corruptive influence. This agnostic stance toward political life has been upturned by the revival of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity since the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing just the opposite. By and large, the shift is accompanied by the belief that it is incumbent upon Christians to pray for, participate in, and provide godly council and leadership in politics.[188] As Gifford notes, "the idea of turning one's back on the world, as we have seen, is rarely involved at all. Far from fulfilling any command to be separate (Lev 20:24) these churches are one of the best available means of linking into the outside world."[189] Active participation in political life is no longer anathema. Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, Kalu observes, "challenges the doctrine of the *l'etat theologique* by revisiting the state's modes of organizing power, its institutionalized domination, its general principles of state and norms of behavior. This is an enormous shift: from a pietistic view of social activism as a means of restraining evil, to politics as a means of advancing the Kingdom."[190]

This merging of Christian teaching with political imperatives is evident in Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity's emphasis on the collective transformation and

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[188] Freston, *Evangelical Christianity*, 16.
[189] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 334.
[190] Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 223.

redemption of society and politics, particularly through an individual conversion project.

As Ruth Marshall aptly states,

> The Born-Again movement has as its principal aim a project of individual and collective renewal and regeneration through a process of conversion based on the idiom of new birth. It deliberately positions itself as a response to what are represented as corrupt or ruined religious and political traditions. The project of conversion involves the elaborating of new modes of government of the self and of others."[191]

Marshall continues, noting that the political theology of conversion

> …means the projection into collective, public space of a highly political agenda. The image of the invading army, sweeping all unbelievers in its path, expresses the political ambition of replacing a corrupt regime with a new form of righteous authority that presents itself as the unique path to individual and collective salvation. This ambition does not take the form of the creation of a theocracy, where spiritual authority underwritten by institutionalized religion would constitute the basis for political authority. Rather, conversion is represented as a mean of creating the ideal citizen, one who will provide a living incarnation of the *nomos* of a pacified and ordered political realm.[192]

Although the teachings of the church may not be directly politicized or preached from the pulpit (though in many cases this is undoubtedly true),[193] the emphasis on socio-political regeneration takes various forms. Studies highlight increasing political engagement such as the formation of evangelical political parties, the organization of ecumenical councils on political issues, the grassroots organization of previously marginalized poor or indigenous people, the participation of Christians in political campaigns and contestation for office, and the formation of representative councils or

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[191] Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 3. Marshall (2008, 8-9) goes on to observe, "The Born-Again project of redemption responds to the latter in ways that both critically reframe and reinterpret the crisis of the present, and also provide new strategies for coping with its material effects. The engagement with t and the explicit staging of the problem of moral uncertainty and mastery in an uncertain world is central to Pentecostal practices of faith everywhere today."
[192] Ibid., 13-14.
[193] See Paul Gifford's (1998) analysis of Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, and Cameroon.

civic associations.[194] From Nigeria and Kenya to Brazil and Nicaragua, Pentecostal-charismatic Christians seek political office or attempt to organize politically. Evangelical political parties claim divine leadership to address social ills and bring about socio-political transformation, although they have achieved little success due to their inability to mobilize more than a narrow constituency (Brazil being the exception).[195] In other instances, religious leaders or believers run for office and draw on the language of faith to legitimize their leadership or bolster their appeal, especially since to do otherwise could distance them from powerful Christian churches and harm their political chances.[196] Churches have also rallied around secular leaders or parties. As Freston notes, "While in some places large denominations have presented official congressional candidates explicitly to defend their institutional interests, such concerns have been repudiated elsewhere in favor of political projects that contemplate the whole population."[197]

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In sum, the entry of Pentecostal-charismatic Christians more overtly into political life can take on a range of political activity and expression. Pentecostals are "immensely adaptive and pragmatic," in the orientation of their beliefs to social or political conditions, note Cleary and Stewart-Gambino. The spread of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in the global South reflects a new political theology that is increasingly

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[194] See David H. Lumsdaine, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia*, ed. David H. Lumsdaine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) Terance O. Ranger, "Afterword," in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Terence O. Ranger, 231-241 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Timothy Steigenga, "The Politics of Pentecostalized Religion: Conversion as Pentecostalization in Guatemala," in *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*, eds. Timothy Steigenga and Edward Cleary, 256-279 (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Martin 1990; Freston 2008; Gifford 1998; Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1998; Marshall 2009.
[195] Freston, *Evangelical Christianity*, 27.
[196] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 191-245.
[197] Freston, *Evangelical Christianity*, 4.

oriented around the temporal plight of social conversion. The sacralization of

contestation, one may argue, is the rising and attendant phenomenon, and it is reflected in

a variety of ways, including demands for greater representation and rights, or through

active participation in political office and establishment of political parties.[198] The beliefs

or faith emphasized in Pentecostal-charismatic churches, therefore, tend to be oriented

toward a politics of "kingdom come," moving away from a theology that abstains from

and even disdains temporal politics. Robert Woodberry emphasizes the importance of

distinguishing between the types of religious change or new forms of mobilization,

noting that "[r]eligious groups are not merely interchangeable with any other

organization: Distinct theologies and organizational forms lead to distinct outcomes."[199]

As Snyder summarizes, the resurgence of religious change has broad implications,

shaping "who the actors in world politics are, what they want, what resources they bring

to the tasks of mobilizing support and making allies, and what rules they follow," and it

can be both reinforcing and undermining to state legitimacy.[200] The importance of this

phenomenon will become evident in subsequent discussion of Nigeria, but, as it stands,

the field of political science lacks strong comparative work on how this religious change

has contributed to identity construction and its politicization in countries such as Nigeria.

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[198] Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).
[199] Robert D. Woodberry, "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012), 269.
[200] Snyder, *Religion and International Relgions,* 4.

STATUS OF THE STUDY OF RELIGION IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Commenting on the role of religion in international and domestic politics, Paul Marshall observes, "The apparent growth in religious influences is likely due to the fact that analysts are only now noticing what was always there."[201] Religion has indeed been overlooked in the international relations and comparative politics scholarship, and has only been gaining ground in the past five to ten years. As Bellin argues, the dominance of realpolitik in international relations has resulted in a failure to "reckon with the power of religion as an independent variable, the noninstrumental aspect of religious behavior, and the malleability of religious ideas, as well as their differential appeal, persuasiveness, and political salience over time."[202]

This trend can partly be explained by the evolution of the political science discipline itself. During the 1950s and 1960s, the secularization thesis and modernization theory diminished the relevance of religion as an independently significant political force. This "dominant paradigm" of secularization, notes Gaskill, "suggests that as societies become increasingly pluralized and 'modern,' non-religious meaning systems emerge and largely replace religious systems of meaning - in short, secularization occurs."[203] For example, as Pippa Norris and Richard Inglehart argue, the "importance and vitality of religion, its ever-present influence on how people live their daily lives" gradually erodes with economic development.[204] Hence, the Iranian revolution and the terrorist attacks of

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[201] Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 14.
[202] Eva Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," *World Politics* 60, no. 2 (2008), 316.
[203] Newton Gaskill, "Rethinking Protestantism and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 1 (1997), 74.
[204] Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 5.

September 11 came as a surprise, as the discipline had long dismissed the independent significance of religion as a force for political change or conflict.

The dominance of the secularization and modernization theories have waned recently in both political science and religious studies, since they cannot explain this rapid growth of Christian activity in non-Western countries.[205] Scholars are beginning to recognize the influence that religion – particularly Catholicism – has had in countries of the global South and may have with the rapid expansion of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in states that are experiencing rapid economic growth *as well as* those that are falling further behind. Indeed, Peter L. Berger, like many sociologists had advanced the argument that modernity would lead to secularization of societies, came to revoke this thesis in his well-known work *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion in World Politics*.[206] "By 2100, over three fourths of all Christians will be living in the South," note Johnson and Chung.[207] As Esposito contends, the post-Cold War world has witnessed a "resurgence" or revival that has "challenged the expectations of modernization theory, the progressive secularization and westernization of developing societies," as "[r]eligion has become a major ideological, social, and political force, appealed to by governments, political parties and opposition movements alike, a source of liberation and violent extremism."[208] The major challenge for political scientists, then, is how to theorize the influence of religion or religious change in relationship to the constitution of different actors, forms of mobilization, and the state.

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[205] Gill, "Religion and Democracy," 217.
[206] See Berger 1999; Peter L. Berger, "Secularization Falsified," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 180 (February 2008): 23-27.
[207] Johnson and Chung, "Tracking Global Christianity's," 171.
[208] Esposito, "Religion and Global Affairs," 19.

Regarding the status of religion in international relations and comparative politics, Bellin notes that the "problem is not that the question of religion has been overlooked in international affairs so much as that it has been undertheorized."[209] The analysis of religion has been largely left to other disciplines that "rarely undertake the kind of structured comparison that a political scientist would embrace – a comparison that can yield generalizable hypotheses about when ethno-religious difference is likely to spell transnational conflict or about which conditions foster the transnational contagion of religious terror."[210] The same critique may be leveled at scholarship on communal inter-religious violence. Additionally, many of the studies on the impact of religious change are single country case studies that do not adopt comparative analysis to contribute to theoretical and generalizable conclusions. Within the literature on the role of religion in the Third Wave of democratization in Latin America, most of the work is of a descriptive nature.[211] Finally, the studies bring limited insight into the conditions under which religion is likely to be a significant force for mobilization, against whom, on behalf of what issues, and to what ends. Factors such as regime type or institutional structure do not often enter the analyses.

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The call for better theorizing and the identification of generalizable observations is a tall order. As Philpott notes, "Scholars have offered a bewildering array of explanations for the politics of religions: their theology, their national and ethnic

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[209] Bellin, "Faith in Politics," 339.
[210] Ibid., 340.
[211] Anthony Gill, "Weber in Latin America: Is Protestant Growth Enabling Consolidation of Democratic Capitalism?" *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (2004), 44.

identities, colonialism, their historical relationships to political authorities, their

competition with other religions, their grievances, and a multitude of economic, political,

and demographic factors."[212] In sum, to make a meaningful contribution, future research

must be able to bridge the theoretical and methodological inconsistencies of the extant

research and develop testable hypotheses. Towards this end, the following section

discusses the process of religious change in Nigeria and its politicization in order to bring

insight into how ethno-religious identity has increasingly become the fault line of

communal violence.

PATTERN & POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN NIGERIA

The pattern of sub-national variation in inter-religious violence in Nigeria cannot be

solely explained by post-colonial and more recent religious change. However, absent an

understanding of the spread of Christianity in Nigeria and its socio-political

consequences the explanation of the pattern of inter-religious violence will be truncated

or incomplete. What follows is a discussion of the pre-colonial and colonial politics of

religion in northern Nigeria, the religious change that occurred in the immediate post-

colonial period, and the significance of the rapid growth of Christianity since the 1970s

as it relates to the construction of an antagonistic Muslim-Christian narrative.

    Data on the Trend

    At the beginning of the 20th century, the population of Christians in Nigeria was

quite low and almost non-existent in the north of the country. Christian missionaries had

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[212] Daniel Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 505-525.

not yet made significant inroads into the interior of Nigeria, and disease and death kept them at bay. Instead, the population was predominantly Muslim or adherents of African Traditional Religion. In less than 50 years, however, the pattern of religious adherence changed drastically. By 1953, Christians constituted approximately 21 percent of the population.[213] By 1963 this total increased to just over 34 percent, and, by 1990, approximately 48 percent of Nigerians were affiliated Christians.

Figure 4.3 Percentage of religious adherents in Nigeria over time
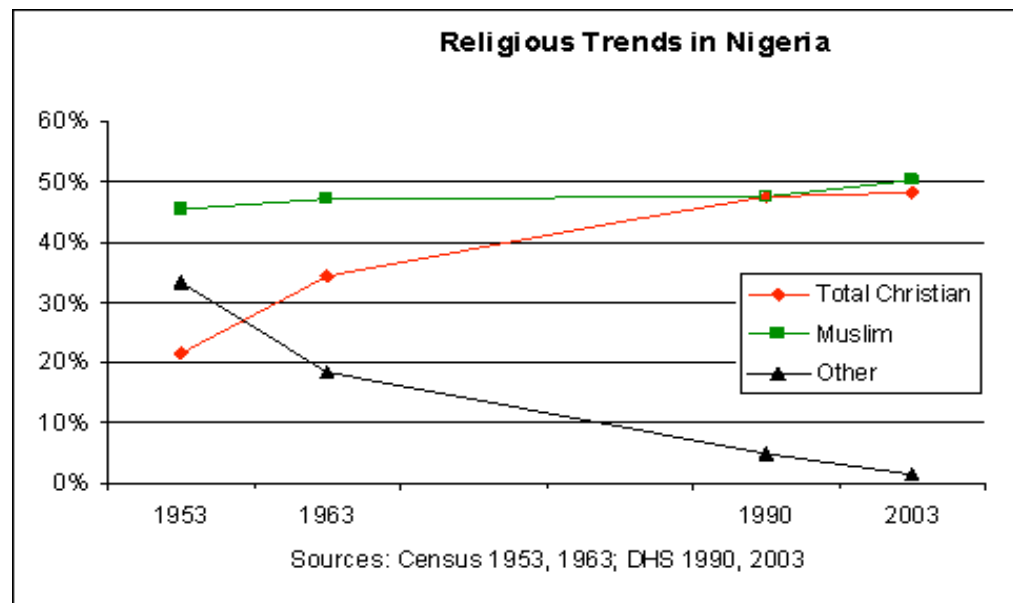
Source: Pew Forum

Currently, with the rapid growth of Christianity and decline in the number of adherents of African Traditional Religion, Nigeria is home to nearly an equal portion of Muslims and Christians with Muslims concentrated in the northern half of the country and Christians

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[213] Pew Forum, "Religion and Demographic Profile, Nigeria," *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, http://pewforum.org/world-affairs/countries/?CountryID=150 (accessed March 15, 2009).

predominant in the South.[214] In the north-central Middle Belt states, which are now a mix

of Muslims and Christians, Christianity made significant gains in the post-colonial era,

pressing up against the borders of the Muslim-dominated north.

The rapid religious change since the 1970s is largely due to the flourishing of the

"renewalist" or Pentecostal-charismatic variation of Christianity, which constituted

approximately 20 percent of the Nigerian Christian community or 35 out of 110 million

in 2001.[215] The inroads made by these burgeoning renewalist groups include not only

those of the Pentecostals variant but also charismatics from the Catholic Church and

other Protestant groups. According to a 2006 Pew Forum survey, this bloc accounts for

"approximately three-in-ten Nigerians," and "roughly six-in-ten Protestants are either

Pentecostal or charismatic, and three-in-ten Catholics surveyed can be classified as

charismatic."[216] (See also Appendix D. and E. for change over time among different

Christian religious blocs in Nigeria and 2010 estimates of affiliated Christians.)

The change over time among affiliated Christians as a whole is also demonstrated

in Table 4.1 below. States in northern Nigeria such as Benue and Plateau went from

virtually no Christian population in 1931 to a Christian majority population by 2010.

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[214] Barrett et al., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 549.

[215] Ibid. See also Musa A. B. Gaiya, "Christianity in Northern Nigeria, 1975-2000," *Exchange* 33, no. 4 (2004), 354; Omosade J. Awolalu, "The Emergence and Interaction of Religions in Nigeria," *Journal of Religious Thought* 41, no. 2 (2001), 18; John Nwafor, *Church and State: The Nigerian Experience* (Frankfurt: IKO-Verlag Fur Interkulterelle Kommunikation, 2002); Rose C. Uzoma, "Religious Pluralism, Cultural Differences, and Social Stability in Nigeria," *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Summer 2004: 651-664. Gaiya and Awolalu note similar though slightly lower figures for the Christian population in 2001 (at approximately 30 percent) and a higher percentage as adherents of traditional religions. Based on World Christian Encyclopedia data, Jenkins (2002, 167) also notes that neither the Muslim nor Christian adherents predominate in Nigeria. Similarly, Nwafor (2002, 25) estimates that 43 percent of the population is Christians and only 7 percent are adherents of traditional religions.

[216] Pew Forum, *Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Nigeria*, October 5, 2006, http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Historical-Overview-of-Pentecostalism-in-Nigeria.aspx (accessed March 15, 2009). See also Nwafor 2002, 58.

While the far "core" northern states have remained strongly Muslim, a number of the

Middle Belt states have experienced a rapid religious transformation in the post-colonial

period (See Appendix E. for figures on more provinces).

Table 4.1 Percentage of Affiliated Christians in select northern Nigerian states over time

Province	1931	1952	1963	2010
Adamawa	0	3.2	14.3	25.0
Bauchi	0.1	1.6	3.2	15.0
Benue	0.2	6.9	41.2	73.0
Borno	0.0	0.6	2.0	20.0
Kaduna	0.0	7.8	25	35.0
Kano	0.0	0.4	1.0	8.0
Katsina	0.0	0.3	0.3	7.0
Niger	0.0	3.0	3.5	25.0
Plateau	0.5	12.9	20.0	60.0
Sokoto	0.0	0.5	0.3	5.0

Source *World Christian Database*. See also Crampton (2004).[217]

Another indicator of the rapidity of religious change in Nigeria is the rate of

church growth among the various denominations. According to the *World Christian

Database*, the rate of church growth in Nigeria as a whole from 1990 to 2000 has been on

the level of 6.64 percent *per year*.[218] While different denominations are stronger in

certain parts of the country, the following four Pentecostal-charismatic churches are most

prevalent in the north: Living Faith World Outreach Ministries, Redeemed Christian

Church of God, Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria, and Mountain of Fire and Miracles

Ministries. A spattering of other Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal charismatic churches, such

as the Assemblies of God, can also be found mixed in among the others.

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[217] Todd Johnson, ed., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007)(accessed April 2011); For 1931, 1952, and 1963 census data figures, see E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 3rd Edition (London, Plateau: African Christian Textbooks, 2004).
[218] Ibid., Johnson.

Among the traditional Protestant denominations, Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) and the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) have been and still are very strong in the Middle Belt and north.[219] These two denominations stem from missionary efforts that began in the first decade of the twentieth century. While they are still considered mainline evangelical denominations from the Protestant tradition, they too are influenced by the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. Thus, the emphasis on being born-again can be found in these churches, as well as a mix of charismatic and traditional forms of worship to appeal to both preferences. However, these Protestant churches are less likely to run miracle/healing crusades or emphasize demon possession and prophecy, and they do not encourage speaking in tongues during services. Table 4.2 below constructed from *World Christian Database* data highlights the rapid growth of these churches in Nigeria.

Table 4.2 Major Christian Denominations in northern Nigeria, % growth per year

Denomination	No. of Adherents (2010)	% Growth
Redeemed Christian Church of God	1,451,000	23.94
Living Faith World Outreach Centre	622,000	20.25
Deeper Life Bible Church	1,147,000	10.07
Evangelical Churches of West Africa	5,410,000	7.68
Assemblies of God in Nigeria	2,900,000	8.86

* World Christian Database

The data in Table 4.3 below, collected in cooperation with the ECWA headquarters in Jos Nigeria in 2011, offer a clear picture of the recent expansion of Christianity in 14 northern states within this one major northern Nigerian Protestant denomination alone.

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[219] ECWA was formerly Evangelical Church of *West Africa*, but this name was changed in light of the denominations expansion in church planting beyond West Africa.

Table 4.3 Percentage of ECWA congregations/churches established in northern Nigeria pre-1970 and post-1970[220]

	Total No.	Pre-1970	Post-1970	Unclear
Bauchi	99	6	85	8
Benue	32	1	29	2
FCT	105	29	72	4
Gombe	130	28	82	20
Gongola*	12	0	8	4
Jigawa	19	4	13	2
Kaduna	789	174	520	95
Kano	41	1	26	14
Katsina	41	3	36	2
Kogi	49	18	31	0
Kwara	143	52	80	11
Nasarawa	426	85	297	44
Niger	243	24	150	69
Plateau	356	21	264	71
Sokoto	11	3	7	1
Total N	**2,496**	**449**	**1700**	**347**
% of Total	**-**	**21%**	**79%**	**-**

* Gongola state was split into present Adamawa and Taraba states in 1991

* % Pre- and Post-1970 calculated without the unclear cases

These data highlight very clearly that church planting grew far faster in the post-1970 period than prior, with 79 percent of ECWA congregations established since 1970 and accounting for over 2,000 churches.[221] Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Niger states reflect the most activity in ECWA church establishment. I do not include the congregations for which their year of establishment was not reported, but it is likely that the percentage of congregations established since the 1970s would be even higher if these data were known.

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[220] This congregations' establishment data include establishment of EMU and Prayer Houses. Although there is some missing data, the above congregation data is likely close to full figures, as ECWA estimates that it has around 5000 congregations in all of Nigeria. For just 14 states in northern Nigeria, I have accounted for 2,496 of the overall total.

[221] This includes ECWA Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) churches (i.e. established in Nigeria by Nigerian ECWA missionaries) and Prayer Houses. Note, also that ECWA estimates their total number of churches in the whole of Nigeria to be in the 5,000 range.

In other words, in conjunction with data collected in the field and the *World Religion Database* and *Religion in the World Database*, the evidence is clear that not only has the number of adherents of Christianity in Nigeria rapidly expanded, there has also been rapid growth in the Middle Belt, the more mixed Muslim-Christian area of northern Nigeria known as the "border area" of the Muslim dominated north. The Middle Belt is also where much of the inter-religious communal violence has been concentrated since the 1970s.

THE PROCESS & POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE

This study is particularly interested in the variation in inter-religious communal violence in these Middle Belt states.[222] Except to students of Nigerian colonial history, however, the reason for the relative lack of inter-religious violence in the "core" northern states as opposed to the north-central Middle Belt states will not be immediately clear. A brief foray into the political and religious history of northern Nigeria is therefore necessary to highlight the puzzle of the Middle Belt.

Politics & Religion in the Pre-Colonial Period

The arrival of Islam in Nigeria during the Fulani conquest of Usman dan Fodio in the first decade of the 19th century ushered in profound socio-political change. Although Islam first came to Nigeria in the 13th or 14th century, it did not make significant inroads until much later.[223] Its real ascendency began with the jihad of dan Fodio in a region

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[222] Note that the construction of these data and method of identifying cases is presented in the following chapter on the empirical methods and findings.

[223] Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria,* 7. See also Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998).

dominated at the time by African Traditional Religion. With the establishment of the

Sokoto Caliphate in the far north, the branches of Muslim Hausa and Fulani[224] rule

extended over a large swath of northern Nigeria, gradually expanding and subduing the

smaller northern ethno-tribal groups through Islamic religion and political power.

The spread of Islam during this period served as the holy cause that justified the

expansionist project and subsumed ethnic divisions, and it did so rather effectively.

Under dan Fodio, religion and rule went hand in hand, conquering and pacifying

populations. In turn, the formation and solidification of the empire of the Sokoto

Caliphate through conquest and assimilation elevated the Hausa-Fulani ethnic

amalgamation and majority bloc to elite status. Regional leaders or emirs were installed

in the various regions, paying homage to the Sultan of Sokoto. In turn, the political elite

appealed to the Islamic faith as an authoritative force to legitimize rule of the Hausa-

Fulani. Although, as Kukah argues, the Islam of the Sokoto Caliphate was more or less a

veneer over underlying political and economic interests, it served its purpose: Political

and economic imperatives were key motivations for the Caliphate's expansion, but

religion was presented as the holy cause that justified expansionism, and it effectively

overcame ethnic divisions. As Kukah notes, "Islam as a creed served as a fulcrum for

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[224] Usman dan Fodio was a Fulani religious scholar. The Fulani and the Hausa became integrated over time, and, hence I generally adopt the Hausa-Fulani designation when referring to the empire of the Sokoto Caliphate and the dominant population in the largely Muslim north. See Wale Adebanwi, "Terror, Territoriality and the Struggle for Indigeneity and Citizenship in Northern Nigeria," *Citizenship Studies* 13, no. 4 (August 2009): 349-363. As Adebanwi (2009, 354) notes, "The majority Hausa ethnic group and several minority ethnic groups in these areas were subsequently converted to Islam under the rule of the Fulani. The Fulani aristocrats adopted the Hausa language and Hausa culture in general, inter-married and related closely with the majority Hausa so much so that, even though a minority, they became identified with the Hausa as an ethnic-amalgam called, Hausa-Fulani – thus transforming them to a part of a majority group."

uniting the various people that it had converted in a way that transcended the ethnocentric confines of pre-Islamic relations in these diverse polities."[225]

The religious change ushered in under the Caliphate thus served to unify much of northern Nigeria under a powerful political regime. The impact of the Jihad on the identity of northern Nigeria was significant, with religious identity and political imperatives constituted as part of the same logic of governance. As Falola and Heaton observe, "Culturally, local populations across the Sokoto Caliphate increasingly came to identify themselves primarily as Muslims and only secondarily as citizens of their local emirates" and this "left the impression on many that they lived in an Islamic state and therefore they were all unified by a common religion."[226] Although there were cracks in the unity of northern Nigeria under the Sokoto Caliphate, Islamic rule's religio-political combination brought about – either by force or willing conversion/submission – a level of cultural assimilation and political integration that rendered northern Nigeria "more culturally united than at any other time in its history, and this unity was based heavily on a shared experience of life in an Islamic state."[227]

In parts of the Middle Belt region of the north, however, domination was not entirely achieved, and the foundation of the Caliphate began to show its cracks in its ability to maintain effective control and governance. While the religious goals of the original Jihad may have been strong and driving, "[i]n seeking to expand its economic and political hegemonic spheres of influence, the caliphate leaders soon began to

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[225] Matthew H. Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2003), 2
[226] Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 72.
[227] Ibid., 73.

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sacrifice the spiritual fervour that had necessitated the Jihad," as they "seemed more preoccupied with slavery, economic, and political expansionism than the spread of the faith."[228] While the area of the core north known as Hausaland was conquered by 1808 during the Fulani Jihad, the Hausa-Fulani did not completely pacify the ethno-tribal groups of the entire northern half of present day Nigeria. "Right up to the 1820s," Crowder notes, "there were pockets of resistance to Fulani rule."[229] In the fringe areas of the northern region, adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) and smaller ethno-tribal groups attempted to maintain their cultural and political autonomy, warding off Hausa-Fulani domination as much as possible through occasional clashes. By the time of the colonial conquest, therefore, these areas were less assimilated into Islamic religion and identity and less integrated into the political structure of the Caliphate.

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In sum, by the time of the British colonial incursion, northern Nigeria was largely under the rule of the Sokoto Caliphate, which successfully used both its political acumen, structure, and religious creed under the Hausa-Fulani majority to assimilate or pacify many of the small ethno-tribal groups of the north. The ethno-tribal groups along the fringes of the northern empire that adopted a policy of resistance faced new challenges to their autonomy with the incursion of the British and the establishment in 1900 of the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria upon the defeat of the Sokoto Caliphate. Through the colonial system of Indirect Rule, colonialism ultimately served to entrench rather than retract Muslim Hausa-Fulani rule of the north. The British colonial strategy

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[228] Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power,* 2.
[229] Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 78.

profoundly impacted the political and inter-tribal relations in northern Nigeria and the
political wranglings and developments since.[230]

Politics and Religion in the Colonial Period

In 1900, the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was established under the
oversight of High Commissioner Sir Fredrick Lugard following the British defeat of the
Sokoto Caliphate. After Lugard had "subdue[d] the Emirs and eliminate[d] the more
distasteful features of their rule, warfare and slave-raiding," the British adopted a system
of Indirect Rule to govern the region,[231] seeking out local elites or chiefs who could
administer territory on behalf of the British.[232] The selection of the chiefs, however, was
not necessarily in keeping with local structures of authority, resulting in many cases in a
distortion of local power by imbuing authority in an individual who did not necessarily
garner the respect of his local community and who, as both prosecutor and judge, did not
always act in their best interests. As Mamdani observes regarding this system of Indirect
rule or Native Authority,

> Its personnel functioned without judicial restrain and were never elected.
> Appointed from above, they held office so long as they enjoyed the confidence of
> their superiors. Their powers were diffuse, with little functional
> specificity…Native Courts, Native Administration, and a Native Treasury –
> together crystallized the ensemble of powers merged in the office of the chief.[233]

Under the policy of Indirect Rule, it was ultimately the Hausa-Fulani or the
Muslim emirs who continued to rule the northern region under the British administration

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[230] See David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba*
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
[231] Crampton, *Religion, Politics, and Power*, 38.
[232] See Falola and Heaton, 116-128; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subjects* (New Jersey: Princeton
University Press, 1996).
[233] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject,* 62-61.

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despite the defeat of the Caliphate. Surveying the Caliphate's institutional political and administrative structure, the British deemed proxy rule through the Hausa-Fulani majority ethno-tribal group the most conducive strategy for maintaining their hold on northern Nigeria. This policy avoided the otherwise acute challenge for the British of creating a completely new system of rule without the necessary institutional gestation period and completely foreign to the socio-political and cultural context of the region. By at least working within the framework of ethno-tribal rule existing at the time of British victory of the north, violent resistance and the drain on British resources could perhaps be kept to a minimum, so the logic went. "Finding the Muslim states had centralized and bureaucratic socio-political institutions," notes Turaki, "Lugard decided to incorporate them into his system of Native Administration, if only modified and developed."[234] The British, therefore, worked primarily with the Hausa-Fulani elite, considering their social and political system more advanced and civilized than that of the many "pagan" ethno-tribal groups in the north. It was in the British interest to build a good relationship with the northern Muslim emirs, protecting their proxy rule from subversion and guaranteeing respect for the dominance of Islam in the north.

The British policy of indirect rule had far reaching consequences for the relationship between the Hausa-Fulani and other ethno-tribal groups in the north. Areas of the north that had not previously been subject to Hausa-Fulani rule or had long resisted it now suddenly came under the rule of Hausa-Fulani emirs placed in authority over the non-Muslim groups at the backing of the British. For example, the area and people of

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[234] Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy In Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria* (Dr. Yusuf Turaki, 1993), 54.

Southern Zaria (now southern Kaduna state) had been fighting to retain independence

from Hausal-Fulani rule prior to British arrival and were "in a state of war with the Fulani

rulers of Zaria and Jemaa."[235] Through British Indirect Rule, then, Hausa-Fulani elite

solidified their authority over the local ethno-tribal and non-Muslim groups in this area

and other non-assimilated and integrated areas of the north. The local populations

perceived this as an affront, elevating and bestowing upon an ethno-tribal Muslim group

political power that they did not previously hold over other local groups. Indeed, the

British decision to work with the Hausa-Fulani institutions and system of rule dismissed

the traditional forms of rule and chieftaincy long entrenched among other local ethno-

tribal groups. Nonetheless, resistance by these groups was kept at bay by the peril of

British force of arms. As Turaki notes,

> What kept down the uprisings of the non-Muslim groups was the fear of the
> ruthless British punitive patrols. Hausa-Fulani rule was seen by British political
> officers as a 'divine rule' which must be supported and protected. Opposition to
> Fulani rule was actively suppressed by the use of armed force. The British
> concept of law and order was strongly attached to Fulani rule and any self-
> determination was viewed as rebellion and lawlessness. Thus, the colonial
> political system did not permit self-determination or practical expressions.[236]

The British maintenance of rule in northern Nigeria, when it came to its policy on

religion or religious expansion and conversion, was paradoxical. The British government,

as part of a project of promoting commerce and civilization, often supported missionary

activity in its colonies. In the case of northern Nigeria, however, its tack had to differ so

as not to upset the stability of its governance through the majority Muslim Hausa-Fulani.

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[235] Ibid., 97-98.
[236] Ibid., 108.

They sought, therefore, to balance the conversion zeal of missionaries while protecting the Islamic religious basis of northern Hausa-Fulani rule.

Delving into the background of the policy on religion and religious change during the colonial era, Christian missions did not first arrive in Nigeria with the British, but, rather, during the mid-19th century under the auspices of the Anglican Church Missionary Society. These missionary "expeditions" by the Anglican Church and later by other missionary societies, in light of their limited incursions along the west coast of Africa and due to their high mortality risk, earned this region of Africa the less than welcoming title "White Man's Grave."[237] Generally, the mission efforts into the interior of present day Nigeria were more effectively led and staffed by indigenous converts, such as Samuel Crowther, a freed slave and returnee who worked with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). As Crampton recounts, "Africans themselves dominated missionary activity in the Nigerian region, communicating with local chiefs and leaders about the benefits Christianity could bring to their societies, only to be forced from positions of leadership in the Church after the 1880s."[238]

It was towards the end of the 19th century that other major missionary operations such as the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) arrived, which later formed the Nigerian-led ECWA denomination that is a major Protestant presence in the north today.[239] SIM set up operation in 1893 and was "among the first pioneering Christian missions in Northern

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[237] Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria,* 19.
[238] Ibid., 89
[239] Today, SIM goes by the name "Serving in Missions," to reflect a non-regional focus. Other missionary organizations that eventually came to northern Nigeria include the following: Sudan United Mission, Church of the Brethren Mission, United Missionary Society, Roman Catholic Church, Dutch Reformed Church Mission, and the Lutheran Mission. See Yusufu Turaki, *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa: A Century of SIM/ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria, 1893-1993* (Nairobi: International Bible Society Nigeria Press, 1999), 3.

Nigeria and, in later years, it became one of the largest, covering a wider geographical territory than any other single Mission in Northern Nigeria."[240] Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) churches stemmed from the Sudan United Mission (SUM), another organized missionary effort, that began work in Nigeria around 1904, and it too went on to become one of the major Protestant denominations in the north. According to a minister currently in COCIN leadership, the sole reason the missionary organization was established was to "prevent Islam from sweeping across the whole of Nigeria."[241] Similarly, one historian notes that

> *...the various groups of missionaries that came to Northern Nigeria had a common agenda, which was to check the further advance of Islam in the Sudan. Okay? It doesn't matter whether they were the American branch, or the British branch, or the Danish branch, and so on. They served a common purpose. And the protection of this region and the fear of Islam became a strong, if you like, ideology, among the Christians. This is what they imbibed - the fear of Islamic domination. And so on. So, [as] much as they cooperated with the government, much as they accepted northern region and so on and so forth there was this basic tension beneath the apparatus of government.[242]*

Like the initial arrival of Islam in Nigeria, however, these Christian missionary efforts did not take a strong foothold in the northern part of Nigeria initially, and this was due to the colonial policy that deliberately limited Christian missions in an effort to maintain a stable system of British Indirect Rule through Muslim elite in the north.

Although Lugard maintained a good relationship with the missionary community, political expediency demanded that he limit missionary work in northern Nigeria, to the chagrin of the missionaries. In exchange for the cooperation of the newly installed

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[240] Ibid.
[241] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State, (April 15, 2011).
[242] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau (September 7, 2011).

Muslim rulers, he promised them that the "Government would not interfere with the Muslim religion."[243] Christian missions were only encouraged or allowed by the colonial authorities under certain conditions, and, at other times, were explicitly prohibited in the north. One exception was missionaries who were allowed to work in the leper colonies in the north towards the mid-1930s, but this was contingent upon them not attempting to proselytize the population.[244] Missionaries often faced resistance if not from the Muslim emirs of the north then from the British authorities who feared that allowing Christian missionaries to evangelize in predominantly Muslim areas would jeopardize the political agenda of the British and their relationship with the northern emirs.

There was, nonetheless, some limited space allowed for missionary work in the north. Missionaries made some inroads among adherents of African Traditional Religion in the fringes of the Hausa-Fulani area of rule primarily in what is now the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Indeed, "[g]enerally the entry of missions into the purely 'pagan' independent areas was welcomed by the government," as a civilizing force, undertaking civilizing efforts that the British administration could not afford.[245] In the non-Muslim areas where the rulers were Muslims, however, the tensions were starker between the missionaries, the administration, and local rulers. With some exceptions, Christian missionary evangelization made Muslim rulers nervous as it was seen as a threat to their expansion and rule. This should come as no surprise, since the foundation of pre-colonial rule in

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[243] Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 45.
[244] Ibid., 64. In cities like Zaria, a mission station was established due to the goodwill between the emir and a missionary by the name of Miller. Otherwise, mission work was concentrated in the Sabon Gari's or outskirts of the cities and mainly targeted pagans. Of course, where the pagans were under the rule of Muslim emirs, the efforts of missionaries to evangelize the pagans created problems for the colonial administration.
[245] Ibid.

northern Nigeria was constituted in the convergence of religious identity and political authority. British policy – the proscription against Christianity spreading in the non-Muslim areas subject to Muslim emirs – thereby gave a tacit go-ahead for Islamization. The Hausa-Fulani political establishment was able to elevate a system of law and courts, for example, over the non-Muslim population.[246] Thus, as Crampton concludes, "This policy of upholding the authority of the Fulani District Heads undoubtedly gave great prestige to Islam and assisted in its spread in areas where the 'pagans' were not especially hostile to the Fulani."[247]

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In sum, while Christianity and colonialism are often spoken of as two sides of the same coin, the history of colonialism in Nigeria dispels this notion. Religious imperatives were secondary to the British political agenda in the north. Although missions and commerce worked together to create inroads in the north in the first part of the 19th century, missionaries were restricted and few in number up until the 1960s when Nigeria achieved independence and the British policy against evangelizing the north ended. In general, the pre-colonial sacralization of political rule and the colonial maintenance of the precedent integrally shaped ethno-tribal and inter-religious relationships in Nigeria. This historical antecedent did not determine the religious change and rapid growth of Christianity in the latter part of the 20th century, nor did it cause the emergence of inter-religious violence in the pluralistic Middle Belt, but it explains how religious identity was

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[246] Ibid., 67.
[247] Ibid.

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integral in constituting political identity in prior periods and shaped the boundaries of religio-political identity in Nigeria as a whole at the start of independence in 1960.

As highlighted in the next section, the removal of a restrictive evangelization policy in the post-colonial period ushered in significant religious change in Nigeria. Christianity made greater inroads in the north among the non-Muslim population as missionaries (particularly indigenous ones) took the Gospel to the north and also brought new opportunities in education. Northern Nigerians trained in missionary schools came into positions of leadership in their local communities and in national administration. As Crampton notes,

> In the early days it is doubtful if many people ever thought that the results of this missionary activity would constitute a threat to the authority of the rulers. The Missions made converts very slowly and the first Christian groups seemed small and insignificant. …In some areas the 'pagans' were so difficult and dangerous that the areas were declared 'closed' and missionaries were not allowed to enter. As these gradually become 'open' missionaries were anxious to enter them so as not to come after Muslim emissaries.[248]

Over time, Christian missionaries did make inroads, and this, in combination with the political ambition of the northern Nigerian Muslim elite, created new incentives for religio-political competition and fear-mongering. Both Christianity and Islam began to grow, ethno-religious identity took on greater political significance as a tool of political loyalty and belonging, and, ultimately Muslim-Christian identity became a symbol of cleavage and fault line of communal violence.

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[248] Ibid. 67.

Politics and Religious Change in Independent Nigeria

The religious change that occurred in the latter half of the 20th century in Nigeria is central to understanding the construction of Muslim-Christian identity as the locus of political contention and communal violence since the 1980s. This religious change involved not merely growth in the number of adherents, but also the emergence of a more educated and politically influential Christian political class and a doctrinal about-face among denominations toward active political engagement, particularly with the rapid spread of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity and the establishment of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). A radical and violent strand of Islam also emerged with devastating consequences by the beginning of the 1980s. Finally, a series of religio-political disputes since the 1970s – including disputes over Nigeria's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference[249] (OIC) and the implementation of Sharia law in northern states – served to reify political identities along ethno-religious lines.

Barriers Removed: Missions and Christian Education

Prior to independence, Christian identity was not a form of social mobilization or political empowerment in northern Nigeria, and what Christian mission education there was in the non-Muslim areas was largely oriented towards evangelization, church-planting, and spiritual training, spurning political or non-spiritual education. The majority of non-Muslims also did not have access to the better, largely Muslim dominated and British-supported northern schools. While the northern Muslim political elite already feared the political consequences of the growth of Christianity as early as the 1940s, those concerns were quelled by the fact that the non-Muslim populations did not have the

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[249] The name was changed and is now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

means to challenge their status, especially since the British forces could easily quell any sort of uprising.

With the expansion of education by the 1950s to the non-Muslim population and the change in the educational approach of the mission schools, this brought greater social and political awareness and opportunity for advancement among the non-Muslim groups. Enhanced access to education led to increased social mobility and the possibility for escape from the marginalization associated with non-Muslim or traditional African religious identity.[250] The articulation and mobilization of greater political demands and rights followed. As Turaki notes,

> Christianity and education were instrumental in the development of political consciousness and self-determination. The people became awakened to the oppressive and autocratic rule of the Fulani rulers… Their silence, passivity, submission and acquiescence soon gave way to open protests, rebellion and agitation for self-rule and independence. Their social development through Christianity and education had resulted in the development of a new ethnic identity, which could no longer tolerate their prescribed subordinated role and status under both colonial and Fulani rule.[251]

Indeed, as Turaki further observes, the agitation among the non-Muslim groups "resulted from the fact that their new identity in Christianity did not change their inferior status and position," as these "new social forces were effectively controlled and contained by the Colonial Administration, since the [non-Muslim groups] had no political power."[252]

This gradual shift in the religious contours of the Middle Belt area of the northern region in the independence period, therefore, represented a threat to the power of the

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[250] Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy,* 993, 118. As Turaki (1993, 117) notes, "It must be borne in mind that the rapid growth of education in Southern Zaria and the non-Muslim areas in general should not be interpreted to mean that the [non-Muslim groups] had a head-start in education than the Muslim groups…a good secular education did not really start in the non-Muslim areas until the 1950s."
[251] Ibid., 119.
[252] Ibid., 110.

Muslim northern establishment vis-à-vis the south during the debates about the regional

lines of authority in Nigeria. A historian at the University of Jos, explains that

> *the missionaries then used all sorts of facilities – dispensaries…schools,*
> *carpentry work, artisan institutions and so on, which quickly attracted people to*
> *them, such that by independence, a core educated group had emerged in these*
> *minority areas that [were] Christian. And, inevitably, this core group was at once*
> *the political elite. They were the politicians of the lower minority groups.*[253]

The response of the north and colonial regime had been to co-opt the Middle Belt and

non-Muslim areas of northern Nigeria with promises of greater rights and representation.

These promises proved empty, however, and reinforced fears in the post-colonial period

of an Islamization of northern Nigeria to the determinant of the now increasingly

Christian population. The political activism of some who were products of the restricted

Christian missionary schools created tensions in areas such as southern Zaria even prior

to independence, as the "rise of new identity, political consciousness and aspirations

imposed a serious threat to the legitimacy of Hausa-Fulani rule and hegemony."[254] In

another example, Christian indigenous leaders instigated the Movement for a Middle Belt

Zone – known at its creation in 1949 as the Non-Muslim League and then in 1950 as the

Middle Zone League – that pressed for a Middle Belt region that would be autonomous

from the Northern Region.[255] Such efforts threatened the political superiority and power

of the northern elite, and the British sought to quell such movements through a policy of

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[253] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (September 7, 2011).
[254] Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy,* 97.
[255] Andrew E. Barnes, *Making Headway: The Introduction of Western Civilization in Colonial Northern Nigeria* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 242.

co-option in some cases, assuring religious freedom to the non-Muslim Christian groups that feared Islamization.[256]

Ultimately, these processes of change in both the religious and political terrain of northern Nigeria did not slow in the post-Independence era. The about-face by Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna or Sultan of Sokoto, in the 1960s from a policy of preaching religious tolerance and respect to one of preaching the necessity of conversion to Islam was none to reassuring to non-Muslims and Christians. At the same time, the shift in the form of missionary education and its expansion brought to the fore a new Christian political elite with new demands. The Pentecostal-charismatic Christian revival that gained significant religious ground in the north in the 1970s and 1980s (following the devastating Biafran ethnic civil war), as well as a series of religio-political events, only enhanced the perception of a Muslim-Christian identity cleavage in Nigerian politics.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic Revival

In post-colonial Nigeria, the removal of restrictions on Christian missionary activity in the north along with the Pentecostal-charismatic revival of the 1970s and 1980s opened a space for the politicization of ethno-religious identity in national politics and raised the specter of inter-religious conflict. By this time, the increased political presence of Christians in politics (and the politicization of religion in general) sacralized political contestation in Nigeria as a whole. Religious identity could now span and unite different ethno-tribal divisions, particularly among the formerly non-Muslim groups of

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[256] One example of the attempted cooption is that of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the first premier of northern Nigeria and the Sardauna of Sokoto, whose speeches were meant to re-assure Christian groups that they would have social and religious rights within a Northern Region. His tune changed, however, after the political movement had been co-opted and pacified. In the 1960s, Ahmadu Bello went on religious preaching campaigns proclaiming the necessity of conversion to Islam.

the Middle Belt and far northern states. The religious change of this period enhanced the perception that politics in Nigeria is a conflict of religious kingdoms.

The beginning of the major Christian religious surge in Nigeria occurred not long after Nigerian independence when a new Christian movement began to sweep the south. The Pentecostal-charismatic movement found fertile ground in southern Nigeria in the 1960s and subsequently began to spread to the north in the 1970s. As Falola and Heaton observe,

> This period witnessed a resurgence of global Islamism and Charismatic and Pentecostal growth worldwide, leaving significant influence in Nigeria. These trends affected the religious terrain and gave great impetus to identity consciousness and protestations as most religious adherents became radicalized and easily mobilizable. This period witnessed the emergence of radical and politically motivated religious groups and fellowships across Nigeria, particularly in Northern Nigeria.[257]

In the south it took a different form than in the north, however. The movement started among university students who were said to have experienced an "outpouring of the Holy Spirit," and it became so widespread that it infused the more conservative mainline evangelical denominations. "The Christian revival in the early 1960s [New Life for All]," according to a local scholar, "cut across *all* Christian denominations," such that people "came together in the evening in wards for praying and evangelism; outreach teams went door to door, village to village, town to town, region to region."[258]

While the revival attracted large followings from other denominations in the south and was primarily student-led, it was treated with suspicion and rejected by the mainline Protestant denominations in the south. In the north, however, the revival in the 1970s

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[257] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 14.
[258] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (March 1, 2011).

broke out *within* the more conservative mainline denominations. The emphasis was not on Pentecostalism *per se*, but on becoming "Born Again," a new experiential revelation of Jesus Christ. One local religious scholar recounts how Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) Radio, a station run by SIM, one of the oldest missionary organization in Nigeria, was instrumental in instigating the movement in the north. He described the radio's impact as "powerful…It brought about revival in the Middle Belt…there were large conversions – non-believers, Muslims, traditional religious adherents converting."[259] Subsequently, leaders and students formed organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian students in the north and furthered the advance of what they later came to identify as the "Pentecostal" or Pentecostal-charismatic movement. Even among young people in the Anglican and Catholic churches, a Pentecostal-charismatic movement or strain emerged. In terms of Pentecostalism's lingering influence on the Anglican church today, this scholar of religion notes that it is very evangelical.[260]

Not all of the denominations welcomed the movement in the north, but it profoundly influenced them. Reflecting on the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in northern Nigeria, one expert on COCIN notes that "COCIN was scared." "A strange thing happened in 1972," he continued, "Gindiri, normally considered the Jerusalem of COCIN," experienced a "sudden outpouring of the Holy Spirit. People were led by the Holy Spirit and God was speaking to a number of people. And the movement spread from Gindiri to Bauchi area, to Jos area, to parts of the Middle Belt."[261]

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[259] Ibid.
[260] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (April 4, 2011) .
[261] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (April 15, 2011).

While the initial sentiment of COCIN toward the movement was positive, believing that the hand of God was moving in some way among their churches, feelings soon changed. "By the end of 1972," the expert noted, "it was misused." That is, the church soon found that pastors or congregants were falsely claiming things in the name of the Holy Spirit or God, falsely speaking in tongues, or falsely demonstrating the Spirit's power. In general, as the religious scholar notes, "the mainline response was suspicion. All of them were suspicious of the movement except for the organized African churches."[262] Within COCIN churches, the movement had more or less fizzled out by the end of 1974 and there was "not much presence of Pentecostalism in COCIN."[263] Yet, despite the denomination's suspicion of the movement, the Pentecostal-charismatic influence can still be found in up to one-fourth of the urban COCIN churches, in the estimate of the COCIN expert.

The Revival Spurs Christianity's Expansion

Whatever the mainline hesitancy toward Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, a number of new churches sprung from the movement in the 1970s and grew at enormous rates in both southern and northern Nigeria. The revival spread across all denominations, particularly in the south, and led to the emergence of new indigenous-led churches, such as Redeemed Christian Church, Deeper Life Church, and other mega-church movements that are now spread throughout Nigeria and into the north. More than thirty Pentecostal-charismatic denominations have been founded, growing at impressive rates and, in the

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[262] Ibid., interview with local scholar of religion (March 1, 2011). Note that the African organized churches are also called African Independent Churches and strongly influenced by African traditional religious practices.
[263] Ibid., COCIN expert.

case of some of them, with thousands of church congregations established throughout the country.[264] For example, Deeper Life Bible Church, which is one of the fastest growing independent denominations in the north as well as the south since 1970, currently has around 11,000 congregations. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, established in the 1950s and also strong in the north, boasts approximately 1.4 million members even with only 1500 congregation. Living Faith World Outreach, which got its start in 1980, has over 1250 churches and more than 620,000 members.[265] One of the innovations of the movement is that anyone who feels inspired by God to start his or her own church or to take the Gospel to a new area could do so without seeking the permission of some hierarchical authority. The spread of the Gospel, through whatever means, is the goal. Thus, it is not surprising to see new "churches" suddenly springing up on street corners in Nigerian towns on a daily basis – with tacked up signs, loud music, and preaching occuring at any hour day or night to go along with it. One of the more unique features of this phenomenon is the innovation and creativity of the pastors in distinguishing or naming their upstart churches. Some of the more notable ones that researchers of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre in Jos have come across include: Satan in Trouble Ministries, Holy Ghost Earthquake Commotion Ministries Inc., Guided Missiles Church, Real Fire Ubiquitous Ministries, Last Battle Prayer War Ministry, and His Battle Axe Foundation Ministries.[266]

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[264] The Aladura church, although still witnessing strong growth, is mainly concentrated in the south-west and its growth has declined since its heights in the 1930s. The new Pentecostal/charismatic churches have outpaced the Aladura church.
[265] Johnson, *World Christian Database*.
[266] Courtesy of the Nigeria Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre, University of Jos.

The trend is remarkable, considering that prior to the 1960s there were less than ten official and independent Pentecostal-charismatic denominations functioning in Nigeria, and these tended to be classical Pentecostals; that is, their emphasis was on individual holiness and strict living and they did not reflect the emphasis on divine healing, speaking in tongues, prosperity, and charismatic worship, which emerged with the revival of the 1960s and 1970s. The fastest growing and largest Pentecostal-charismatic churches are by and large far outstripping their more conservative Protestant counterparts in terms of growth rates. The Assemblies of God, ECWA, Baptist conventions, Methodist, and Apostolic churches have more than a million members each, but they have had more than half a century head start on the Pentecostal churches in some cases.

The international influence, although important in furthering the revival, was not the cause of the religious phenomenon and its rapid growth. Indeed, as one local religious scholar explains, "It didn't start as 'Pentecostal'; the name Pentecostal came later," once it was realized that the revival exhibited characteristics of Pentecostalism or its 'style' as found in other countries.[267] It was following the outbreak of the movement that leaders made the connection with the Pentecostal movement outside of Nigeria. Because the mainline churches reacted with suspicion towards the movement, the Nigerians in this new movement appealed to Pentecostal leaders in other countries for their leadership. Consequently, "the Western Pentecostal church leaders started interacting with Nigeria. They provided the leadership, structure, style, and form which was adopted," he notes.[268]

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[267] Ibid., interview by Laura Thaut (March 1, 2011).
[268] Ibid.

When the Western evangelists came to Nigeria, the Nigerians then adopted their preaching and teaching style. The "crusade," for example, a Christian event usually held at stadiums or other large grounds, is a western import designed to attract and covert thousands of people at one time through open air sermonizing.[269] Thus, "when this wave of Pentecostalism came in, people already were prepared to accept it. The Student Union and the [Fellowship of Christian Students] easily accepted the message, style, and emphasis. [Their revival movement] was no different from Pentecostalism."[270] The arrival of Pentecostalism or the "Born-Again" movement, therefore, was not a western imperial import. It was an indigenous Nigerian movement that then merged with the international Pentecostal-charismatic revival and subsequently connected them with Pentecostal leaders in the West from whom they would benefit.

Explaining the Growth and Success of the Movement

What explains why this religious movement took root? Was it, as adherents claim, due to the "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" among the population at this particular point in history, or did the new Christian movement provide answers to the dire socio-economic and political plight of the average, struggling Nigerian? One's response is likely to vary depending on the assumptions underlying one's ontology, but a number of factors likely shaped the strong appeal of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement in Nigeria.

As scholars of the global resurgence of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in the global South have noted, the wave of Pentecostalism that took root at the beginning of

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[269] Note, however, that the conversion results of such crusades is unclear – whether there have actually been "thousands" of conversions at Nigerian crusade events or whether the attendees are primarily Christians even when hosted in cities, such as Kaduna or Kano, with a large or majority Muslim population.

[270] Ibid., interview with local religious scholar by Laura Thaut (March 1, 2011).

the 1970s in many countries and the Neo-Pentecostalism that emerged in the 1980s provided, or at least *claimed* to provide, answers to the socio-economic and political trials faced by Nigerians and others.[271] Furthermore, the charismatic style of worship and the beliefs regarding spiritual and the physical life fit well within the spiritual worldview and practices of African traditional religion. Both personal spiritual and social transformation can be achieved through the "re-birth" that the movement preaches, and the supernatural can also be tapped for power over everything from the invisible demons to the ever present and gut-wrenching poverty faced by the average Nigerian. In a cultural contexts in which the spiritual is intimately bound up with people's understanding of their daily struggles, it is not surprising that a message and promise of hope and God's power to overcome harmful spiritual forces and life trials would find reception among a vast segment of Nigerians. With oil prices stagnating at the end of the 1970s, the Nigerian economy and people suffered severely, and political leaders were failing to deliver the socio-economic and political stability Nigerians expected. As Falola and Heaton note, "The charismatic movement offers an alternative path to social and spiritual well-being, and attracts members by addressing people's needs for community development, physical, mental, and spiritual healing, and the hope of prosperity in this life and the next, all of which the Nigerian state has been unable to provide."[272] What is perhaps most interesting is that this phenomenon of Pentecostal-charismatic revival is not unique to Nigeria; across Africa, Latin America, and the global South, this brand and message of Christianity has grown or been rapidly "poured out" since the 1970s.

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[271] See Marshall 2009.
[272] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 221.

Politics of the Religious Change

In the initial stages of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement of the 1960 and early 1970s, the emphasis was largely on personal holiness and individual salvation, eschewing a political agenda or political involvement. Christian leaders taught that conversion, prayer, individual transformation and holiness would result in social transformation that would infuse the conduct of politics. This "holiness" emphasis characterizes what is now referred to as the "traditional" or classic Pentecostal denominations, but the new Pentecostal-charismatic wave introduced a theological shift. A new, more political face of Christianity emerged in combination with an emphasis on personal prosperity – the "health and wealth" or "name it and claim it" gospel. "While the charismatic movement remained largely apolitical throughout the 1970s," notes Falola and Heaton, "by the 1980s charismatic churches were beginning to take an active part in Nigerian civil society, lobbying the Nigeria government to be more responsive to the needs of the Christian community."[273]

And, it seemed, there was good cause for the reformulation of the Christian's role in politics and the abandonment of an apolitical view of church and politics. Corruption, poverty, unemployment, and political scandal were rife, especially with the fall in oil prices in the 1970s and the ensuing economic crisis that Nigeria and many other developing countries experienced. Hence, many Nigerians turned to a gospel that claimed to hold the answer to their problems and that went beyond an individualistic spiritualism to call for godly transformation of politics and society as a whole. It was during this period, therefore, that both Muslim and Christian leaders began to form religio-political

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[273] Ibid.

organizations and that religious identity became a salient and useful national and local political category, politicized by both religious and political elite. In tandem with the religious changes and sacralization of politics, inter-religious or ethno-religious communal violence began to shake up northern Nigeria in the latter part of the 1980s.

This politicization is evident on any given Sunday in Nigerian churches. Not only is the church claiming a political voice, it is actively pressing for and equipping Christians to participate in politics. Attending a Sunday worship service early in 2011 at a prominent Protestant church in Jos, Plateau state, this dynamic was evident. The special speaker was a former pastor and local political representative who spoke on the topic of Christians and politics. After briefly noting the calling of God for him to be in politics, he highlighted the binary between the way of God and the way of evil found in Scripture. "The Bible is so much a book of conflict," he noted, and the "most basic conflict of life is a conflict between God and evil…armies are arrayed on both sides…you are either in one or the other," and, "if you don't have the spirit of God, you are on the side of the devil." Politics, he argued, is the arena in which this struggle between God/good and evil is played out.

The crux of his message was that it is the duty of the Church to raise up Christian leaders who can go into politics. One of the failures of the church, he noted, is that it "has never been successful in taking over the power, privilege, resources, and commanding heights in our land…Let's not deceive ourselves that God is not interested in what happens in Jos, in political parties…God is not here to take sides, He is here to take over." Otherwise the church risks the danger of being "overrun." Furthermore, the connection between a thriving church and political activism is clear from his message.

"When God raises [people into politics] we are at the threshold of a great revival," he argued, and, ultimately, a politically active and aggressive church is essential to God's agenda, since "God's purpose is to establish and defend Godly rule in Plateau State and all of the world." "I am convinced that the biggest resource God has for transforming this country is the local church," he concluded.

Similarly, pastors emphasized the political role of the church during a March 27, 2011 Sunday service at another prominent Protestant church in Jos. At the end of the service, a pastor made the announcement about the ongoing "political education sessions" the church was hosting and instructed congregants to pick up the manual "The Christian Becoming a Political Leader" written by Rev. Dr. Pandang Yamsat. The forward to the manual, written by Nde Alexander Molwus of the PDP in Plateau State, highlights the religio-political change that has taken place in Nigeria and infused the churches since the 1970s – the shift from a "kingdom-come" and holiness-oriented theology to a "this kingdom" orientation that preaches active Christian engagement in politics. He argues the following:

> In the past, the Church was lukewarm in elections and electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. However, the ever growing destruction of li[fe] and property and Church building at any electioneering, has made the church to be focused and interested in what the State and its statutes are doing, so as not to get more churches burnt and more members dying on such necessary clashes! The Church and its leadership cannot involve itself in partisan politics, but it cannot shy away from what happens in the political arena and in the corridor of government since they affect the church for good or bad.[274]

Furthermore, Yamsat notes in his introduction,

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[274] Rev. Pandang Yamsat, *The Christian Becoming a Political Leader* (Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 2011), v.

In spite of the significance of politics and political leadership in the life of a people, right from the time of the Colonialists until the seventies, politics was not thought to be for Christians but for unbelievers. Very few Christians ventured to go into politics then and those who did were not thought to be true Christians.[275] …However, if the church would impact the globalized world of the twenty first century, it must take politics and political leadership seriously…It is for this reason that the Holy Bible says that political leadership is instituted by God for the purpose of caring for his creation, of which human beings are the chief beneficiaries. That is why the church can no longer shy away from politics… To change the trend of politics for good in Nigeria, the church leaders must encourage faithful Christian men and women that God has bestowed with the gift of political leadership to go into partisan politics, while the church leaders participate in non-partisan politics by speaking in favour of the rights of their members, their rights to vote and be voted for and by speaking against any form of injustice and oppression in the land. It is the responsibility of church leadership to sensitize Christians on politics and political leadership so as to enable them [to] play politics according to the teaching of the word of God, without which they will never succeed in the world of sin. Failure to do so, the church will wake up one day to see that it can no longer worship in its beautiful and gigantic cathedrals and preach the gospel on the streets and villages of its land freely….The handwriting is already clear in Muslim dominated States…[276]

Regarding the question of whether Christians should elect non-Christians (i.e. Muslims), Yamsat agues, "They must first of all know him or her to have a good record of fighting for the unity of the country and that such a person is not linked to the Islamic terrorism that has been a thorn in the flesh of this country since the eighties and not linked to the constant movements to turn Nigeria into an Islamic State."[277] Apart from this, he directs Christians to vote for whoever has the best interests of the country and its people at heart without discrimination on the basis of ethnic or other identities.

A similar message was preached from the pulpit at another prominent Protestant Jos church on April 3, 2011. Regarding the upcoming elections, the pastor instructed his

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[275] Ibid., 1
[276] Ibid., 2-3.
[277] Ibid., 35.

congregants that "whosoever the Holy Spirit lays it on your heart to vote for, vote." Yet, he then quickly added, "But He cannot tell you to vote a Muslim. He can't." In other words, congregants were instructed to vote for whoever they want based on their assessment of his/her merits, except that they are clearly voting against God if they vote for a Muslim.

This trend of Christian leaders encouraging active political participation and organization, as well as educating church members, is not unique to Nigeria. It is a trend that would have been unheard of in church circles prior to the 1970s, however. Furthermore, the emphasis in many Christian circles on the political role of the church being primarily a battle against the spread of Islam and Islamic political power in the country is rampant. Fears of the religious other, well-founded or not, are common on both sides of the religious divide. Consequently, in present day Nigeria it is common for competition over rights, representation, and political influence to take on strongly religious tones. The growth of many independent Pentecostal-charismatic churches gives the impression of an advancing Christianity that is intent on converting Muslims and claiming more political rights and power in the north. On the other hand, the rise of radical Islamic sects in northern Nigeria and the expansion of Sharia law conveys the impression that there is a new Jihad being waged that is intent on pushing south, dominating politics, and instituting Islamic law in the whole of Nigeria. These views are both at extreme ends of the discourse, but they are not uncommon. A series of events in Nigeria since the 1970s enhanced the perception of a war, or at least fierce competition, between Islam and Christianity for the religious and political domination of Nigeria. Although the causes of Muslim-Christian communal violence may be rooted in non-

religious socio-economic and political dynamics, the violence is increasingly characterized by a Muslim-versus-Christian narrative.

Religio-Political Events & the Muslim-Christian Political Cleavage

The issue of Sharia law

One of the most significant issues that sparked tension between the Muslim and Christian communities occurred in the late 1970s when Muslim majority northern states began to press for the adoption of Sharia criminal law. Nine states succeeded, and, in the opinion of the Christian communities, this move directly challenged the constitutional guarantee that "[t]he Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion," which was put in place to protect the religious rights and ensure the equal treatment of a nearly evenly split Muslim-Christian Nigeria.[278] The debate galvanized the Christian community. As Falola and Heaton recount,

> By far the biggest religious issue of the times was the debate over the implementation of Islamic *shari'a* law at the federal level. As early as 1978, when Nigeria's new constitution was being drafted, northern Muslim activists lobbied for the inclusion of a *shari'a* court of appeals so that Muslims could be judged by Islamic law at the federal level. Christians and practitioners of indigenous religions opposed this move, however, arguing that it was a violation of the dedication to a secular state and marked the beginning of an "Islamization" of Nigeria. The proposed *shari'a* appellate court provoked a walkout from the Constitutional Assembly on the part of Christian elements from the middle belt states. In the end, a compromise was reached, allowing judges versed in *shari'a* law to sit on cases in the regular appellate court that had originated in local *shari'a* courts.[279]

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[278] *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999*, Chapter 1, Part II, Section 10, http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm (accessed July 25, 2012); See also Gaiya 2004, 370-1.

[279] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria,* 205.

The debate over the implementation of Sharia law fed the notion that politics was increasingly characterized by Muslim-Christian conflict and that Christians must be politically active in defending their interests. The marginalization of Christians in the north was at stake, in the view of Christian elite, while Muslims argued that Sharia law would not apply to or affect Christians. Nonetheless, this dispute and the ones that followed created a narrative of us-versus-them that would feed into subsequent Muslim-Christian communal clashes. "The politicization of religious identity represented in the *shari'a* dispute marked a growing tension between Christian Muslim world views," continue Falola and Heaton, "a tension that has expressed itself ever more violently since the 1970s, with the development of radical religious movements that are more interested in fighting their religious adversaries than in lobbying for government reform."[280]

The debate over Sharia law did not end in 1978, however. At the time of return to civilian rule in 1999, Sharia was again back on the table, as a number of states in the north wanted to adopt Sharia criminal law in their judicial systems. Despite much Christian protest, many states again did so, bringing the total number of states with Sharia law to 12. The impact on Christian-Muslim relations is captured by Gwamna in his statement that,

> With the *re-introduction* of Shariah in some states of the Middle-Belt such as Kaduna, Niger, Bauchi and Borno, the ethnic and inter-religious relations were further widened between Muslims and of course the Christians who are opposed to it. In fact, the Shariah *re-introduction* from 1999 created strong consciousness along religious divides that polarized inter-religious relations to unprecedent[ed] heights than prior to this period.[281]

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[280] Ibid., 205-6.
[281] Je'adayibe Dogara Gwamna, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria* (Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2010), 32.

Indeed, the "initial confusion and stress" among the Christian population resulted in a "violent backlash in states such as Kaduna" in what became know as the deadly Sharia riots.[282]

The fallout persisted in northern Nigeria between Muslims and Christians, with Paden observing that it "tended to harden Christian and Muslim identities."[283] Especially in the Muslim majority northern states where Christianity has made significant inroads since the 1970s, the adoption of Islamic law raised fears among the Christian ethno-tribal groups, seemingly calling into question the constitutional assurance that 'The Government of the Federation or a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion."[284]

The OIC dispute

Along with these concerns over Sharia law, an event in the late 1980s also caused anger to flare and sparked violent clashes between Muslims and Christians. In 1987, Christian leaders accused Ibrahim Badamasi Babinga's military regime of going behind everyone's backs when he sought and was granted membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). This led to an outcry among the Christian population and subsequent violence, as it appeared that Islam would then dominate the state in contravention of the constitutional provisions on religious freedom. As one major Christian peace activist notes, "Because clearly the Christians said it is unacceptable –

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[282] John N. Paden, *Faith and Politics in Nigeria: Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2008), 58.
[283] Ibid., 23.
[284] Gaiya, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 370.

Nigeria is a secular state, Nigeria is not an Islamic state – they saw it as first step toward Islamizing the country using political means. What [the Muslims] could not get through the Jihad, they were now trying to use political power."[285] Indeed, disgruntled by this event and though they ultimately failed, six Christian military officers attempted to overthrow the Babangida regime in a 1990 coup.[286]

Again, despite formal respect for religious freedom, actual government policies and initiatives increased tensions and fears that either Muslims or Christians would dominate state power to the detriment of one or the other ethno-religious community. As Philpott notes, such conditions create a potentially volatile social and political environment. Where a single ethno-religious community is identified with or dominates a regime to the detriment of other ethno-religious communities, there is the danger that this will "swell dissent and create regime opposition that, even if repressed, will create a permanent situation of domestic political instability."[287]

Creation of religious organizations/political bodies

By the 1980s, both Christianity and Islam constituted nearly an equal portion of the population. The percentage of persons belonging to African Traditional Religion had decline to single digits, and Christianity was now strongly flourishing in parts of northern Nigeria (and Middle Belt states in particular) where missionaries and church's targeted their evangelism efforts. The sacralization of politics took on heightened visibility and greater significance during this period. Religious leaders came together to form

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[285] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (June 3, 2011).
[286] Paden, *Faith and Politics*, 22.
[287] Daniel Philpott, "Christianity and Democracy: The Catholic Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004), 43.

organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to represent the voice of the Christian community in the halls of politics. As noted by one Christian leader and activist, "The simple reason CAN was formed was to preserve the voice of the Christian minorities in the North. That's the real reason. And to give them a platform in which they would speak to political issues… If you had not had groups like CAN in existence, Christians would have been shut out completely from the political arena."[288]

CAN is an example of the organization capacity and political influence of Christian churches in Nigeria. Despite the non-hierarchical structure of Protestant churches and the variation among them, CAN symbolizes the "political unity" of Christians and has contended on their behalf since the late 1970s. For example, when it came to Christian opposition to Sharia law, to membership in the OIC, and to violence against Christians or church property, CAN helped to mobilize Christian politicians to oppose and bring pressure on the state to contravene these apparent violations of religious freedom and worship.[289] CAN sought to prevent the "Islamization" of Nigeria while also lobbying the government for greater employment opportunities for Christians, as well as state-sponsored pilgrimages for Christians to complement the state sponsorship of the Islamic *hajj* in place since 1975.[290] Other Christian organizations, including the Association of Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri Christians and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) are also active on issues affecting the religious freedoms of Christians, particularly in response to the perceived fears of radical Islam.

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[288] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (June 3, 2011).
[289] Gaiya, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria,* 369. See also Paden, 45.
[290] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Northern Nigeria*, 221-222.

In entering the political arena, Christian organizations came into direct conflict with Islamic organizations also engaged in politics since the 1970s. Organizations such as the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) had long been pushing the Nigerian government to adhere to more Islamic norms of governance. These included, among other things, changing the weekly day of rest from Sunday to Friday, removing symbols of Judeo-Christian traditions from public space, and, above all, allowing the spread of Sharia law and courts.[291] These political interests hardly seemed too much to ask from the perspective of the Muslim community. The exacerbation of fears of one group's marginalization or domination of the other at a communal and national level through the series of religio-political events discuseed above, however, constituted the Muslim and Christian religious identities – across many ethno-tribal divides – as salient political oppositional forces. While Islamic and Christian organizations clashed politically on a number of issues, both Muslim Student Society (MSS) groups and Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) groups formed in universities all over the country, mobilizing the young around issues not only of religious devotion but also in protection of perceived threats from the religious other.[292] It is important to note, of course, that some of the Muslim and Christian organizations are more or less politicized or "extremist" than others. In general, however, these groups were established as the umbrella organizations that encouraged religious faith as well as expression of political concerns.

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[291] In respect to the Islamic law, they would ultimately prove successful to some degree in the north.
[292] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Northern Nigeria*, 221-222.

In the decades following colonial rule, with the failures of Nigerian elite to create a stable system of governance, with the massive conflict and loss of life during the Biafran civil war from 1967-1970, with the disappointments with successive military regimes that failed to create to conditions for economic growth and cracked down on dissent, with the emergence of a new brand of Christianity that promised hope and political transformation for a large swath of Nigerians, and with the perceived religious threat (particularly in the north) to a Muslim religious and political elite, religious identity became a salient political category around which elite mobilized on a number of divisive questions about the future of Nigeria. Taken all together, post-1960s events and religious changes emphasized a latent but potentially volatile religious fault line in the country that crossed ethno-tribal categories and began to coalesce in communal violence that pitted Muslims and Christians against one another from the end of the 1980s onward.

CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the dimensions and degree of religious change that occurred with the Pentecostal-charismatic wave of Christianity that took hold both in the global South as a whole and in Nigeria since the 1970s. Attention to this process of religious change and the attendent religio-political disputes is essential for understanding how Muslim-Christian identity became a major fault line and symbolic trigger of communal violence in northern Nigeria. The rapid expansion of Christianity in northern Nigeria among both mainline and Pentecostal-charismatic churches, the conversion of denominations away from an isolationist stance toward politics, and the socio-political dimensions and consequences of Christianity's growth raised its specter of importance in communal

relationships. The debate over Nigeria joining the OIC, the dispute over the expansion and implementation of Sharia law in northern states, the formation of politico-religious church umbrella organizations like CAN, the emergence of a more radical form of Islam in the north with expansionary political demands, and the continued growth of indigenous-led Christian churches intent on evangelizing and winning souls among the Muslim-dominant north are all factors that have sacralized political debate and been a catalyst for inter-religious violence since the 1980s.

This process of religious change also has a longer historical context. It is the northern fringe or Middle Belt states that are today the locus of inter-religious violence. Unlike the far northern states, the non-Muslim (now predominantly Christian) minorities in the Middle Belt states were much less assimilated and integrated into the socio-political and religious order of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim political establishment. It is not surprising, therefore, that the inter-religious violence of northern Nigeria is largely concentrated in those states that were less assimilated and less integrated into the religio-political arrangement under the Sokoto Caliphate and under subsequent Hausa-Fulani colonial rule. These were the areas where missionary's concentrated their evangelism and made the greatest conversionary success following independence, as well as where the establishment of Christian missionary educational institutions reached a population of marginalized ethno-tribal groups that helped lead to the emergence of a new "enlightened" Christian political class that threatened northern Muslim political domination.

Hence, it is no surprise that, as my data show, the less politically integrated and less religiously assimilated areas of the Middle Belt during the colonial period are now the areas more prone to inter-religious violence.

This is not to say that religious change is *the* cause of the havoc and upheaval of inter-religious violence occurring at various times in some communities of the north or Middle Belt. The argument, rather, is that religious change has been pivotal in shaping both the political debate and the terrain upon which community disputes and identities have been constituted and negotiated, even if the "root" causes of inter-religious violence are not entirely, per se, *religious*. The subsequent chapter delves into the importance of how scholars conceptualize "ethnic" conflict and the differences in the dynamics of ethno-tribal and ethno-religious communal violence in Nigeria over the past three to four decades.

CHAPTER 5

"Ethnic" Violence:

Patterns of Ethno-religious and Ethno-tribal Violence

"In divided societies, ethnic conflict is at the center of politics. Ethnic divisions pose challenges to the cohesion of states and sometimes to peaceful relations among states. Ethnic conflict strains the bonds that sustain civility and is often at the root of violence that results in looting, death, homelessness, and the flight of large numbers of people. In divided societies, ethnic affiliations are powerful, permeative, passionate, and pervasive."[293]

As the quote above emphasizes, ethnic cleavages are at the core of insecurity in many states. Inequality and competition along ethnic lines can lead to the polarization of groups, divisive political rhetoric, and, ultimately, violent mobilization to "resolve" disputes that are purportedly *about* a group's very identity. This is the danger of ethnic polarization in the contemporary world order. Indeed, cross-national conflict has declined while intra-state conflict has become the major form of violence in the post-Cold War world.[294] Yet, what do we mean by "ethnicity" and "ethnic conflict"? Is ethnicity a stable referent? Or how do changes in the construction of ethnic identity over time shape the capacity for its politicization and mobilization as the basis of difference among groups? In particular, is there a difference between the role that ethno-tribal versus ethno-religious identity plays in the constitution of identity in Nigeria and the phenomenon of communal violence?

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[293] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 12.
[294] See Uppsala University, *The Uppsala Conflit Data Program (UCDP): Charts and Graphs*, 2010, http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/charts_and_graphs/ (accessed 19 March 2012).

These are the questions that I take up in this chapter. As the preceding chapter highlighted, many countries in the global South are undergoing rapid religious change as the number of religious adherents – Christians, in particular – expands. For countries such as Nigeria, the result is a political space infused with the politics of religious difference, competition, and fear, ultimately taking the form of an upsurge in inter-religious violence since the 1980s. This raises the question: how should scholars theorize ethnic identity and the functions it plays in the construction of communal violence? In this chapter I argue that current studies of ethnic conflict tend to collapse various types of identity into a single "ethnic" designation, thereby conflating the differences in the mobilizing or narrative-constructing role of different types of ethnic identities in communal violence.

In this chapter, I first discuss the importance of distinguishing between types of ethnicity in the study of ethnic identity and political mobilization. A discussion of the phenomenon of religious change and the ethnic category of religious identity elucidates the importance of the distinction. Second, I further support this argument with wholly original data collected on ethno-tribal and inter-religious communal violence in northern Nigeria since 1979, showing that the trends and precipitating events in cases of inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence tend to be very different. Finally, I discuss the inability of current datasets to capture the true extent of communal violence within countries, and why the newspaper data used to construct this dataset, even if imperfect, is the best data available for such analysis and avoids some of the major critiques of bias or unreliability.

ETHNICIT(IES)

<u>Conflating Identities & Losing Distinctiveness</u>

Ethnicity, as Horowitz's seminal work notes, is a construction of racial, linguistic, religious, tribal, or caste-based identities.[295] Varshney observes that most work now adopts Horowitz's broader conceptualization of ethnic identity, noting, "Ethnicity is simply the set to which religion, race, language, and sect belong as subsets in this definition."[296] According to Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnic identities are understood to be defined mainly by descent rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as religion, language, customs, and shared historical myths."[297] While scholars recognize that there are distinctions among different ethnic identit*ies*, little work has been done to dissect the importance of different identity constructions, particularly when they are overlapping in some fashion. For example, Gurr refers to religious identity only briefly in his well-known *Minorities at Risk* project as a "communal" identity, but does not address the conditions under which one communal or ethnic identity matters politically as opposed to another.[298] What explains, for example, why religious identity has become a major ethnic cleavage and fault-line of communal violence in Nigeria over the past 30-40 years, trumping tribal cleavages in some cases? When religious identity is merely folded into a broad conceptualization of ethnic identity, scholars overlook whether or how religious identity may function according to different processes, mechanisms, or logics of mobilization.

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[295] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*.

[296] Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 365.

[297] James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 848.

[298] Ted Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2000).

Part of the political significance of religious identity, I argue, is that it is generally more change-able than other ethnic categories such as caste and tribe. Although some of the most important work on ethnic identity and politics generally observes that people possess any number of "ethnic" identities that may or may not be emphasized or visible in a particular context, the studies of ethnic identity nonetheless fall prone to the conceptual problems Chandra critiques.[299] Ethnic identity is treated as a fixed category, as a "catch-all" category that eliminates the possibility that different sorts of identities could have different political logics – different causes and consequences of mobilization. A particular ethnic and religious identity may go hand-in-hand, but these identities are not stable and entrenched. Rather, they are reinterpreted and challenged in a context of simultaneous religious, social, and political change.

Applying the notion of non-fixedness and malleability to the study of religious change and identity, how might this concession affect analyses? Religious identity, unlike parentage, common history, or common ancestry is not a matter of tracing back one's identity to a common territory or bloodline. Rather, religion is generally a less fixed category of identity. Individuals can identify themselves with one set of religious beliefs or another depending on their convictions or motivations at a particular point in time. One may observe massive religious change or conversion in a society over time, but the same can hardly be said of ethno-tribal identity. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the reality of massive religious change in Nigeria has been demonstrated in two ways in less than a century: areas of Nigeria in the 1900s where Christianity was virtually non-

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[299] Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 397-424.

existent transforming, in some cases, into Christian majority areas today, and also the rapid growth of Christianity itself being driving by the Pentecostal-charismatic revival that took off in the late 1970s.

One simply does not observe "waves" of tribal conversions in the short term. Indeed, it is implausible to imagine – anywhere in the modern world – the conversion of hundreds millions of people from, say, no tribal identity to some tribal identity. The closest comparison might be conversion of populations to a "national" identity or, by contrast, the "failed conversion" and breakdown of states (e.g. former Yugoslavia) into many disparate nationalities. As Chandra notes in her definition of constrained change, "Attributes associated, or believed to be associated, with descent are, on average, difficult to change in the short term. By contrast, attributes not associated (or not believed to be associated) with descent can, on average, easily be changed even in the short term."[300] How identities take on meaning, become more or less "fixed" as a political and communal identity over time, then, matters for studies of identity and conflict.[301] Despite fewer constraints on change compared to descent-based categories, religious change can have a group-binding capacity and significant political consequences. It is for this reason,

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[300] Ibid., 414. Note that in the Nigerian context, my designation of some violence as "tribal" is not meant to primitiv-ize or primordial-ize Nigerian identities. Rather, the reference to tribal violence designates violence between groups identified by their ancestral identity. While it is not a simple matter, as Chandra (2006) highlights, to decisively define a person's ancestral identity since these categories are malleable and often-times political, it is possible to speak of how people ascribe to various tribal identities in contemporary Nigerian society, identities which possess both historical and political significance. Furthermore, in Nigerian parlance, tribal identity is associated not only with ancestral heritage but often with a particular territory. This point is important since one's indigenous status – one's place of origin – is an important political category in Nigerian politics. It often shapes an individual's access to rights, resources, and representation in a particular political and geographical space.
[301] Religious identity can, indeed, take on a greater degree of fixedness. In some families, whether in Nigeria or the U.S., the decision to change one's religious identity may have significant consequences for family and social relationships, resulting for example in being shunned or essentially ostracized by friends and family. In some countries in the Middle East, conversion is an offense punishable by death. In some contexts it may hold more political importance among descent-based groups than tribal-based identity.

I argue, that the politics of religious change and identity should not be conflated with other identity categories.

The importance of excavating the implication of particular politicized ethnic identities has not gone entirely overlooked.[302] Further research should engage with these questions, examining, in particular, the significance of religious change in the politics of the global South. As highlighted in Chapter 4, these questions about the saliency of ethnicity identities over time must take into account processes of religious change – in numbers and in type – among religious groups.

Ethno-Tribal vs. Ethno-Religious Identity

One of the most important and most-taught pieces in graduate seminars that addresses the saliency of different ethnic identities is David Laitin's story about Yorubaland. For almost two decades, his study of the saliency of religion and tribe among the Yoruba has influenced the study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict. The question he asks is: why, in a context of religious pluralism, is tribal identity politicized but not religion? By the beginning of the 1990s in Nigeria, religious change in combination with political manipulation elevated religious identity to a politically exploitable category for Muslim and Christian elite, but religious difference did not become a major cleavage among the Yoruba of western Nigeria. This seemed counter-intuitive. As Laitin observed, despite the politicization of religious identity in Nigeria and the potential gains for the

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[302] *e.g.,* Daniel N. Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). In looking at the politics of ethnic coalitions, Posner asks why it is that one particular ethnic identity is more politically salient than another. As Posner (2005, 2) queries, "Why do politicians emphasize (and why do people respond positively to appeals couched in terms of) race rather than language, religion rather than tribe, caste rather than state? Under what conditions does the dimension of ethnic cleavage that is salient change? When does politics shift from being about religious differences to being about language differences, from being about country of origin to being about race?"

Yoruba in the west to split along Muslim-Christian lines, religious identity did not become a salient political cleavage.[303] Ancestral or ethno-tribal identity is a more salient ascriptive identity, he finds, trumping religious identity and reducing the propensity of inter-religious violence among the Yoruba.

I ask a similar question, but flipped on its head: why, in a context of ethno-tribal pluralism, *is* religion politicized over and above tribal identity? Why is *religious* identity the primary cleavage of communal violence in some cases as opposed to long-standing descent-based tribal identity? In contrast to Laitin, I find that religion has indeed become a salient political cleavage in Nigeria, leading to recurrent and devastating inter-religious communal violence in some ethno-tribally diverse communities in the north. The argument that religious identity can serve as a powerful mobilizer of group difference and violence is demonstrated over and over again in communities in northern Nigeria over the last 30 to 40 years. Laitin's work does not respond to the puzzle of why inter-religious communal violence would flare in some pluralistic communities in the Middle Belt and not others under similar conditions, as his analysis focuses on the sub-tribal ancestral heritage among the Yoruba ethno-tribal bloc.

This study, in contrast, examines both major ethno-tribal blocs traditionally politicized in Nigerian politics *and* religious blocs more recently politicized to assess the interaction of the politics of identity. Furthermore, at the time of Laitin's writing there had been only a few major cases of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria and major inter-religious political disputes had not yet occurred. Inter-religious violence has only become more frequent and religion more politicized. Consequently, Laitin's work does

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[303] Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*.

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not appear to offer much insight into what is now a major theatre of inter-religious

violence in northern Nigeria – the Middle Belt states. In this sense, I argue that the theory

presented in this study – about the nature of religious change and local institutions - is

potentially more generalizable in Nigeria and to other countries where ethnic groups

often live in mixed communities and the politics of identity is rife.

Religious identity trumps: Examples from violence in northern Nigeria

Since the 1980s, Muslim-Christian violence has steadily increased in Nigeria,

many of the incidents involve relatively few deaths, but some involve hundreds of deaths,

not to mention the hundreds and thousands often displaced even in relatively "small-

scale" skirmishes. Although tribal and religious identity may overlap in many of these

cases, one increasingly finds that religious events or narrations are more likely to spark

the communal violence. In Jos and a number of other communities affected by communal

violence, the ethno-tribal "indigenous" versus "non-indigenous" or "settler" division

would seemingly be a sufficient cleavage around which groups could mobilize a narrative

of difference. After all, the politics of indigineity is a big issue in Nigerian politics and

some conflicts, including the civil war at the end of the 1960s, did pit ethno-tribal blocs

against one another. As Kraxberger explains regarding the dynamics of indigenous and

non-indigenous interpretations of belonging in Nigeria,

> "Status as an indigene is based on biological and ascriptive characteristics, and a
> person can only be an indigene of one area (often operationalised through local
> government or state boundaries). Whenever a person is resident outside his or her
> area of patrilocal ancestry, that person is regarded as a 'non-indigene,'even if the
> person was born in that area or has lived there for an extended period of time. In
> the current period, there is typically no way for non-indigenes to become
> 'naturalised' as indigenes. The designations of indigene and non-indigene are
> important since they are closely tied to citizenship practices, but particularly
> rights. The general pattern is that indigenes living in their homeland receive

preferential treatment in both the public and private sectors; non-indigenes are excluded from many opportunities and face discrimination on a variety of fronts."[304]

Groups deemed indigenous to a particular area of the country are advantaged over their non-indigenous "settler" counterparts when it comes to employment and education, for example, and this indigenous versus settler contest is often the basis for conflicts in communities and villages.

And yet in Jos and other areas the indigenous-settler divide, although perhaps present, is *not* the primary locus of communal violence in recent years. Instead, the Muslim-Christian divide has become the primary cleavage, narrating and propelling recurrent violence. As more than one interviewee noted, shared indigenous identity has been insufficient to unify local ethno-tribal groups against the non-indigenous Hausa-Fulani, but religion has this capacity. While comparing the Jos indigenous/non-indigenous conflict over ownership of Jos to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, one peace activist and Christian religious leader in Jos notes that indigenous status has not been the basis for mobilization, since "you need a platform to appeal to them, to bury their political differences," and "that platform is only through Christianity."[305] A professor at Jos University explains that although groups can appeal to ethno-tribal identity, it is more

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[304] Brennan Kraxberger, "Strangers, Indigenes and Settlers: Contested Geographies of Citizenship in Nigeria," *Space and Polity* 9, no. 1 (April 2005): 18-19. See also Ogoh Alubo, "Chapter One: Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria," in *Workshop on Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria* (Lagos: CLEEN Foundation/Ford Foundation, 2009), 1-18; Wale Adebanwi, "Terror, Territoriality and the Struggle for Indigeneity and Citizenship in Northern Nigeria," *Citizenship Studies* 13, no. 4 (August 2009): 349-363. As Alubo (2009, 4) notes, "Most of the people defined and treated as settlers do not regard themselves as such. In the Nigerian experience, being an indigene or a settler is a permanent identity, as there is no provision for the latter to convert to the former."
[305] Interview with religious leader/peace activist, interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (June 2011).

likely that their appeal will be viewed as the agenda of a *particular* ethno-tribal group

rather than as a shared interest among the local ethno-tribal groups:

> He's not going to get support from other ethnic groups, but he's going to get
> support from his own ethnic group. …But he needs more than that. [Consider]
> Jos. Jos has several ethnicities here. So if say Beroms say…'we Beroms are
> going to fight this'…well, then the other ethnic groups withdraw. …[They] will
> say 'Oh no, it's a Berom matter.' ...So the Berom's have to now say 'look, this is
> a Christian thing, and I've heard that in church,' and so on. And things like that.
> Even when the Hausas and the Fulani tended to narrow it to an ethnic group by
> the way in which they attack in recent times –they wanted to make it an ethnic
> matter – that divides them. But the churches had to preach, "No, this is not an
> ethnic problem, it's a religious thing.[306]

Instead of shared indigenous identity, therefore, shared religious identity has

become the basis for mobilization. In many cases, communal violence spreads on the

basis of shared religious identity even where the groups involved do not share the same

ethno-tribal identities or underlying grievances. The main point to emphasize here is that

religion and descent-based identities do not or cannot necessary do the same work.

Although one would hypothesize that shared indigenous identity – ancestral ties to the

land – would be a sufficient rallying cry against the presumed outsiders, Jos and other

cases show that tribal differences are not as efficient as religious differences in

mobilizing groups, giving weight to the significance of religious change and the

politicization of religious identity in Nigeria. This is why, as argued previously, it is

important to distinguish between categories of identity subsumed under ethnicity and to

explore how the politics of these identities may vary and operate according to different

mechanisms of mobilization. Religious belonging crosses ethno-tribal categories, can

appeal to a wider swath of the population, and, therefore, is more easily appealed to and

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[306] Professor at University of Jos, interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (April 4, 2011).

mobilized by those who view the politics of representation and rights as imbued by inter-religious competition. Hence, ethno-tribal and -religious identity matter differently for achieving mobilization (and a particular type of mobilization) because they emerged and are constructed as political categories with different group binding capacity. In the face of an offense or attack, while appeals to indigenous or ethno-tribal identity may effectively mobilize groups in particular areas of the north, an appeal or attack interpreted on the basis of religious identity can cross-tribal divisions and engulf far more of the population in communal violence or conflict. This is reflected in the examples of spillover violence discussed briefly below.

Spillover violence: Southern Plateau State violence – Yelwa, Shendem, Wase

If shared ethno-tribal identity, as Laitin suggests, is a more salient form of identity than religious identity, we should also expect that where groups hold no ethno-tribal affinity with the those involved in communal violence elsewhere, the violence should not spillover. Yet, as my data reveal, spillover violence is a frequent phenomenon in northern Nigeria. Retributive or revenge violence can occur in towns even a couple hundred miles away from the original incident on the basis of *religious* affinity. The events surrounding the initiation of the original case of violence may be largely unknown to actors in the spillover case(s), but the one similarity among them is religious identity. The "offended group" in the spillover case will attack members of the opposite religious group despite the fact that their "grievances" have nothing to do with the causes or precipitating events of the original incident and there was relative peace prior. Patterns of retributive violence also highlight the importance of not conflating ethno-tribal and religious identity, as one

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would not otherwise predict ethno-tribal communal violence in those cases where ethno-tribal affinities are not shared.

This pattern manifested itself in the conflagration that broke out in southern Plateau state in May 2004. In February of that year, the Muslim Hausa population carried out an attack on the Christians in Yelwa town in Shendam LGA, killing around 70 who took refuge at a church. In retaliation, Christians of various ethno-tribal groups in the area carried out an attack on Muslims in Yelwa town on May 2 and 3 that killed at least 400 people. The original attack was thought to be a strictly ethno-tribal (indigenous vs. non-indigenous) conflict over resources and political control, but waves of Muslim-Christian violence subsequently ensued throughout other LGAs in southern Plateau state where the ethno-tribal groups were distinct from the original victims *except* for shared religious identity. Indeed, Muslims and Christians came to blows in villages where the ethno-tribal groups had formerly lived together peacefully. The conflict was thereby constructed not as ethno-tribal but as inter-religious.[307] In Mikang LGA, Dinshak notes that the violence "metamorph[iz]ed into waves of violence by 2004, when the prominence of religion had become quite evident by the way and manner in which they were carried out: members of the same ethnic identity in the same community and even families turned against one another under the banner of their religions."[308] Furthermore, once violence had subsided

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[307] See Katherine Naanzoem Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State," in *Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria*, ed. Shedrack Gaya Best, 24-64 (Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2008). As Hoomlong (37-38) notes, even in Yelwa, one of the contributing factors to the tension between the communities was the ban on Christian girls having relationships with Muslim boys and the Christian opposition to the opening of two mosques in the town market in 2002 before the outbreak of the February violence.
[308] Luka Dinshak, "Conflict Escalation and the Effects of Conflict: The Case of Mikang Local Government Area, Plateau State," in *Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria*, ed. Shedrack Gaya Best, (Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2008), 88.

the Muslims sought to "underscore [the town's] new Islamic identity" after the displacement of Christian by re-naming the town "Zamfara," which is the name of the first state that adopted Sharia law in northern Nigeria. As Hoomlong notes, the "non-Muslims used this to project the point that the conflict had turned religious."[309]

The reverberations were felt wider than Plateau state. News of the violence trickled out and, as a Human Rights Watch report notes,

> One week later, on May 11 and 12, Muslims in the northern city of Kano—several hundred kilometers away from Plateau State—took revenge for the Yelwa attack and turned against Christian residents of Kano, killing more than two hundred. A once localized dispute in a specific part of Plateau State had escalated into a religious conflict of national dimensions.[310]

Although the roots of the Yelwa violence are attributed to economic and political competition between ethno-tribal groups (i.e. lack of power-sharing) in the local community, the violence unfolded along religious lines and co-religionists elsewhere interpreted it as a Muslim-Christian conflict.

This trend has repeated itself over and over again. Violence in Tafawa Balewa in southern Bauchi state sparked violence in Bauchi city as Muslims retaliated for the deaths of Muslims at the hands of Christians. Similarly, in Kaduna state, violence between Muslims and Christians in Kafanchan in 1987 sparked violence in Funtua, Zaria, and Kaduna city, as well as in cities in Kano and Katsina states.[311] Reflecting on the religious contours of the September 2001 violence in Jos, Human Rights Watch notes that "What

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[309] Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict," 44.
[310] Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the Name of Religion: The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States," *Human Rights Watch Publications*, May 26, 2005, http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/05/24/revenge-name-religion-0 (accessed August 30, 2011), 1.
[311] Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood 1980-2002* (Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003), 50-54.

had originally been ethnic and political conflict turned into a religious one, as the ethnic divide widened to coincide with the religious divide: the conflict between 'indigenes' and 'settlers' became a conflict between Christians and Muslims, as both sides exploited [religion] as an effective way of mobilizing large-scale support.[312]

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In sum, ethno-tribal and -religious identity do not necessarily share the same mobilizing properties, even in a context in which ethno-tribal identities are defined and recognized among the local population. And in a context such as Jos where the main issue is pronounced as one of indigenous rights to ownership of Jos versus non-indigenous rights, it is telling that religious identity is described as necessary to mobilize groups and, as my data show, is more likely to precipitate inter-religious violence than other political or economic events.

THE LIMITS OF WHAT WE KNOW: CURRENT DATA/STUDIES

In this section, I expound on the dearth of research on the subject of religion and communal violence, and I highlight critical weaknesses in current datasets (or the lack of relevant data overall) used to study inter-religious violence. Much of the cross-national research and large-N studies are focused on civil war or conflict between insurgents and the state and cannot get at dynamics of communal violence. They suffer from two related weaknesses: they do not capture persistent and low-level communal violence, and, hence, the conclusions they draw about the extent and nature of religious violence in the post-Cold War era are at least partly misleading

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[312] Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the Name of Religion," 2.

Much of what we know about religion's resurgence and its relationship to violence derives from studies that 1) do not capture intra-state violence; 2) only capture intra-state violence in which the state is one of the parties to the conflict; and/or 3) only include conflicts in which the number of deaths recorded is relatively high. For example, Jonathan Fox finds that religious conflicts since WWII have occurred almost as often as but are more intense than non-religious conflicts, and he finds that Christian groups are more likely to participate in religious conflicts than other groups. Similarly, Monica Duffy Toft finds that religion has been central to civil wars - and increasingly so since the 1940s – although by her estimate, *interreligious* conflict has not increased.[313]

However, the cross-national State Failure dataset used by Fox counts only six cases of religious violence in all of Nigeria, with most occurring prior to the 1980s. Likewise, the PRIO Battle Deaths dataset Duffy-Toft uses records a mere two cases of "religious civil wars" in Nigeria. In contrast, in my original dataset of communal violence in northern Nigeria, which spans the past 32 years, I found over 500 cases of inter-tribal and inter-religious communal violence combined. This dearth of cases in the PRIO and State Failure datasets is due to the fact that these datasets are not intended to capture cases of communal violence. The State Failure and Battle Deaths datasets only capture cases in which the violence resulted in 1,000 or more deaths (in the case of the State Failure dataset), or only record cases in which the state is one of the parties to the conflict

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[313] Monica Duffy-Toft, "Religion, Civil War, and International Order," Discussion Paper (Cambridge, Mass.: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006), 12.

(as in the PRIO dataset).[314] The threshold limitation applies to the Major Episodes of

Political Violence (MEPV) dataset as well, only capturing cases with at least 500

deaths.[315] Thus, these datasets are not designed to say anything about the nature and

breadth of inter-religious *communal* civil conflict in the post-Cold War era – such as in

Nigeria where a number of small-scale events have collectively resulted in thousands of

deaths over the past two decades alone and the displacement of thousands of people.[316]

For this reason, datasets such as the PRIO Non-State Conflict Dataset and the

Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED) may considerably advance the

study of communal or civilian conflict. In particular, ACLED goes much further toward

the goal of capturing low- as well as high-intensity non-state political violence.[317] Indeed,

as part of the rationale for these types of datasets, the authors of the Non-State Conflict

dataset note, "most of the research on collective violence has been state-centric, focusing

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[314] UCDP/PRIO, "UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook Version 4-2009" (Uppsala and Oslo: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), 2009).

[315] Monty G. Marshall, "Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) and Conflict Regions, 1946-2008," *Center for Systematic Peace*, July 28, 2010, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/MEPVcodebook2008.pdf (accessed May 20, 2011)..

[316] See Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998); Hanne Fjelde, "Sub-national Determinants of Non-State Conflicts in Nigeria: 1991-2006," *Presented at International Studies Association Annual Meeting* (New York, February 12-15, 2009). The empirical weaknesses in such large-N studies have sparked a research program on the micro-dynamics of conflict. See Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Mamoud, eds., *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Nicholas Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (2004): 259-279. See the following for critiques of other global datasets on conflict, such as the Correlates of War project: Ralph Sundberg, Kristine Eck, and Joakim Kreutz, "Introducing the UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 2 (2012): 351-362.

[317] The Non-State Conflict Dataset appears to be less comprehensive at present. When looking at the number of cases of communal violence in Nigeria included in the dataset, there are a mere 50 total cases of ethno-tribal or inter-religious communal violence recorded in *the whole* of Nigeria for the years 1989-2010. In contrast, my dataset includes over 500 cases of communal violence in Nigeria's northern region alone, with most of the cases occurring since 1987. The difference is likely due to the UCDP's reliance on sources available through the Factiva online news search engine, which does not always have major *local* country news sources available. In light of the overall dearth of cases, the dataset's other information sources – such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and local NGOs – also do not apparently provide comprehensive reports on individual cases.

on civil war and interstate violence," which "includes only those cases of political violence in which a state is involved; fighting between non-state actors is thus deliberately excluded."[318] There are nonetheless some limitations that current datasets such as ACLED face. They do not provide a fine enough grain of detail about the individual events or cases to analyze, for example, the role of different identities in fueling the conflicts or to study the pattern of precipitating factors that are most likely to spark inter-religious as opposed to inter-tribal lethal violence. Such insights can be garnered from more fine-grained data as discussed in the following section.

While the "small-scale" communal lethal and non-lethal violence may seem less significant than civil war violence involving hundreds or even thousands of deaths, there are important reasons why it should not be overlooked. Not only are such data important for the study of identity and conflict, but small-scale violence also entails significant social, economic, and political costs. Community markets, schools, and businesses close at even a hint of trouble, as observed first-hand during nearly a year of research in northern Nigeria. Human Rights Watch reports that since 1999 alone at least 13,500 people have been killed in Nigeria's inter-religious violence. [319] Populations are displaced and cities once religiously and tribally inter-mixed – such as Kano, Kaduna, and Jos – are now segregated along Muslim/Christian lines, propelling revenge and further divisions.

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[318] Sundberg et al., "Introducing the UCDP."
[319] Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: Use Restraint in Curbing Jos Violence," January 19, 2010, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/19/nigeria-use-restraint-curbing-jos-violence (accessed August 2, 2010). Indeed, inter-religious violence in Nigeria has become an endemic problem since the beginning of the 1980s. More recently, over 1000 people were killed September 7-13, 2001 in Jos in Muslim-Christian violence, according to Human Rights Watch (2001). See Human Rights Watch, *Jos: A City Torn Apart*, December 2001, http://www.hrw.org/node/76878 (accessed August 2, 2010); Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Toyin Falola, 1998;

Muslims and Christians who at one time freely associated with one another now consider it too dangerous to venture into one another's neighborhoods even during periods of "peace."

Although the scale of killing is often relatively low, the cost in terms of displacement can be massive and may feed into long-term distrust and renewal of conflict. Even in cases where no deaths are reported, the displacement can be considerable. In one such case in 1996 in Taraba state, for example, 15,000 people were reportedly displaced as they fled fighting with no reported deaths but with massive destruction of homes. An estimated 15,000 villagers also fled their homes for fear of further violence when a skirmish over a political appointment in Borno state resulted in the death of one person. In 2000, a tussle over a plot of land in a local government area of Borno state temporarily displaced thousands after 15 people were killed. As many as 25,000 and 50,000 people were displaced from their homes following communal riots or clashes in Plateau state and Kaduna state that killed anywhere from 50 to a few hundred people.

The costs to economic development over time are also substantial. In Kaduna alone, the state estimates that they spent 10 billion naira (66 million USD) on security from April to December 2011 following the post-election violence, and they spend approximately 200 million USD every month.[320] As one government official bemoaned in the *Daily Trust*, this is money diverted from local development. Indeed, the increasing frequency of communal violence does not bode well for the development of a strong

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[320] Sunday Isuwa, "Post-election violence costs Kaduna N10bn'," *Daily Trust* (Abuja, Nigeria, December 14, 2011).

state. Nigeria does not score well on the Failed States Index ("Critical" status and 14th

worst performer out of 177 countries) and the Polity Fragility Index ("High" fragility and

15th out of 164 countries).[321]

In sum, although most of the cases of low-intensity communal violence would not

register on the radar of civil war datasets, their human cost and toll over time should not

be ignored. Aside from the amount of national and international money diverted from

development and funneled into security, these cases of low-simmering conflict literally

divide communities and fuel the fire for renewed conflict on a far larger scale of lethal

violence and destruction.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE DATA: NORTHERN NIGERIA

The importance of distinguishing between inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence

becomes clearer when looking at the trend in these types of violence over time in

northern Nigeria from data I compiled from a daily Nigerian newspaper on their

frequency, location, and characteristics spanning 32 years from 1979-mid 2011. In the

analysis below I will focus on distinctions in "ethno-tribal" and "ethno-religious"

violence involving Muslims and Christians. I hypothesize that if it is true that ethno-tribal

and -religious violence follow similar logics of mobilization, this similarity should be

reflected in their pattern of precipitating events, their likelihood of deriving from or

leading to spillover violence, their trend over time, their concentration in certain states,

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[321] See Foreign Policy, *Failed States*, 2012,
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive (accessed Jan 18, 2013); Montey G
Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, "State Fragility Index and Matrix 2011," *Center for Systematic Peace*,
2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm (accessed Jan 18, 2013).

and in their scale and degree of lethal violence. I expect that one should observe very different trends and patterns of inter-religious communal violence as opposed to inter-tribal violence if my argument concerning the nature of religious change and the cross-tribal group-binding capacity of religious identity in contemporary Nigerian politics holds.

A brief discussion of how the data were coded and categorized as ethno-tribal and inter-religious is important both in terms of what it does and does *not* indicate. The identities of the groups involved in each case of violence are coded according to the identity referred to in the newspaper report(s). That is, if the newspaper reports only the religious identities of the groups involved (e.g. Muslim and Christian), then that case's "Type of Violence" is coded as inter-religious. If, however, the report refers to *both* the tribal and religious identities of the parties involved, then the case is coded as tribal-religious. Where only tribal identity is reported (e.g. Tiv and Jukun), the case is designated as Ethno-Tribal. In the analysis below, however, I collapse the first two types – inter-religious and tribal-religious – into Ethno-Religious. I do this primarily because I am interested in those cases that take on some semblance of an inter-religious conflict even if it references tribal identities. The goal is to understand how those cases that pit religious groups against one another differ from those constructed in the narrative as inter-tribal conflicts.

This coding, of course, raises the question: how does one know that a case only reported as Muslim-Christian is not also mobilized on the basis of ethno-tribal identity, or that a case reported only as inter-tribal is not also in some dimension religious? That is, the coding could be easily compromised by the source's potentially biased or flawed

description of the events. As Falola notes, "In many cases, trying to differentiate between a religious identity and a tribal one can either be difficult, impossible, or misleading. Hausa Muslims, for example, cannot describe their ethnic identity without mentioning Islam."[322] In response, first, because tribal and particular religious identities often coincide in Nigeria, it is not uncommon for newspaper reports to mention both the ethno-tribal and -religious identities of the groups involved (e.g. Hausa Muslims or Berom Christians). Studies or reports on inter-religious violence in Nigeria commonly also refer to the tribal identities of the parties involved even if it is largely an inter-religious conflict. In some cases, the reporting is clearer about the singularly religious dimensions of the conflict, such as when it is sparked by a religious event (e.g. the Danish cartoon crisis, religious defamation or desecration) or when it is spillover violence involving ethno-tribal groups unrelated to the original crisis. Thus, just because a report mentions the ethno-tribal identity of the groups involved as well as their religious identity, it is not cause to claim that the case therefore is clearly *not* religious.

Secondly, and most important in light of this potential critique, it is the precipitating events or reported causes, as will be discussed, that offer strong support for collapsing the categories of inter-religious and tribal-religious. Cases coded as *only* involving tribal identities show a pattern of reported causes and precipitating events quite distinct from those cases of communal violence involving groups identified by religious identity. For example, ethno-tribal disputes are most likely, as I show, to spark from a dispute over economic resources – cattle or cattle grazing rights and access or rights to land. In contrast, communal violence associated with members of a religious group (even

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[322] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 13.

if tribal identity is also mentioned) are most likely to spark from religiously symbolic events, such as desecration of a religious figure or symbol, disruption of religious worship, or an attack on co-religionists (See Appendices G and H for coding details). Thus, attention to the events and precipitating factors surrounding each case is important in how I determined the validity of the categories.

Finally, this method of coding does not presume that the communal violence itself is primarily a case of ethnic or religious hatred. As noted in Chapter 1, I am not measuring the "religious-ness" or "ethnic-ness" of the various clashes. That is, I do not make the claim that the clashes stem from innate religious differences in beliefs or identity. Instead, I aim to call attention to the rise of inter-religious violence, its characteristics and distinctiveness from ethno-tribal violence, and its association with religious change in Nigeria.

Total Figures

In Figure 5.1 below, I present data on the total number of cases of Ethno-Religious (the collapsed inter-religious and tribal-religious categories) and Ethno-Tribal communal violence since 1979.[323] These data were compiled from a daily Nigerian newspaper spanning 33 years from 1979-mid 2011. The number of cases of communal violence coded during this time period totals 520. If I included in this analysis the cases in which an ethno-religious or -tribal group is involved but the clash is intra-religious, targeted at the state/police (usually carried out by an extremist Muslim religious group), or the designated second party to the conflict is unclear, this total number shoots up to

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[323] In the collapsed Ethno-religious category, 66 of those were reported only mentioning Muslim-Christian religious identities and 134 reported by religious identities and tribal identities (e.g. Hausa, [non-]indigenous, etc.).

638. However, since this study is interested in cases in which communal groups are pitted against one another, the analysis will be limited to these 520 cases.

Figure 5.1: Cases of communal violence by type (1979-2011)
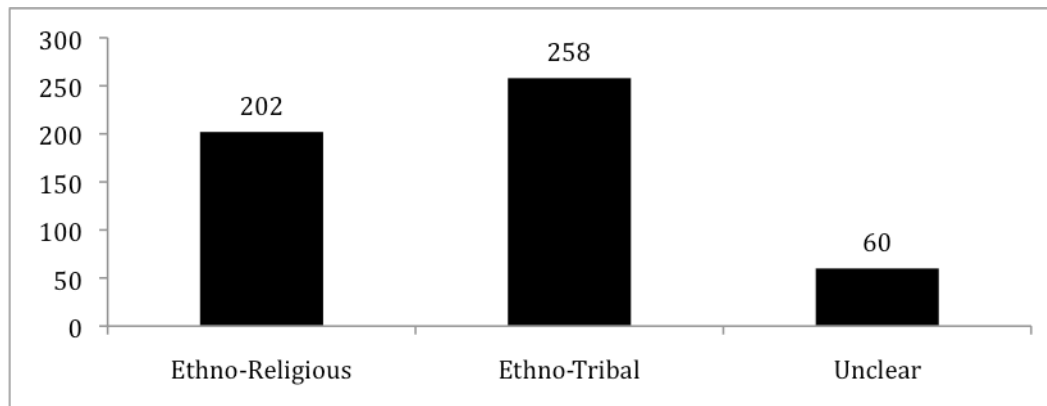
What these data immediately highlight is that the incidence of inter-religious and inter-tribal violence in Nigeria is far more frequent than what local scholars estimate and far more prevalent than any current datasets would lead one to believe. The director of the University of Jos Center for Conflict Management and Peace Studies writes that "[s]ince Nigeria's return to civil rule in May 1999, it has witnessed in quick succession, not less than forty violent conflicts."[324] That number should be far higher, as well as estimates that put the number of cases in the *whole* of Nigeria around 200 over the past 30 years. Nevertheless, even the figures above are likely low-balling it, assuming that not *every* case of inter-tribal or inter-religious violence is reported even if the newspaper is generally good about reporting small incidents as well as major upheavals.

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[324] Audu N. Gambo, "A Historical Analysis of the Tarok-Hausa/Fulani Conflict in Wase LGA of Plateau State 2002-2005," in *Historical Perspectives on Nigeria's Post-Colonial Conflicts*, eds. Akinwumi, Fwatshak and Okpeh Jnr (Historical Society of Nigeria), 37.

<u>Pattern of Reported Causes & Precipitating Events</u>

As noted above, one way of addressing whether religious identity has much to do with the incidence of supposedly "religious" clashes is by looking at the events most likely to be reported as causal and as precipitating the cases of communal violence. Consequently, I followed Varshney and Wilkinson's method of coding the reported causes (RCs) and precipitating events (PEs) reported in each case.[325] The RC is meant to capture the reported underlying issue(s) of the conflict; that is, the roots of the conflict. The PEs, on the other hand, refer to the events that actually *sparked* or precipitated the violence. I emphasize the precipitating events, in particular, since reports may highlight any number of socio-economic or political "causes" when reflecting on the violence. I expect the reported causes of inter-religious violence will be less consistently associated with religious disputes or events. In contrast, I expect that if religious identity (symbols, narratives, and actors) are significantly associated with inter-religious violence, they should be more likely to precipitate the violence than other political or economic events. In this sense, precipitating events tell us more about the saliency of religious identity as the logic of mobilization in any one case.

My hypotheses regarding the relationship between the RCs and PEs and the types of violence are as follows:

> H1: If the two types of communal violence – Ethno-Religious and Ethno-Tribal – are basically the same type of violence and their differentiation is not useful or telling, the RCs and PEs of both should not differ.

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[325] See Varshney (2002) and Wilkinson (2004).

H2: More specifically, if Ethno-Religious violence is rooted in a narrative of
religious difference, the RCs and the PEs are more likely to be reported as rooted
in religious events or offenses as opposed to economic or political events or
grievances.

In this sense, the reported causes and precipitating events will both help to confirm the
treatment of Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious violence as distinct types of communal
violence as well as shed light on the role of religious identity or events in the logic of
mobilization.

To code the RCs and PEs for each case, I created a four-page list of possible RCs
and PEs, many of them similar to those identified in Varshney and Wilkinson's
dataset.[326] While the full range of (general) coding categories and (specific) sub-
categories used can be found in Appendices G and H, the general categories employed
are as follows: Political, Economic, Religious, Ethnic/Tribal, Personal, Criminal,
Educational, Police-related, and Unclear. Each of the categories entails a number of
possible sub-types of factors to provide as much specificity in the coding of a case as
possible. It is important to note that a case reported as involving a Religious precipitating
event does not rule out a political dimension, as found in the sub-categories of the
"Religious" coding designation. The coding can also capture more than one possible PE,
both "Religious" and "Political" coding designations. For example, a case in which the
violence is sparked by a Muslim candidate losing a political appointment or induced by a

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[326] Some options, of course, were added or deleted to reflect the Nigerian context (e.g. the slaughter of a
cow does not possess the religious symbolism in Nigeria as it does in India).

political speech made by a religious leader is coded as a Religious event but, more specifically, as religio-political in the sub-category. A case in which the PE is coded purely as "Political," on the other hand, would indicate communal violence precipitated by an election campaign or election results in which a *religious dimension is reportedly absent* (e.g., unrelated to religious figures or contestation between ethno-religious groups).

Now to the question of whether cases I coded as Ethno-Religious violence are more likely to be associated with RCs and PEs that are religious in nature, Figure 5.2 below shows the association. The simple cross-tab shows that where RCs are concerned, Ethno-Tribal violence is predominantly associated with disputes of an economic and ethnic (tribal) nature. This would include, for example, disputes over cattle grazing rights or creation of a tribal chiefdom. In contrast, cases of communal violence in which the groups are referred to by their ethno-religious identity tend to be characterized by a mix of religious, political, and overlapping religious/tribal causes. These data fit with observations that cases of violence that pit both ethno-tribal and ethno-religious identities against one another are not simply uni-dimensionally "religious" conflicts.

Figure 5.2 Reported causes by type of communal violence
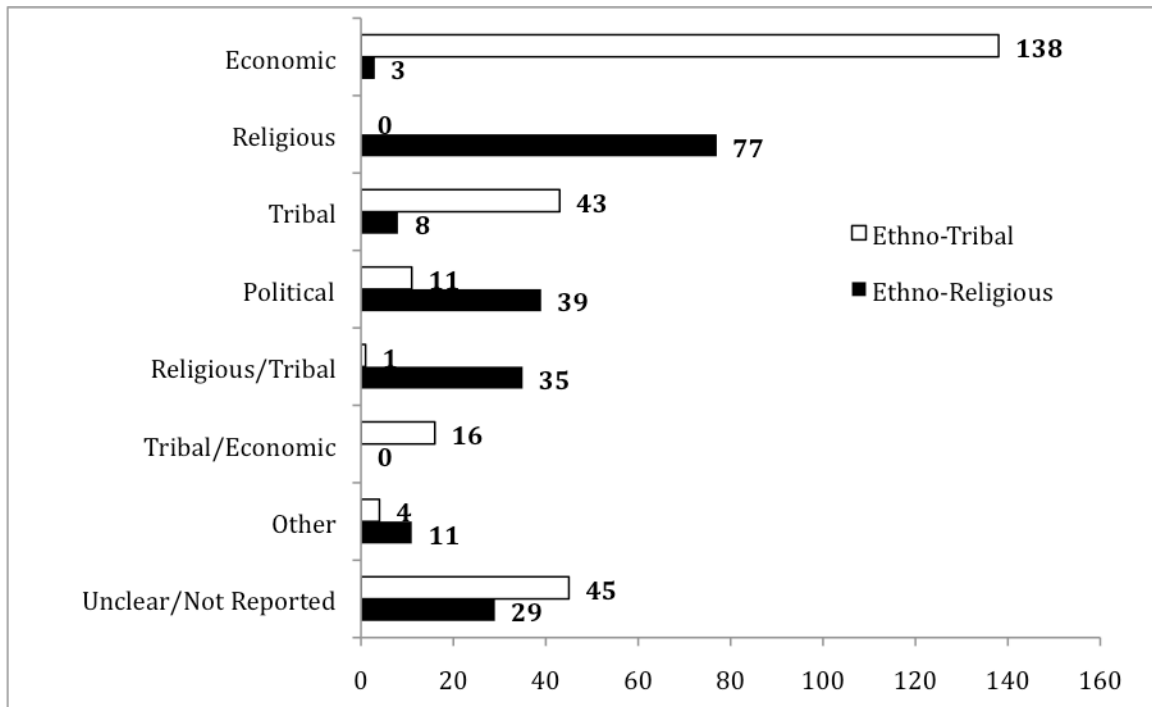
Note that too much weight should not be placed on "Political" causes in terms of this category's relative importance over time, as the majority of cases with this designation occurred in the 2011 post-election violence.

In general, these data show a clear divergence between cases of the Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious variants. Violence involving Muslims and Christians is far more likely to be associated with religious events. Violence reported as between tribal groups is more frequently associated with economic disputes. However, as previously noted, less weight should perhaps be placed on reports of underlying causes, as the commentary may be more subject to the reporters understanding of the history of the social, economic, or political relationships between the communal groups. For this reason, I place more emphasis on the role of religious identity in the description of events immediately

preceding the eruption of communal violence. The factors leading up to or directly

precipitating inter-religious communal violence, I argue, are perhaps more critical for

understanding the religious dimensions of a conflict or the likelihood of religious disputes

or offenses mobilizing the violence. Figure 5.3 below presents the frequency of PEs

associated with Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious communal violence.

Figure 5.3 Precipitating events by type of communal violence
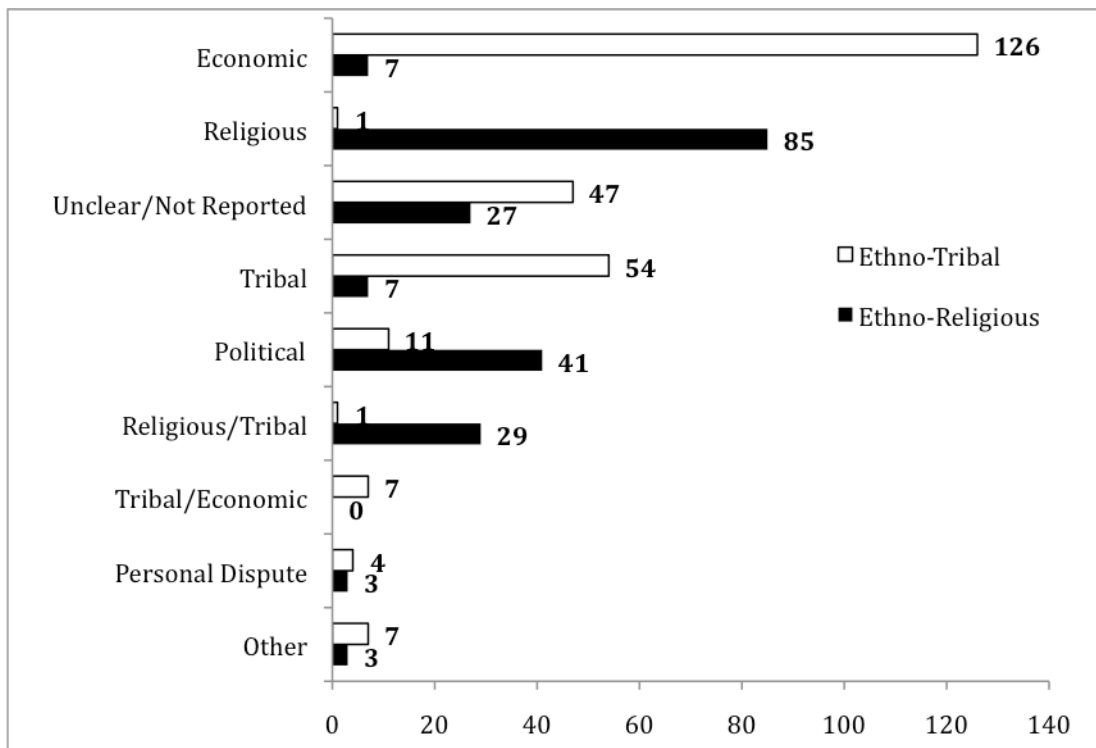
The data show that, as with the RCs, the PEs reported in cases of Ethno-Religious

communal violence are overwhelmingly religious or reported as a combination of

tribal/religious.[327] In contrast, Ethno-Tribal communal violence distinguishes itself as

predominantly sparked by economic and ethnic (tribal) disputes.

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[327] Like with the RCs analysis, the presidential election results in 2011 render "election results" from the Political category one of the most prevalent PEs in cases of Ethno-Religious violence. Almost all of these RCs/PEs were reported in 2011, however, and should probably be excluded for the purposes of this

These data confirm that even in their precipitating events, Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious communal violence tend to be distinct. Whatever the underlying socio-economic or political factors that go into shaping communal tensions, Ethno-Religious violence is far more likely to be incited by an event of religious significance than by any other economic or political event. Economic greed or competition for scarce resources, on the other hand, tends to characterize only Ethno-Tribal violence. If the basis for mobilization were similar for both ethno-religious and ethno-tribal conflict, this distinction should be absent. These data confirm that the logic of violent mobilization for Muslim-Christian conflicts differs from disputes between tribal groups.

Breaking this finding down further, I examine which types of precipitating events referred to as "Religious" are most commonly associated with inter-religious violence. As shown in Figure 5.4 below, Muslim-Christian violence is most often precipitated by an event of prior violence between Muslims and Christians (in the same town or elsewhere in the north). For example, the violence at the end of April 1991 in Bauchi city in Bauchi state resulted in upwards of 80 deaths, 5,000 refugees, and damage to dozens of places of worship and other property, but the incident that ignited the violence did not originate in Bauchi city. Instead, the violence was a reaction to prior violence in Tafawa Balewa in the southern part of the state where a dispute between a Muslim and Christian in a marketplace resulted in a brawl that snowballed into violence. When reports about the violence in Tafawa Balewa reached Bauchi city and Muslim Hausas saw policeman

analysis so as not to distort the general picture/trend over the past 30 years. Disputes over election results or political appointments have rarely been linked to cases of Ethno-religious or Ethno-tribal violence, and, in those cases where communal violence pre-2011 was linked to political appointments or elections, they were *all* related to *local-level* election/appointment disputes.

escorting the corpses of Muslim victims from Tafawa Balewa to the hospital, they

immediately mobilized in revenge by attacking Christians (and non-indigenous

southerners who are also predominantly Christian) in Bauchi.[328]

Figure 5.4 Types of precipitating events (PEs) in cases of *Ethno-religious* violence
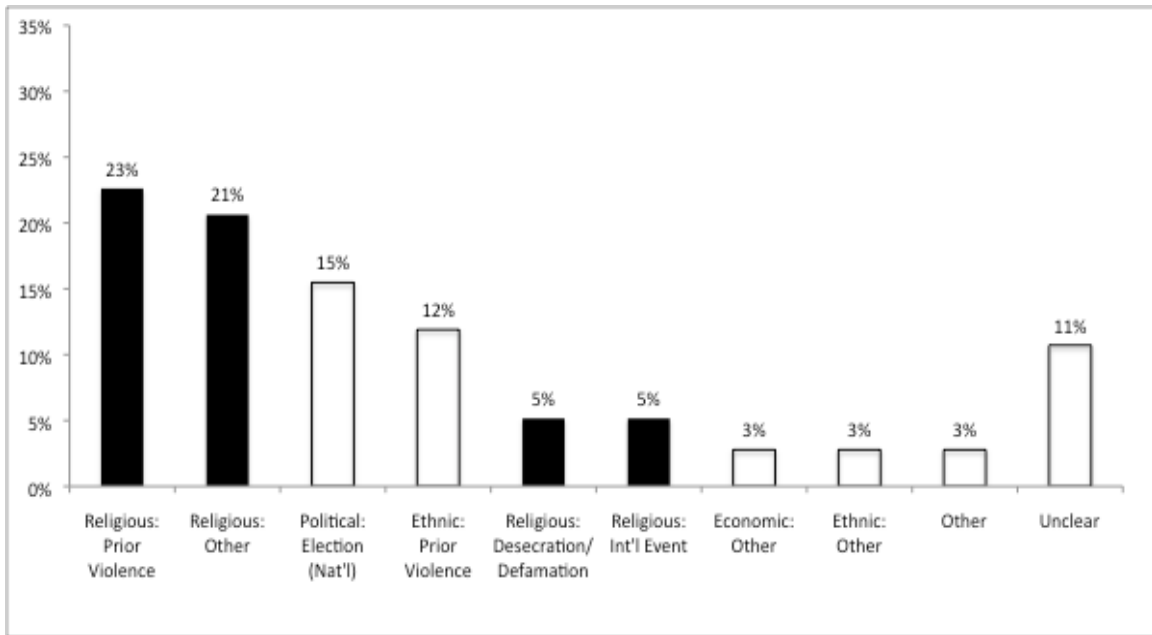
A smattering of other religious events collapsed into "Religious: Other" in the

chart above constitute 21 percent of the reported PEs. In this category, inter-religious

violence is spawned by perceived mistreatment of a religious group by another religious

group, disruption of worship services or religious processions, speech by a religious

leader, disputes over the implementation or expansion of Sharia law, and the list goes on

(each comprising about 3 percent of the total). For example, in February 2009, Bauchi

city was once again the site of Muslim-Christian clashes that left around a dozen dead

and around 4,000 displaced following claims that Christians had prevented Muslims from

attending Friday prayers or observing weekly Juma'at prayers at a mosque located nearby

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[328] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 207.

a church and that Christian youth had set a mosque ablaze. The series of events are not entirely clear, except that the clashes and retaliation were articulated as reprisal for hindering religious worship.[329] In one example of Sharia-related violence in February 2000, around 600 people were killed in areas of Kaduna city after attacks on a peaceful anti-Sharia protest march snowballed into violence.[330]

The other two most commonly cited religious precipitating events highlighted in the chart above are religious defamation/desecration and international events – such as the Danish Cartoon Crisis, the 9/11 terrorist attack on the U.S., the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan, and the Miss World Pageant – interpreted by ethno-religious groups as cause for mobilization. For example, in 1994 a man in Kano was attacked and beheaded by Muslim zealots after he was observed using sheets of the Koran to clean excrement, and rioters also lynched a woman in Gombe in 2007 for allegedly desecrating the Koran.[331] In November 2002, just prior to the Miss World beauty pageant scheduled to be hosted in Nigeria a month later, violence erupted when a journalist suggested in *ThisDay* – a national daily Nigerian newspaper – that the Prophet Mohammed would approve of the Miss World beauty pageant and perhaps might even wish to marry one of the contestants. The OpEd piece sparked a firestorm, and Muslim rioting in Kaduna resulted

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[329] *Guardian* (Lagos), 27 February 2009, 22-23. *Gaurdian* (Lagos), 13 February 2009. Godwin Ijedioger, "Blood on Their Hand," *Guardian* (Lagos), 28 February 2009, 49-50.

[330] Saxone Akhaine and Agoju Nadugba, "20 Feared Dead in Sharia Protest: Kaduna Imposes Curfew," *Guardian* (Lagos), 22 February 2001, 1; *Guardian* (Lagos), 23 February 2000, 1-2; *Guardian* (Lagos), 24 February 2000, 1-2; *The Guardian* (Lagos), 25 February 2000, 1-2; *Guardian*, "Sharia and the Kaduna Riots," (Lagos), 28 February 2000, 20.

[331] *Nigerian Standard* (Jos), 1 January 1994, 1-2; Auwal Ahmed, "Religious Rioters Kill Womean in Gombe" *Guardian* (Lagos), 22 March 2007, 80; *Guardian* (Lagos), 25 December 2007, 14.

in some 200-400 deaths, hundreds injured, and around 6,000 people displaced.[332] The

pageant was then relocated to London.

One will note that "Political: Election" (i.e., national election results) is also a

commonly cited PE of inter-religious violence. This figure is not, however, representative

of a common precipitating event for inter-religious violence in Nigeria. The cases in

which the outcome of a national election preceded inter-religious violence all occurred in

2011 following the announcement of the national presidential results. The election results

fit well within the Muslim-versus-Christian narrative, as presidential candidate

Muhammadu Buhari was considered by some as more representative of the Muslim north

and Goodluck Johnathan as more representative of the Christian south. Nonetheless, this

figure is not reflective of the overall pattern of inter-religious violence, but, rather, is a

worrisome recent trend.[333]

Finally, it is important to note that economic events – such as disputes in the

market or over cattle or land – almost never precipitate violence characterized as Muslim-

Christian. Inter-religious violence is most likely to stem from prior violence against co-

religionists elsewhere or offenses constructed or narrated as closely associated with a

group's religious identity. This does not rule out economic or political inequalities as

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[332] Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 238; *Guardian* (Lagos), 22 Nov 2002, 1-2; Austin Edemodu and Kelvin Ebri, *Three Days of Rage and Destruction Guardian* (Lagos) 24 Nov 2002; *Guardian* (Lagos), "Kaduna: A Smouldering..." 1 December 2002, 22; Yusuf Sarki Mohammed, "Eyewitness: Kaduna's Rioting," *BBCNews*.com, 22 November 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2502357.stm (accessed March 13, 2011).

[333] Perhaps this RC and PE would more appropriately be reported as a sub-category of the Ethnic and Religious RC and PE since one could impute the ethno-religious dimension that characterized the violence; one of the primary presidential contenders was a Christian southerner and the other was a Muslim northerner. When Buhari, the Muslim northerner, lost to Goodluck Jonathan, Buhari's supporters began attacking non-Buhari supporters or, in essence, non-indigenous/southern Christians living in states such as Gombe, Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Kano, etc. in the north. Muslim northerns tended to vote for the CPC party and Christians for the PDP. Identity and its significance in this post election violence is rather convoluted.

underlying Muslim-Christian communal violence in Nigeria. Rather, the point is that with

religious change and the contemporary politics of religious identity, religious events or

offenses in particular are far more likely to spark communal violence that pits Muslims

and Christians against one another, further entrenching a narrative of religious acrimony.

In contrast, cases of Ethno-Tribal violence reveal a decidedly different pattern. As

Figure 5.5 below illustrates, conflicts over land ownership/rights and cattle grazing rights

are the most commonly cited precipitating events, accounting for 50 percent of PEs in

communal violence reported by groups' tribal identity. Prior violence between tribal

groups is the next most common PE, followed by violence stemming from disputes

between tribal/communal groups over social or political rights or treatment.

Figure 5.5 Types of precipitating events in cases of *Ethno-tribal* violence
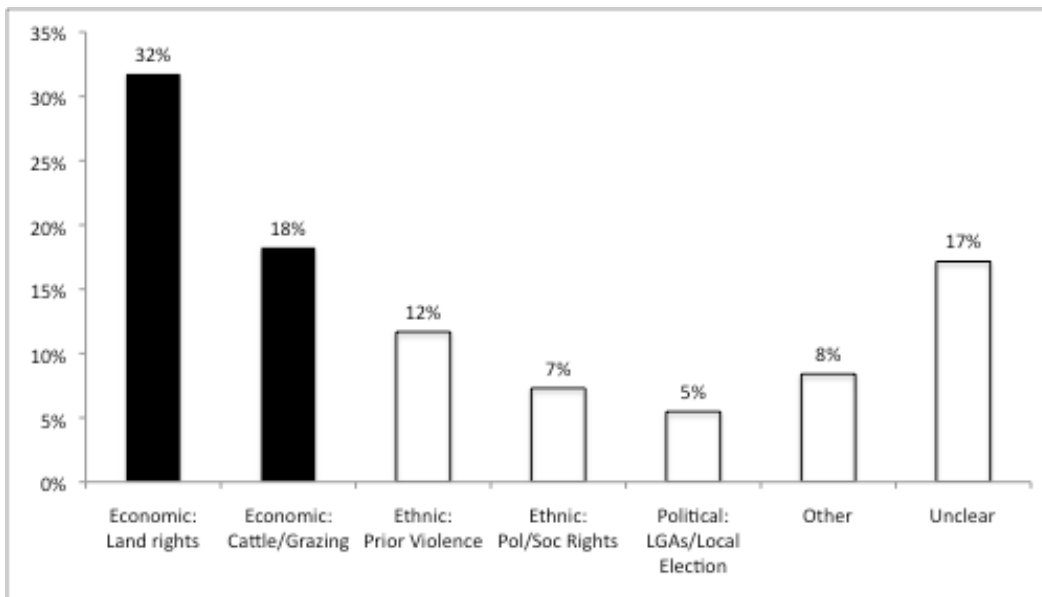
There are dozens of cases in which nomadic (often Fulani) cattle herders and farmers

clash after cattle have wandered onto farmland and destroyed crops. Due to the decline in

grazing and arable land in the north, as well as the expansion of farms in the more fertile

areas, disputes over boundaries and land rights are often volatile. When the communities

come to blows, it also increases the danger of retaliations for the deaths, destroyed land,

razed villages, or cattle killed in the prior dispute. For example, in February 1996, a clash

ensued between Fulani cattle herders and a Hausa village in retaliation for Hausa farmers

allegedly refusing to let the Fulani graze their cattle on the farmers' cornstalks. Thirteen

people were killed.[334] On a much larger scale, an April 1996 clash between Fulani

herdsmen and members of the Karimjo community in Taraba State led to retaliatory

destruction of an estimated 500 houses and the initial displacement of some 15,000

people.[335] In Benue state in February 2011, Fulani herdsmen retaliated against a Tiv

village for killing of some of their cattle, resulting in an estimated 20-30 deaths, 300

injured, 100 razed homes, and 20,000 displaced from one village alone in three days of

fighting.[336]

Disputes over ownership of ponds and trees have also produced communal

violence in rural areas. In April 1997, members of two different tribal groups clashed in

Benue state over ownership of a locust bean tree, leading to the destruction of farms and

40 homes before the police could bring the situation under control.[337] In January 2002, a

dispute over ownership/use of a pond in one district of Nasarawa State led to fighting

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[334] Bayo Ohu, "25 Killed in Farmers, Herdsmen Clash in Katsina," *Guardian* (Lagos), 10 February 1996, 32.

[335] *Guardian* (Lagos), 15 April 1996; *Guardian* (Lagos), 1 May 1996.

[336] Simeon Nwakaudu, "10 Die as Suspected Fulani Herdsmen Invade Benue Community," *Guardian* (Lagos), 10 February 2011, 7; Simeon Nwakaudu, *Guardian* (Lagos), 17 February 2011, 12.

[337] *Guardian* (Lagos), 24 April 1997, 1-3, 6.

between the Agulu and Ayele people, resulting in around 100 deaths and injuries and massive destruction of land and property in eight villages as thousands fled.[338]

These data and few examples emphasize the very different pattern of precipitating factors associated with ethno-religious versus ethno-tribal violence. Muslim-Christian communal violence is unlikely to erupt from economic disputes over land and cattle, whereas ethno-tribal violence between various tribal groups is likely to do so. The data, therefore, support the argument that scholars should treat "ethnic conflict" with more nuance, as ethno-religious and ethno-tribal identity are subject to different logics or mechanisms of mobilization. Furthermore, these data challenge the notion that, whatever the underlying structural inequalities, the occurrence of all ethnic conflict is reducible to economic disputes. If one were to attempt to forecast the likelihood of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria based on clashes over economic resources, the predictions would fail woefully.[339] Ethnic communal violence – the conditions under which it occurs, how it is mobilized, the role of identity etc. – is not simply reducible to political and economic inequalities in some general vague sense. There is little explanatory power or insight in such an assertion.

Other Indicators of Difference in Ethno-Religious & Ethno-Tribal Violence

As noted in my hypotheses, I expect that if Ethno-Religious and Ethno-Tribal communal violence follow similar logics of mobilization, this trend should be reflected not only in their pattern of precipitating events but also in other indicators. Below, I

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[338] Isa Abdulsalami, "100 Feared Killed in Nasarawa Communal Clash," *Guardian* (Lagos), 10 January 2002, 63.

[339] In light of the above analysis, many of the clashes in which the ethnic identities of the groups involved were not clearly identified in the reports are more likely to be Ethno-religious rather than Ethno-tribal in nature. When reported, religious events predominate in terms of precipitating factors.

present the dynamics of Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious violence in northern Nigeria over time, their concentration in certain states, their scale and degree of lethal violence, and their likelihood of deriving from or leading to spillover violence. Analysis of these data further support my hypothesis that violence drawing on tribal versus religious cleavages are subject to different mechanisms of mobilization; they do not tend to mirror one another in any of their characteristics.

Trend over time

As Figure 5.6 below indicates, there was a strong uptick in cases of Ethno-Religious violence in 1987, which is the year local scholars often reference as the beginning of serious Muslim-Christian violence in the north. Most importantly, the data show that cases of Ethno-Religious communal violence do not tend to follow the trend of Ethno-Tribal violence. While the number of cases of both types of violence has been increasing since the 1980s, they do not mimic one another over time; increases in ethno-tribal violence do not appear to follow from upswings in Muslim-Christian violence and vice versa. Furthermore, their fluctuation does not tend to be consistently and similarly associated with any one political regime or transition.

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Figure 5.6 Frequency of communal violence over time (1979-2011)
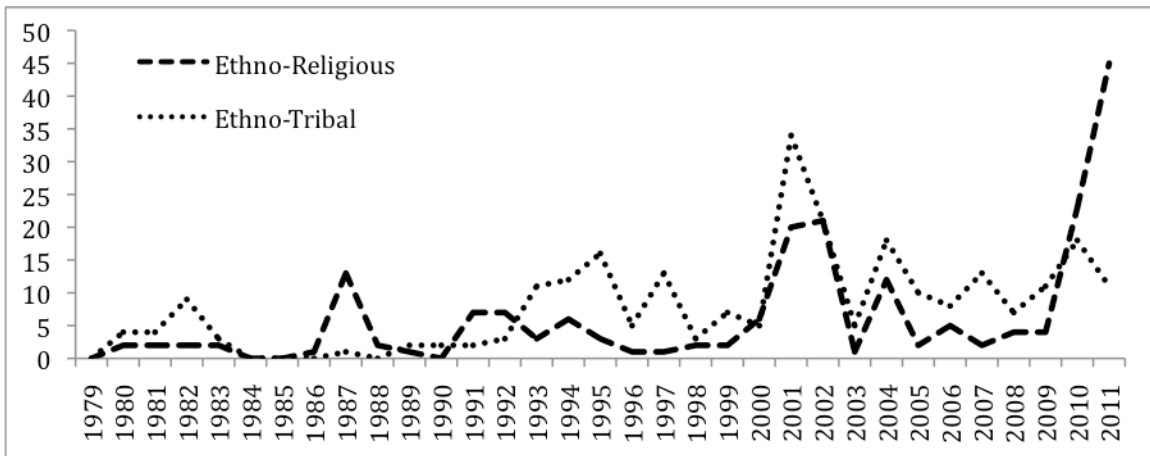
Of concern, however, is the major upswing in Muslim-Christian violence since 2009. The 2011 inter-religious violence largely reflects the widespread post-election violence following the announcement of the presidential winner Goodluck Jonathan over the Muslim northern candidate Muhammadu Bushari. This relatively sudden upswing in Muslim-Christian and/or northern-southerner violence in connection with a national election is not a good omen for national politics. The vast majority of communal Muslim-Christian violence connected to political events has, in the past, been associated with *local* level politics. In general, though, the trend above once again highlights the divergence between Ethno-Tribal and Ethno-Religious communal violence.

Intensity & Degree of Violence

The following two figures also highlight important distinctions in the intensity and degree of violence associated with Ethno-Religious as opposed to Ethno-Tribal violence. While the majority of cases of both types fall within the range of relatively few deaths (See Figure 5.7), the most intense cases of communal violence in the 250-1000+ deaths range are *only* Ethno-Religious. That is, when communal violence occurs,

Muslim-Christian clashes are far more likely to involve large scale loss of life, rendering

the steady increase in Muslim-Christian violence over the years an even more concerning

trend.

Figure 5.7 Number of deaths per case of communal violence
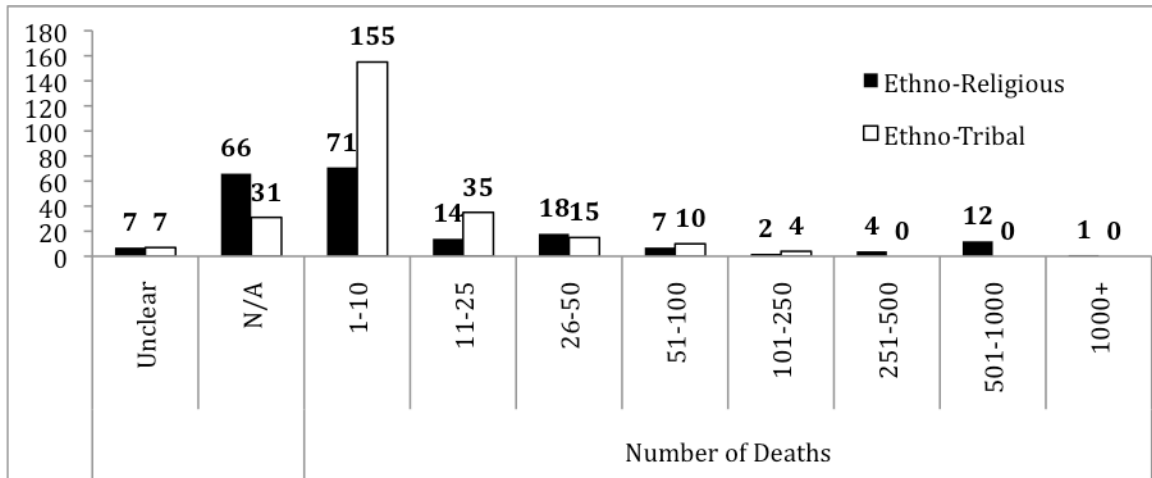
In general, the data in Figure 5.8 below reveal that the majority of cases of both

types of violence involve lethal violence. Cases of Ethno-Religious violence, however,

are more likely than Ethno-tribal violence to involve only property damage. This does

not, however, lessen the grievousness of Ethno-Religious violence, since it is far more

likely to involve large-scale loss of life than Ethno-Tribal violence, and property

destruction (e.g. mosques or churches) also has the potential for deepening the cycle of

violence and mistrust. Thus, in general, communal violence in Nigeria, *when reported*,

often involves a high degree of violence with deaths and injuries resulting, even if not

very many in any particular case.

Figure 5.8 Degree of violence by type of communal violence cases
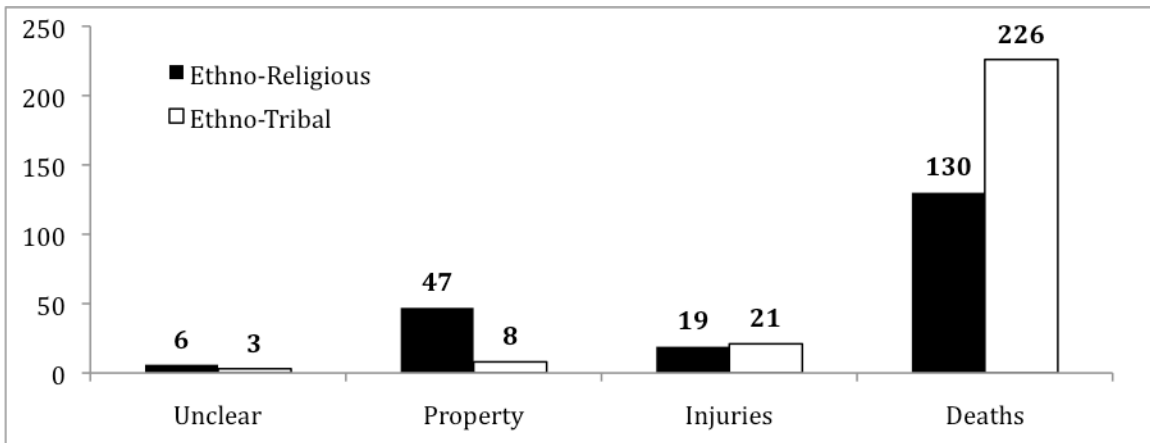
By Targeting of Religious Sites & Symbols

Another way of getting at the religious dimension of Ethno-Religious versus Ethno-Tribal violence is to examine the percentage of cases reported as involving destruction of Christian and Muslim religious sites or symbols such as churches or mosques. The destruction of these places of worship is most likely under-reported, but the data show at least a general pattern. In approximately 54 percent of cases of Ethno-Religious violence, religious sites or symbols were targeted. In contrast, this religious dimension is largely absent in cases of Ethno-Tribal violence; targeting of religious sites or symbols are only reported in under 2 percent of these cases. These data lend further credence to the argument that Ethno-Tribal violence is distinct from Ethno-Religious violence.

Figure 5.9 Percentage of cases in which a religious site or symbol is targeted

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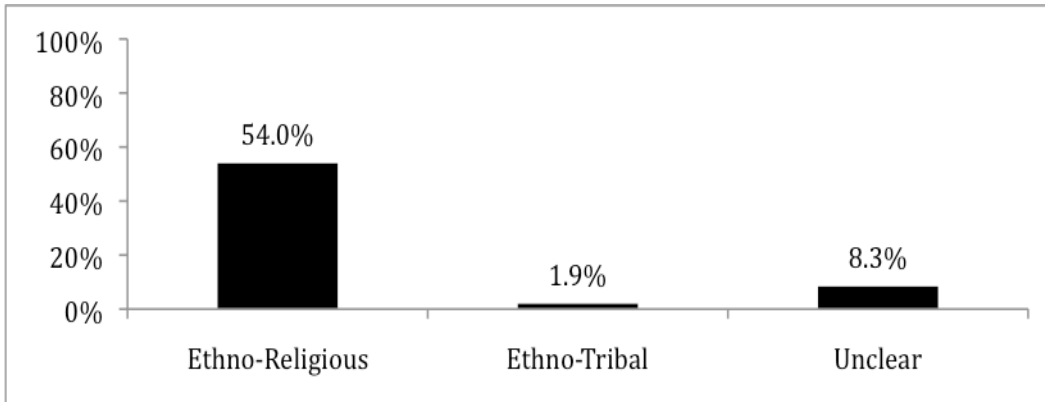
As these data on the pattern of communal violence in northern Nigeria highlight, the validity of studies of the politics of ethnic identity are potentially compromised in not distinguishing how different types of ethnic identities interact and affect political contestation and conflict. Both scholarly and international news sources often conclude that violence involving religious and other ethnic identities can be treated as one and the same and a product of competition for scarce economic resources. My analyses of these original data lead to a much different conclusion. Ethno-Tribal violence is most commonly associated with economic disputes over land and resources, but Ethno-Religious violence is not. Instead, in violence pitting Muslims and Christians against one another, religious events are far more likely to serve as the mobilizing narrative for the communal conflict, precipitating the devastation.

This is not to say that the politics of power is not at the root of both types, but that the mechanisms and narrative that spark the communal violence often differ. Indeed, both the trend over time and the intensity and degree of violence differs greatly for these two categories of identity-based violence, and cases of ethno-tribal violence tend to occur in

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locations distinct from those reported as religious, such as along disputed borders or in areas well known for disputes between Fulani cattle-rearers and local farmers . Scholars should therefore be more attentive to how ethnic identities differ from one another in their mechanisms or processes of mobilization and the variation over space and time in plural societies.

ADDRESSING POTENTIAL CRITIQUES OF DATA METHOD

Admittedly, there are potential biases and problems with a method of data gathering that relies on coding newspaper reports. Some of these criticisms arise in Davenport and Ball's analysis of how different sources – newspapers, NGOs, and individual witnesses – report violations in Guatemala. The set of critiques leveled against newspapers center on the finding that they tend to give a distorted picture of events, focusing more on the following types of incidents: urban cases as opposed to rural ones, events in which the violence is larger or more bizarre, and events in closer proximity to the news agency. Also, information that comes to the news source may come through any number of channels and may not report all of the details or angles of the event.[340] In particular, one of the main criticisms of news sources is that they will be less likely to report on state agents involved as perpetrators in a violation, or state actors may unduly influence the reporting.

These are all valid critiques, but they are more or less relevant depending on the method of newspaper selection, the type of violation being reported, and the weight

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[340] Christian Davenport and Patrick Ball, "Views to a Kill: Exploring the Implications of Source Selection in the Case of Guatemalan State Terror, 1977-1995," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3 (2002), 430.

placed on different findings from the data. In general, the problems Davenport and Ball associate with a newspaper methodology appear to be less serious in this dataset of communal violence. First, I selected the newspaper source itself with three main criteria in mind: is it non-government owned, does it have good coverage of the northern states, and does it tend to emphasize news events as opposed to social magazine-style commentary? In discussion with local scholars and librarians (and given limited time and resources), the *Guardian* was deemed the best fit for these criteria even though the publication headquarters is in Lagos in the south.[341]

Second, in terms of the newspaper's pattern of reporting on urban versus rural cases, I find that the urban-bias critique does not hold in this case. In Davenport and Ball's analysis, 96 percent of newspaper-reported cases are urban. In contrast, of the 520 cases of ethno-religious and ethno-tribal communal violence coded for northern Nigeria, 75 percent (382) of reported cases across the 32 year period are *rural* (i.e. occurred where the the population is less than 50,000).[342] In this sense, the trend is the opposite of Davenport and Ball's findings and indicates that A) the Nigerian newspaper selected is better at capturing rural cases than the Guatemalan source(s) they relied on, and/or B) there are simply far more cases in rural areas of Nigeria as a whole so the rural frequency is no surprise. Either way, the urban bias critique does not apply in this case.

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[341] As noted previously, two other papers – the *New Nigerian* and *The Standard* – are both northern publications, but the former tends to be Muslim/Northern elite biased and the latter tends to be Middle Belt/Christian biased. Thus, when necessary to fill in missing years from 1979-1983 before the Guardian began publication, I used *both* the New Nigerian and The Standard for balance and coverage. Although it is possible that the Guardian may be more likely to miss very small scale events than either of the other two papers, it is more likely to be representative and more balanced in its reporting overall

[342] This excludes from the total (denominator) the seven cases in which the urban/rural location is unclear. The total number of urban cases is 125 or 25 percent. Data on cities with a population of less or greater than 50,000 provided in the following source: Todd Johnson, ed., *World Christian Database*, ed. Todd Johnson (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007) (accessed June 5, 2011).

Third, in terms of the tendency of newspapers to report on cases of violence that are larger in deaths or violence than others, this is likely true and comes as no surprise. One would expect that large-scale violence and deaths would galvanize public attention more so than a small communal dispute. The goal of this data collection project is not to collect *every* incident of communal violence that ever occurred in northern Nigeria, as there is no way to verify that every incident is captured in the press. Rather, the purpose of this project is to employ a source that is *most likely* to capture cases of communal violence when they do occur. As noted previously, the number of cases collected confirms that scholars and local experts have far underestimated the frequency of communal violence over the last thirty years. Nonetheless, to assess the degree to which the news sources captured cases of smaller incidence, I recorded the number of citations each case received (i.e. number of articles in which each case was reported). I expect that if large-scale violent incidents are more likely to be reported, the majority of cases of communal violence should have multiple citations.

Unsurprisingly, I find that more intense cases of communal violence (i.e. a higher number of injuries and deaths reported) tend to have more citations. However, I also find that the number of cases with only one citation account for 61 percent of the total, and only 8.8 percent of my cases have 5 or more citations. This is encouraging, as it indicates that the news source is just as likely to report small-scale communal clashes, even if only one citation, as it is to report large-scale clashes. There is no guarantee that every communal clash is accounted for in the press, but it indicates that the Nigerian newspapers used to construct my dataset do not have a severe bias toward major

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communal clashes.[343] Furthermore, considering the sensitivity of Nigerian politics to events of a divisive ethno-tribal nature since the end of the civil war in 1970 and of a divisive ethno-religious nature with the subsequent politicization of religion in Nigerian politics since independence, it is no wonder that even minor communal clashes of these sorts are significant events that receive attention in Nigerian newspapers. Religiously-biased or ethnically-biased remarks by Nigerian politicians, for that matter, are hot news in Nigeria. Hence, considering the Nigerian socio-political context, even relatively minor clashes between identity groups would be important publishable events for newspapers. The citation pattern seems to confirm this analysis.

Finally and most importantly, the most significant critique leveled against newspaper data by Davenport and Ball does not apply to this particular dataset and study. In their study, they focus on how different sources report cases of *state* repression, whereas this research focuses on *communal* violence in which the state is not one of the parties to the conflict. The argument, therefore, that a newspaper is likely to be biased in its reporting due to A) the sensitivity of reporting state repression and B) the desire to maintain a "working relationship" with the state and avoid press censorship does not apply to this study. While Nigeria's different military regimes at times harshly suppressed journalists and newspapers that criticized the regime, the reports on communal violence are not targeted at the regime since these cases of violence involve non-state actors. While one might argue that the regime could take offense at newspapers that highlight instability within the country, reporting on individual cases of communal

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[343] Note that, having gone through hundreds of newspaper editions, it is not unusual for The Guardian to report on a car crash on some (poorly maintained) Nigerian road in which maybe a handful of people are killed at most.

violence can be tempered without compromising the validity of the reporting, and there are arguably far more sensitive issues of regime corruption and repression the press report on that have and could upset the national authorities. That is, the journalistic source may avoid pointing to any regime weakness while still laying out the basics of what occurred in a small community of northern Nigeria – where the violence took place, the factors involved, number killed etc.

In sum, issues of reliability and validity can never be completely surmounted when it comes to collecting cases of communal violence, but, as my research shows, newspaper reporting can be a valuable source of data on the frequency, scope, and pattern of communal violence. Furthermore, considering what counts as newsworthy in the Nigerian political scene, I can be fairly confident that I have indeed captured the vast majority of cases of communal violence since 1979. Considering the lack of a more comprehensive approach or database of ethnic or religious communal violence, this type of data-gathering is the best means of shedding light on the scope and general pattern of communal violence within countries. Finally, as Davenport and Ball acknowledge, one of the strengths of newspaper sources is that they "generally focus on the same types/aspects of sociopolitical phenomena across space and time," and are thereby "ideal for researchers because news agencies are basically preformatted for comparative analysis."[344]

Religious violence sensationalized by media?

One final potential critique of the data that can be addressed to some degree is whether cases of Ethno-Religious violence are more sensationalized than Ethno-Tribal

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[344] Davenport and Ball, "Views to a Kill," 429.

violence in the newspaper source used to construct the communal violence dataset. If so, this may indicate a problem with source bias that compromises the dataset to some degree. To address this critique, I hypothesize that one would expect that reports of religious violence, if more sensationalized than inter-tribal violence, should appear more prominently (i.e., on the front cover or first pages) in the newspaper. Having recorded the page numbers for each article reporting on any one case of communal violence, I test this hypothesis below.

Test 1: Front-page attention?

The figure below tests whether cases of Ethno-Religious violence are more likely to receive front-page attention. The analysis shows that a higher percentage of cases of Ethno-Religious violence are reported on page one (about a 12% difference). Both types of communal violence are about equally likely to be reported on pages two through four or towards the middle of the newspaper.

Figure 5.10 Percentage of cases of Ethno-Religious and Ethno-Tribal violence reported on particular pages of newspaper source
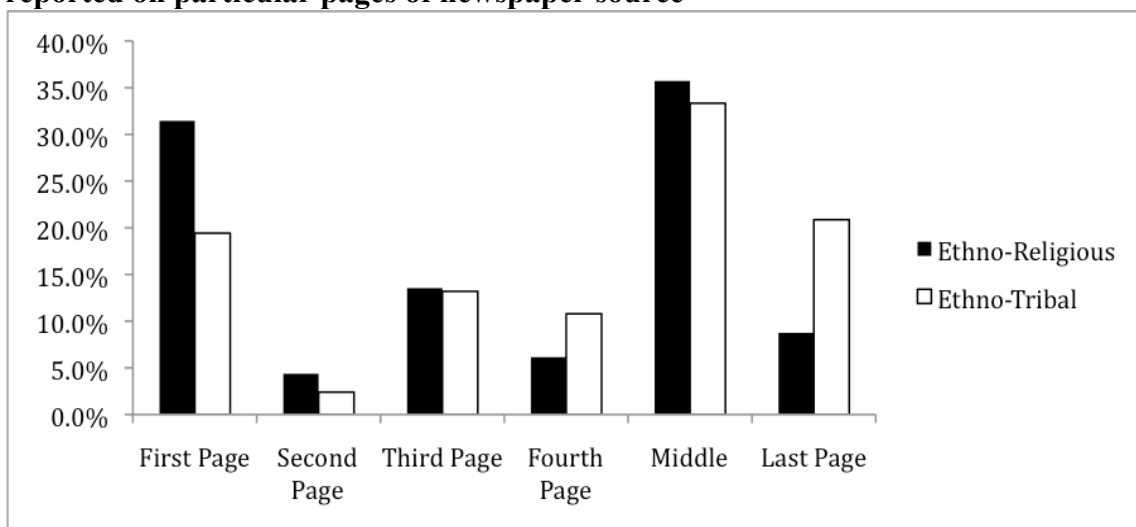
However, Ethno-Tribal violence is more likely than Ethno-Religious violence to be reported on the last page (i.e., with around a 13% difference). While one might argue that this indicates that Ethno-Religious stories are perhaps more sensationalized – appearing more often on the front page – such a conclusion is problematic for the following reasons: First, it became clear from becoming familiar with the layout of *The Guardian* while wading through hundreds of editions of the newspaper for the data collection that top political news stories often appear on the *back* page as well. That is, the back page *returns* to top political news after all the other sections on sports, business, etc. This makes some sense, since the newspaper, when folded, would show news on the front and back pages most prominently in the hands of readers. If front-page and back-page stories are considered as roughly equivalent, then Ethno-Religious and Ethno-Tribal violence are given roughly equal treatment.

Second, even if the front page is considered more prominent than the back page, cases of inter-religious violence have been (a) increasing over time in Nigeria since the end of the 1980s and (b) are more likely to be higher on the "violence intensity" scale. It would make sense, therefore, that a somewhat higher proportion of cases of Ethno-Religious violence appear on the front page of the newspaper source. Ultimately, this analysis cannot conclusively support a claim of potential media bias. To the contrary, the findings above suggest that Ethno-Religious and Ethno-Tribal cases receive fairly equal treatment in the newspaper source.

Test 2: In cases of similar intensity?

Another way of further testing this question of source bias is to examine whether, in cases of similarly intense violence (indicated by reported number of deaths), Ethno-

Religious violence is more likely to be reported in the first three pages of the newspaper source.

Figure 5.11 Percentage of cases reported on the first three pages by scale of violence intensity (i.e., no. of deaths)
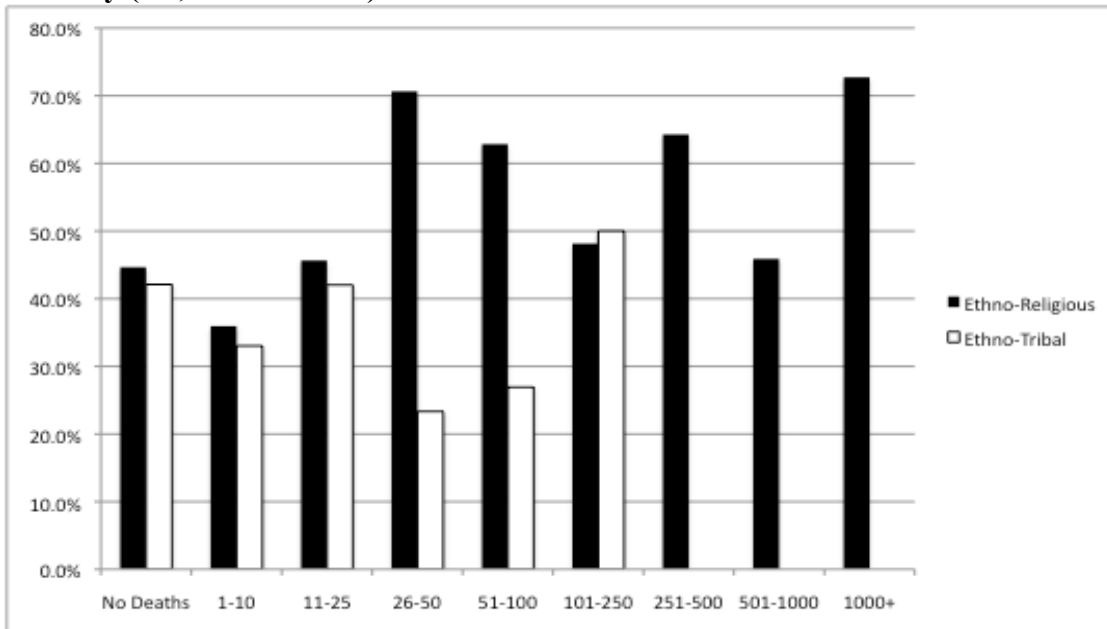
First, the Figure above indicates that cases involving injuries and/or property destruction ("No deaths") and those involving 1-25 or 101-250 deaths are just as likely to be reported in the first three pages of the newspaper source whether Ethno-Religious or Ethno-tribal. These findings do not support a claim of potential reporting bias. Second, cases of Ethno-Religious violence involving more than 250 deaths are far more likely to be reported in the first three pages of the newspaper, but this is due to a rather obvious reason: there are no recorded cases of Ethno-Tribal violence in the dataset that involve more than 250 deaths. Finally, it is unclear why Ethno-Tribal cases of mid-range intensity – from 26 to 100 deaths – are less likely than Ethno-Religious violence of the same intensity to be reported in the first three pages. One possible theory is that these Ethno-Tribal cases of

violence are associated with long-standing and recurring tribal conflicts and have become

associated with some sort of reporting fatigue even when fairly lethally intense. The other

categories of intensity tend to track closely with each other, however, or can be explained

by the intensity of the violence.

Number of citations differences?

It is interesting to note the overall number of citations for the cases of Ethno-Tribal and

Ethno-Religious violence in the dataset. There are 974 citations for Ethno-Religious cases

versus 419 for Ethno-Tribal cases. Religious violence stories outpace tribal by two to

one. This finding can be explained, however, by the greater frequency of more intense

cases of inter-religious violence, and by the increasing frequency of inter-religious

violence in Nigeria since the 1980s. These observations go toward explaining why there

are more stories per religious incident on average. Thus, it is not entirely surprising and

need not indicate media bias that cases of Ethno-Religious violence receive more

coverage.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the evidence from communal violence in northern Nigeria, this chapter

highlights the importance of not lumping the categories of ethnic identity into a single

ethnic designation. Doing so smoothes over what is hardly a smooth surface of identity;

inter-religious communal violence and ethno-tribal violence, as my data show, tend to be

ignited by very different precipitating events and reported causes. Furthermore, the

analysis points back to the importance of the malleability of ethnic identities, as inter-

religious violence in northern Nigeria is only a recent phenomenon that has emerged in

step with significant religious change and politicization of Muslim and Christian identity. Finally, the distinction between types of ethnic identities is not merely a matter of semantics as I will discuss further on. One can conceive of far different peacebuilding strategies and challenges for inter-religious as opposed to ethno-tribal violent conflict.

The following chapter takes up the main puzzle of this dissertation, which is the question of why some communities in northern Nigeria are more likely to experience inter-religious violence than others in communities subject to the same pressures, latent cleavages, and same ethnic diversity, broadly speaking. I present the findings of data gathered on local government power-sharing in the 17 LGAs of Plateau state and 23 LGAs of Kaduna state, which I argue support the theory that local governments with power-sharing arrangements are less prone to inter-religious violence, and local government, therefore, should be the focus of peacebuilding strategies aimed at preventing civil conflict from spiraling into broader civil war and instability.

CHAPTER 6

Power-sharing Data and Findings

Prior to 1987, Muslim-Christian violence was largely unheard of in northern Nigeria. "Until the 1980s," notes Falola, "the Christian-Muslim rivalry did not degenerate into conflict or violence, and there were many southern Christians who were indifferent to the existence of Islam. Indeed, in the 1960s and 1970s attempts were made to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue and to seek some common ground."[345] While the Maitasine riots of the early 1980s resulted in loss of life among Christians, these are generally known as *intra*-religious communal clashes between radical Muslim Maitatsine sect and other moderate Muslim adherents.

In 1987 in the small town of Kafanchan in southern Kaduna state, this image of peaceful religious relations changed. The Kafanchan violence was the "first most brutal confrontation between Christians and Muslims."[346] A week of Christian events and festivities on the campus of the Kafanchan College of Education turned violent between Muslim and Christian students, snowballing and soon engulfing the town itself. During the "Mission '87" week of celebration, Christian students held sessions for prayer, testimonies, films and other events. While such religious events on the college campus were common, hanging a banner over the entrance gate to the school with the words "Welcome to 'Mission '87' in Jesus Campus" caused some consternation among the

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[345] Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 48.
[346] Ibid., 179.

Muslims students, and the school authorities removed it when students complained.[347]

Boer notes that tensions were already high; the Muslim Student Society (MSS) on

campus held their own religious program the week prior.[348] It was the Christian students'

meeting on Friday, March 6th that let loose the tide of violence. Although both sides

dispute who threw the first punch, the accounts of the event are fairly consistent.

Reverend Abubakar Bako, a former Muslim convert to Christian, was invited that

evening to speak to a group of Christian students to give his testimony of conversion. A

Muslim girl sitting nearby in the library overheard his conversation with the students,

and, claiming that Rev. Bako defamed the Prophet Mohammed and the Koran, ran out

onto the campus shouting to fellow Muslim students of his defamation. A close friend of

Rev. Bako's and deeply involved in work with students in northern Nigeria universities at

the time notes that Bako "was not the kind of Islamic Christian fundamentalist that went

up and down causing trouble," but when the girl heard him say the name of the Prophet,

"she simply went out and started shouting and screaming 'They are blaspheming

Mohammed's name! They are calling Mohammed's name in a Christian gathering

meeting!'"[349] Muslim students then rushed to the scene, and, although the leaders

appealed for calm, a violent brawl ensued that engulfed the campus and spilled over into

the town the next morning and resulted in at least 11 dead and 16 injured at the end of

three days. Three mosques, a church, and many buildings and vehicles were also

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[347] Ibid., 180.
[348] Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood 1980-2002* (Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003), 51.
[349] Interview with Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State (June 3, 2011).

damaged.[350] "The Muslims went off to tear apart a nearby church, and the Christians set

the school mosque and its Qur'ans on fire," notes Falola, while the town was "thrown

into mass confusion" as students began mobilizing more support.[351]

> The violence did not end there, however. While calm was returning to Kafanchan,
>
> Muslims were busy organizing mobilizations against Christians elsewhere. Muslims who heard that Rev. Bako had denigrated the Qur'an in Kafanchan decided that it was time for war, not for reconciliation…to those among them who saw the Kafanchan riots as a victory for the Christians, it was time for revenge. Indeed, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, a well-established pro-Islam radio station, broadcast exaggeratedly that many Muslims had been killed in Kafanchan, and that their houses and mosques were burned. This broadcast fueled a raging fire.[352]

Subsequently, clashes between Muslims and Christians ensued in a number of towns,

including Kaduna, Zaria, Samaru, Wusasa, Kankia, Malufanchi, Katsina, and Funtua in

Kaduna state, as well as Kano in Kano State. The violence continued for ten days, and,

although accounts of the level of destruction vary, anywhere from 113 to upwards of 200

churches alone were destroyed in the violence.[353] Markets closed, officials suspended

university classes, food prices shot up, people lost billions of naira in property, and

security forces came in to try to restore calm.

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[350] Stevin Adeyi-Adikwu, "White Paper Lists Causes of Kaduna Riot" (Lagos: The Guardian, July 24, 1987), 1, 11; Stevin Adeyi-Adikwu, "Government Orders Probe into Kafanchan Clash" (Lagos: The Guardian, March 11, 1987), 1, 16; Boer 2003, 51.
[351] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 181.
[352] Ibid., 183.
[353] Adeyi-Adikwu, "White Paper Lists Causes of Kaduna Riot," 1; Falola 1998, 183. Falola notes 113 churches destroyed overall, but the Guardian notes 155 were destroyed in Kaduna alone. The International Crisis group cites 9 deaths as the destruction of169 hotels, 152 churches, five mosques and 95 vehicles. International Crisis Group, "Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict," December 20, 2010, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/880F82BDF4CF7582C12577FF0050EB69-Full_report.pdf (accessed June 14, 2011), 34.

This case highlights not only the ability of a very localized religious event to propel symbolic and widespread retributive violence in other towns and states that have nothing to do with the original incident, but it also raises the question: Why do Muslims and Christians in some communities and not others take up arms in response to perceived religious offenses and violence against co-religionists? For example, the events in Kafanchan did not spark retaliatory violence in Jos or other religiously mixed towns in Plateau state. One might argue that perhaps the Muslim-Christian violence was so out of the ordinary that it simply caused surprise rather than immediate retaliation among Muslims and Christians in other areas. This may be the case, but this argument does not hold when considering that Muslim-Christian violence since 1987 has become a more frequent phenomenon in north-central Nigeria. As noted in Chapter 5, inter-religious violence is frequently associated with prior violence elsewhere. That is, when it comes to religious events that are most likely to precipitate inter-religious violence, it is news of Muslim-Christian violence in other towns or neighboring states that is the most common precipitating event. Nonetheless, the puzzle still remains: What explains why some religiously pluralistic are more prone to Muslim-Christian violence than others?

In this Chapter, I present the analysis of original power-sharing data collected during fieldwork for LGAs in Plateau state, as well as some data on Kaduna state. Based on my theory and hypotheses laid out in Chapter 1 and 2, I expect that pluralistic communities with power-sharing arrangements will be less likely to experience inter-religious violence. These data are aggregate, indicating the presence or absence of power-sharing over time in each LGA. The data confirm the hypothesis that LGAs that adopted power-sharing arrangements following the 1970s reforms are less susceptible to inter-

religious violence. Regarding the causal mechanisms, however, these data are suggestive; they do not explore the causal mechanisms – why elders in one community opted for power-sharing while others do not. The causal story I take up in subsequent chapters with in-depth case studies of some of these power-sharing and non-power-sharing LGAs. In this chapter, I will first discuss the methodology used to collect the power-sharing data. I then present the overall findings and conclude with the implications of these findings.

POWER-SHARING DATA METHODOLOGY

Plateau state is a good site for comparative analysis; the LGAs share a similar colonial history, have a mixed ethnic makeup, and some areas were more integrated while others less integrated and assimilated into the Hausa-Fulani Muslim colonial rule. Also, critical for the comparative analysis is that some pluralistic communities in Plateau state have experienced intense inter-religious violence over the past three to four decades (See Figure 6.1 below), but others have remained relatively peaceful. The explanation for higher levels of Muslim-Christian violence in states such as Kaduna and Plateau is not reducible to mere population levels, however. The Figure below, for example, shows that Plateau state has a population that is smaller than or similar to a number of other northern states, but it has the highest reported incidence of Muslim-Christian violence and the second highest ethno-tribal violence. Higher population levels do not signify a greater likelihood of communal violence. Instead, I expect that the history and nature of local level ethno-tribal relationships and the presence or absence of power-sharing institutions since the 1976 LGA reforms are key to explaining the likelihood of communal violence in pluralistic northern Nigeria LGAs.

Figure 6.1. Frequency of cases of Ethno-religious and Ethno-tribal violence in Middle Belt states (1979–2011), Plateau & Kaduna states emphasized
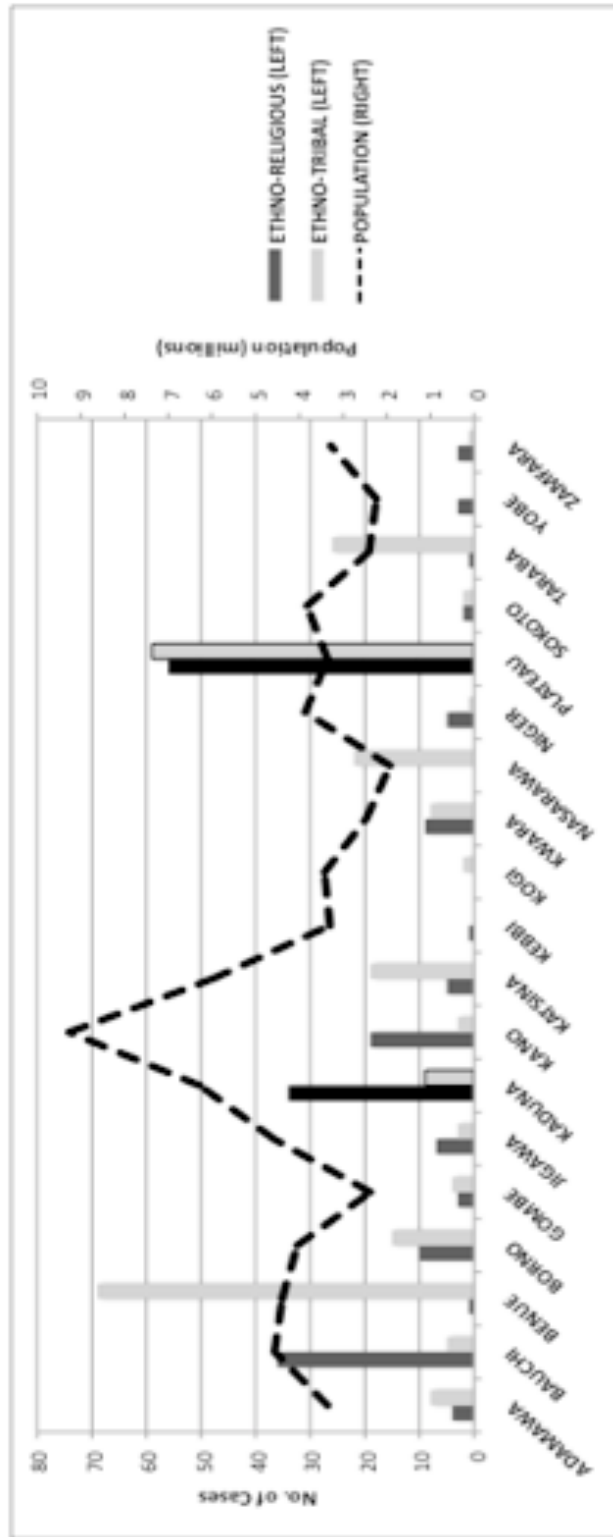
Method of Data-Collection on Power-Sharing

To test my power-sharing theory, I gathered the election/appointment records of

LGAs in Plateau state. My research assistants and I interviewed respondents in most of

the LGAs, inquiring generally about the structure of local government and issues of peace

or conflict. In most cases, I did not need to initiate a question about whether formal or

informal power-sharing arrangements exist among the ethno-tribal groups, as this often

came up naturally in the course of conversation and I would then pursue it further. In

order to gain a more holistic picture and confirm the nature and extent of power-sharing

arrangements in LGAs, however, it was necessary to gather data on LGA election results

over the years, and, in particular, the ethnic composition of individuals who served in

local government. The two driving questions behind this data gathering project were: In

pluralistic LGAs where respondents claimed to function under a power-sharing

arrangement, is this reflected in their election results and/or political appointments? In

LGAs characterized by communal violence, do their election and appointment outcomes

show lopsided political control considering the major ethno-tribal groups in the LGA?

This is my main indicator of variation in power-sharing.

Gathering this data represented a major hurdle: records of local government

elected/appointed officials do not generally exist in Nigeria apart from a list of past

Chairman or the previous one or two local government councils. The National Electoral

Commission, the state government offices, and LGA headquarters do not have consistent

records. To gather the electoral/appointment data on the 17 LGAs of Plateau state,

therefore, I, along with three research assistants, spent time in each of the local

governments coordinating with them to compile the names of the officials and their

ethnic identities for past administrations. This effort often involved speaking directly with former chairmen, deputy chairman, secretaries and councilors who were able to assist in the reconstruction of information on the various administration officials. Where possible, the data were cross-checked through verification by multiple officials who served in a single regime or from other sources, such as a complete national list published of local government officials in one election cycle. Although it was not possible to get comprehensive records for some local governments, the result of this effort is the first fairly comprehensive data of local government officials and their ethnic identities in Plateau state. The same data collection was also carried out in Kaduna state.

Finally, a further note on the data and its interpretation is necessary. Local government elections do not occur at consistent intervals. This is due to factors such as the national regime in power – which in the past has been known to suspend local government elections (e.g. during military rule) and appoint Sole Administrators[354] – or due to administrative inefficiencies of the state government or the state election commission in charge of the administration and organization of local government elections. In other cases, contested results will delay the implementation of a newly elected local government council, extending the administrative period of transition committees also known as caretaker committees. The data reflect these "inconsistencies," but it is still possible to observe the *pattern* of local government power-sharing or lack

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[354] In this appointment scenario, the officials are not necessarily appointed from the local government itself. They may come from a different local government or even another state. These dynamics have varied over time during the different civilian and military regimes. For this reason, weight should not be placed on sole administrators or outside appointments when examining the pattern of power-sharing

thereof in terms of the ethno-tribal and -religious groups who are represented from one period to the next in the primary seats of local government leadership.

As noted in Chapter 3, the pattern of power-sharing may vary. In some cases, the local government council leadership (Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, Secretary) may reflect representation of the major ethnic groups in the local government (i.e. the three top posts rotate between the major ethnic groups from one election to the next). In other cases, a rotational system by which the chairmanship rotates between local districts or wards may be in place, which, in an ethnically pluralistic local government means that it will likely rotate the ethnic group represented in the chairmanship. Or, in some cases, the chairmanship may always go to the major ethnic group, but there may be an informal arrangement that the deputy will always come from the smaller ethno-tribal group in the LGA. Nonetheless, if my hypothesis is confirmed, I expect that the ethnically diverse LGAs that are more peaceful are also more likely to have adopted some manner of power-sharing arrangement among the ethno-tribal elite. Of course, in local governments that are dominated by one ethno-tribal group of a single religious identity, I expect a power-sharing arrangement to be both less likely and less politically relevant when it comes to inter-ethnic relations. The following discussion presents the findings of 10 months of fieldwork and original data gathering, confirming that power-sharing is indeed a powerful explanatory variable.

FINDINGS OF POWER-SHARING DATA: PLATEAU STATE

This section analyzes data on the relationship between inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence and power-sharing within Plateau state LGAs. One should note at the outset,

however, that these data indicate a correlation or association. They cannot demonstrate direct causality. For this reason, the next three chapters focus on the processes or mechanisms underlying the relationship between inter-religious violence and power-sharing through in-depth case studies of select LGAs. The case studies verify the significance of the relationship between power-sharing and inter-religious peace by digging into the history of power-sharing in the LGAs, the peace-inducing impact on communal relationships in the face of inter-religious tensions and violence elsewhere, and their pattern of sustainability over time. Nonetheless, the data presented below are a first step toward testing the theory.

LGAs & Incidence of Inter-religious Violence

Aiming for a simple presentation of the data, Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below provide indicators of the ethno-tribal and -religious composition of the population in each LGA of Plateau state, as well as indicators of the overall incidence of Muslim-Christian violence (6.1) and ethno-tribal violence (6.2) and the practice of power-sharing. While power-sharing in this chart is indicated by a checkmark, this indicator is based on analysis of the local government electoral and appointment data collected for each LGA – whether the LGA in question has a system of rotational representation. I compiled the incidence of inter-religious or ethno-tribal violence from my original dataset on communal violence in northern Nigeria as discussed in the previous chapter. To shed further light on the cases in which communal violence is recorded, I also distinguish whether the violence was reported as a "spillover" and/or "cross-border" case of communal violence. The spillover cases are those in which the violence occurred in response to previous violence elsewhere (i.e. in another town, LGA, or state), and the designation "crossborder" refers to those

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cases of violence involving a group from one LGA clashing with a group from another LGA. For example, out of the cases of inter-religious violence reported for Wase, nine of those were reported as spillover cases and six of the ten cases were cross-border clashes. In Table 6.2, I also distinguish those cases of inter-tribal violence that were clashes between a communal group and Fulani herdsmen or cattle-rearers. The importance of these distinctions will become clearer in the following discussion of the data. The final item to note is that the column "deaths" reports the number of overall cases in which deaths were involved. For example, seven out of 12 of the total cases of inter-religious violence in Langtang North led to deaths. By and large, almost all of the reported cases were lethally violent.

Table 6.1. Plateau state LGAs indicators of identity and inter-religious violence*

LGA	Created	Tribe Mix	RelMix	Maj Xian	Maj Mus	Rel Split	Power-Sharing	Cases RelVio	Spillover	Crossborder	Deaths
Barkin Ladi	1976			✓				**4**	1	0	All
Bassa	1976	✓	✓	✓			✓	**0**	0	0	All
Bokkos	1991	✓		✓			✓	**1**	1	0	All
Jos East	1996			✓				**0**	0	0	All
Jos North	1991	✓	✓			✓		**15**	4	0	13/15
Jos South	1991		✓	✓				**11**	7	0	All
Kanam	1976	✓	✓		✓		✓	**5**	2	5	All
Kanke	1996			✓				**0**	0	0	All
Langtang North	1991			✓				**12**	8	11	7/12
Langtang South	1991			✓				**0**	0	0	All
Mangu	1976	✓	✓	✓			✓	**0**	1	0	All
Mikang	1996	✓		✓			✓	**0**	0	0	All
Pankshin	1976	✓		✓			✓	**0**	1	0	All
Qua'an Pan	1989	✓	✓	✓			**	**1**	0	0	All
Riyom	1996			✓				**1**	0	0	All
Shendam	1976	✓	✓	✓				**5**	2	0	All
Wase	1976	✓	✓		✓		**	**10**	9	6	9/10

* Note: "Tribe Mix" and "Rel Mix" indicates whether or not the LGA is pluralistic/mixed in terms of its tribal and religious population, respectively. "Maj Xian" and "Maj Mus" refer to whether or not the majority population in that local government is Christian or Muslim. "Rel Split" refers to population that is fairly evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. "Cases RelVio" refers to the number of cases of inter-religious violence recorded for the LGA since its creation.

** Note: A zoning arrangement between wards in Qua'an Pan LGA results in rotation of leadership. The data and limited information on Qua'an Pan make assessment difficult, but it appears that the conflict in the LGA in the mid-2000s over the creation of a new development area was primarily a dispute with an ethno-tribal group not reflected in the rotation. For Wase, not enough data were provided for a complete assessment, but interviews and secondary sources suggest that the struggles between the Taroh and the Hausa-Fulani are symptomatic of a lack of power-sharing.

As the Table above highlights, the pluralistic LGAs with a power-sharing arrangement among their ethno-tribal groups –Bassa, Mangu, and Kanam – have lower incidence of inter-religious violence. That is, these are the LGAs where the top tier positions of the local government – the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary – rotate among the primary ethno-tribal groups in the LGA. The finding is the same whether the LGA has a Christian majority as in Bassa or a Muslim majority as in Kanam. One may note that there are a number of LGAs, such as Langtang South and Riyom, which do not have an ethno-tribal power-sharing arrangement but do have low levels of inter-religious violence. Power-sharing among *ethno-tribal* groups in these LGAs would make little sense – they are largely homogenous in their ethnic composition. In this sense, the data appear to support the hypotheses that there is a positive relationship between low levels of communal violence and power-sharing in pluralistic communities.

In contradiction to this analysis, one might observe that the high incidence of inter-religious violence in Jos South, Langtang North, and Kanam disprove my argument. For one, Langtang North and Jos South LGAs are fairly homogenous in their ethnic makeup, so why the higher incidence of communal violence? Furthermore, Kanam, as one of the local governments with a power-sharing arrangement, should be less prone to inter-religious violence according to my theory. A closer look at the data and history of communal violence in these LGAs, however, helps to explain the seeming inconsistency without contradicting the power-sharing theory and argument.

First, the Jos South cases do not tend to stem from Jos South itself. One of the dangers I identify about the contemporary nature of communal violence in northern Nigeria is that cases of inter-religious violence often spillover from events elsewhere.

These Jos South as well as the Wase LGA cases of inter-religious violence are generally "spillover" cases. Jos South LGA also runs into or is part of the Jos general metropolis and there meets with the volatile Jos North. All of the Jos South cases that are identified as linked with events elsewhere are linked with the general Jos city or Jos North disturbances. Although there is a very small population of Muslims among the predominant Jos South LGA Christian population (thus the lack of a power-sharing arrangement), revenge or retaliation will sometimes occur in this area. In contrast, the inter-religious violence in Jos North generally, if not exclusively, stems from events in Jos North itself.

Second, while the cases of inter-religious violence involving Langtang North are high, it is important to note that 11 out of the 12 cases are not intra-LGA communal clashes, but, rather, are clashes between Christian Taroh from Langtang North and Muslim Bogghom from Kanam local government. This helps to explain all of the cases of inter-religious violence involving Kanam local government as well. These cross-border disputes stem from two factors: a) long-standing disputes on the border area between the two ethno-tribal groups that also fit a Muslim-Christian dimension, and b) the association with inter-religious violence occurring elsewhere in the southern part of Plateau state. Point "b" is a particularly important explanatory variable. In two out of four of the cases of inter-religious violence involving Kanam LGA and in eight of the 12 cases involving Langtang North LGA, they are reported as being connected to the conflict occurring in Shendam and Wase LGAs. During the early 2000s, major inter-religious violence occurred in Shendam LGA that soon spread to Wase and polarized groups as far north as Langtang North and Kanam LGAs. Because ethnic groups took sides based on religious

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identity, the spillover was widespread. Hence, it is no surprise that the predominantly Christian Langtang North and the predominantly Muslim Kanam LGAs had a few incidents of cross-border inter-religious violence, as the communal groups identified with the warring parties in the Shendam and Wase violence and these other LGAs were also major recipients of those fleeing the southern Plateau state violence. Apart from these cross-border LGA clashes, the communal groups *within* these two local governments are largely peaceful – Kanam with its power-sharing arrangement and Langtang North with its fairly homogenous ethnic population.

Third, as already noted, Wase LGA became a major arena for inter-religious violence in the spillover of violence from neighboring Shendam LGA. This dynamic is largely due to the disputes between the Hausa-Fulani Muslim majority and the large population of indigenous Taroh Christians in the southern part of Wase LGA. When the violence broke out in the Shendam LGA between 2001 and 2004, the Torah's identification with the oppression of Christian indigenous groups, as well as the Taroh's grievances over lack of representation in Wase LGA, lit the fuse. Ethno-religious identity became a major rallying point or interpretive lens through which not only the local Wase ethnic groups mobilized, but also groups in surrounding LGAs.

In sum, these cases, which appear as discrepancies at first glance, can be explained within the framework of the power-sharing theory. Furthermore, they highlight the potential for inter-religious communal violence to spillover to other ethno-tribal contexts on the mere basis of identification with co-religionists who are engulfed in conflict elsewhere as highlighted in the previous chapter. Inter-religious violence is *trans-*

tribal in Nigeria, not limited to tribal boundaries. These data indicate, however, that pluralistic communities with power-sharing institutions tend to fair better.

LGAs and Incidence of Ethno-tribal Violence

Do incidents of ethno-tribal violence tend to track with the level of incidents of Muslim-Christian violence? Table 6.2 below contrasts the pattern of ethno-tribal violence with that of ethno-religious violence in Plateau state in Table 6.1 above. Table 6.3 below also shows the basic contrast in frequency and spillover of incidents of ethno-religious and ethno-tribal communal violence in Kaduna state LGAs.

A first key distinction to note is that an area characterized by a high incidence of ethno-tribal violence does not necessarily reflect a high level of ethno-religious violence. This is true for both Plateau state and Kaduna state. For example, while my data report 15 cases of ethno-religious violence for Jos North, there are only two cases of ethno-tribal violence reported. There are less than half as many cases of ethno-tribal violence in Wase as there are inter-religious violence. In contrast, there are more than twice as many cases of ethno-tribal violence in Barkin Ladi than there are cases of Muslim-Christian violence. In Kaduna state, ethno-religious violence is a far more frequent phenomenon than ethno-tribal clashes, and ethno-tribal clashes are not necessarily more likely to occur in LGAs with greater frequency of Muslim-Christian violence (See Table 6.3). Furthermore, digging into the various cases of communal violence shows that the different types of communal violence tend to occur in *different* areas or communities of the LGA. In general, these data on frequency and location are a further indicator that ethno-tribal and inter-religious are not necessarily correlated or one and the same form of communal violence.

Second, the data highlight that not merely do these cases diverge in frequency (i.e. some LGAs characterized by high levels of Muslim-Christian violence may be characterized by low levels of ethno-tribal violence and vise versa), the nature of the cases is also quite different. As the data presented in Chapter 5 revealed, the causal or precipitating events in cases of inter-religious violence tend to have a specifically symbolic religious dimension. This is rarely the case for ethno-tribal violence, wherein the reported causes and precipitating events tend to be of an economic nature – disputes over cattle grazing and land rights, for example. Consequently, one of the striking differences between the cases of inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence in Plateau state is that many of the cases of ethno-tribal violence are reported as a dispute between Fulani herdsmen or cattle-rearers and members of the local community (see "Fulani" and "Cases EthoVio" in Table 6.2 below). For example, nine out of nine cases of ethno-tribal communal clashes in Barkin Ladi involved a dispute with Fulani herdsmen. As land available for cattle-rearing has become more scarce in Plateau state and other states, it is increasingly difficult for cattle rearers, who are often Fulani, to find areas to graze their cattle. As a result, they can come into conflict with farmers as they graze cattle on farmland. Thus, the data highlight again the importance of distinguishing between cases of inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence; they tend not to mirror one another in frequency and location, and they are also characterized by different causes and precipitating event.

Third, one might argue that power-sharing arrangements, since they are based on ethno-tribal identity, should also reflect lower frequencies of ethno-tribal violence in those LGAs that have power-sharing. Although a quick look at the total number of cases

may initially call into question this argument, closer inspection is helpful. First, LGAs that do have power-sharing institutions tend to be more peaceful than other LGAs *overall*. Also, in some of the LGAs in Plateau state where there is a low number of ethno-tribal cases of violence reported, once again, the violence in some of these cases is associated with Fulani herdsmen (who are not necessarily resident in that LGA) or are spillover from events elsewhere. In sum, as a general trend, power-sharing LGAs still tend to be more peaceful as a whole.

Table 6.2. Plateau state LGAs indicators of identity and ethno-tribal violence*

LGA	Created	Tribe Mix	Rel Mix	Maj Xian	Maj Mus	Rel Split	Power-Sharing	Cases EthnicVio	Fulani	Spillover	Crossborder	Deaths
Barkin Ladi	1976			√				9	9	3	0	7/9
Bassa	1976	√	√	√			√	3	3	0	0	All
Bokkos	1991	√		√			√	3	1	0	1	All
Jos East	1996			√				0	0	0	0	All
Jos North	1991	√	√			√		2	0	1	0	All
Jos South	1991			√				6	5	2	0	4/6
Kanam	1976	√	√		√		√	1	0	1	0	0
Kanke	1996			√				0	0	0	0	All
Langtang North	1991			√				4	0	3	2	2/4
Langtang South	1991			√				1	0	0	0	All
Mangu	1976	√	√	√			√	3	0	0	1	All
Mikang	1996	√		√			√	0	0	0	0	All
Pankshin	1976	√		√			√	0	0	0	0	All
Qua'an Pan	1989	√	√	√			**	4	1	1	0	All
Riyom	1996	√		√				4	3	0	0	3/4
Shendam	1976	√	√	√				7	5	3	0	All
Wase	1976	√	√		√		**	4	1	1	1	All

* Note: "Tribe Mix" and "Rel Mix" indicates whether or not the LGA is pluralistic/mixed in terms of its tribal and religious population, respectively. "Maj Xian" and "Maj Mus" refer to whether or not the majority population in that local government is Christian or Muslim. "Rel Split" refers to population that is fairly evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. "Cases RelVio" refers to the number of cases of inter-religious violence recorded for the LGA since its creation.

** See Note in Table 6.1

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Table 6.3. Kaduna state LGAs & cases of communal violence, 1979-2011

LGA	Created**	Cases EthnRelVio	Spillover	Cases EthnTrib Vio	Spillover
Birnin-Gwari	1973			1	
Chikun	1989				
Giwa	1991	2	2		
Igabi	1989	4*	4	1	1
Ikara	1976	1	1		
Jaba	1990				
Jema'a	1975	4		2	
Kachia	-				
Kaduna North	1975/91	6*	2	1	1
Kaduna South	1975/91	7*	3	1	
Kagarko	1987				
Kajuru	1997			1	
Kaura	1989				
Kauru	1987	1	1	1	
Kudan	1996				
Kubau	1996				
Lere	1979			1	
Makarfi	1991	1			
Sabon-Gari	1991	1	1		
Sanga	1996				
Soba	1989				
Zango-Kataf	1989	3		1	
Zaria	1969	8	3		

*Note that in the case of Igabi LGA incidents, the violence occurred in the Kaduna metropolitan area and are more accurately part of the Kaduna North/South clashes. A small stretch of Igabi LGA merges into the Kaduna North and South metropolis, and this is were any Igabi incidents have occurred, in Rigasa neighborhood in particular. Note that for the Kaduna North and South "Cases EthnoRel Vio" and "Spillover" cells, the figures could be doubled if the number of incidents were counted by distinct neighborhoods in which the violence took place or spilled over.

** Note that Kaduna LGA was created in 1975; in 1991 Kaduna North and South were carved out of the former Kaduna LGA. The date of Kachia LGA's creaton is currently unclear.

LGAs, Patterns of Power-Sharing, and Violence

The following two-by-two chart – Figure 6.2 below – represents the overall

pattern in the power-sharing and communal violence data, contrasting the Plateau state

LGAs by A) whether they have a power-sharing arrangement and B) whether they experience relative inter-religious communal peace or violence. Note that the homogenous LGAs are also indicated by the dashed circle. These are LGAs considered largely *homogenous* in their ethno-tribal composition; any minority tribal groups constitute perhaps 5 percent or less of the overall LGA population.[355] The focus is on LGAs characterized by some degree of ethno-tribal *pluralism*, however, where, even if these LGAs have a major ethno-tribal group, they also are home to other sizable ethno-tribal groups. The purpose of separating out these two types of LGAs is to test whether power-sharing is an effective institutional approach for negotiating rights and representation, as well as defusing inter-religious conflict, in pluralistic communities. Power-sharing, I expect, is less relevant or does not serve the same function of defusing inter-religious tensions in communities that are largely homogenous in their ethno-tribal or ethno-religious composition in the first place.

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[355] Note that the tribal or religious homogeneity is determined from interviews and engagement with people living in the LGA communities as well as academic studies or reports issued on communal violence. These are best estimates, as there are no official statistics, since the government stopped collecting these data on national censuses in 1963 due to the sensitivity of such information.

Figure 6.2. Plateau state LGAs and inter-religious violence[356]

	Relative Peace	**Violence**
Power-Sharing	Pankshin, Mangu, Bassa, Mikang, Kanam, Bokkos	
≠ Power sharing	(homogeneous) Riyom, Kanke, Jos South, Jos East, Langtang North, Langtang South, Barkin Ladi	Jos North, Shendam, Qua'an Pan, Wase

The following Map of LGAs in Plateau state is another representation of the findings in the data – blue LGAs are characterized by power-sharing and relative peace, and red areas by a lack of power-sharing and a higher incidence of inter-religious violence. The non-colored LGAs are the relatively homogenous LGAs:

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[356] The Riyom local government often has Anges as Deputy Chairmen, even though Angas is a very small ethno-tribal population. This was described not as a power-sharing arrangement, but as a vote-gaining strategy by the majority ethnic group.

Figure 6.3 Plateau State LGAs and inter-religious violence, map
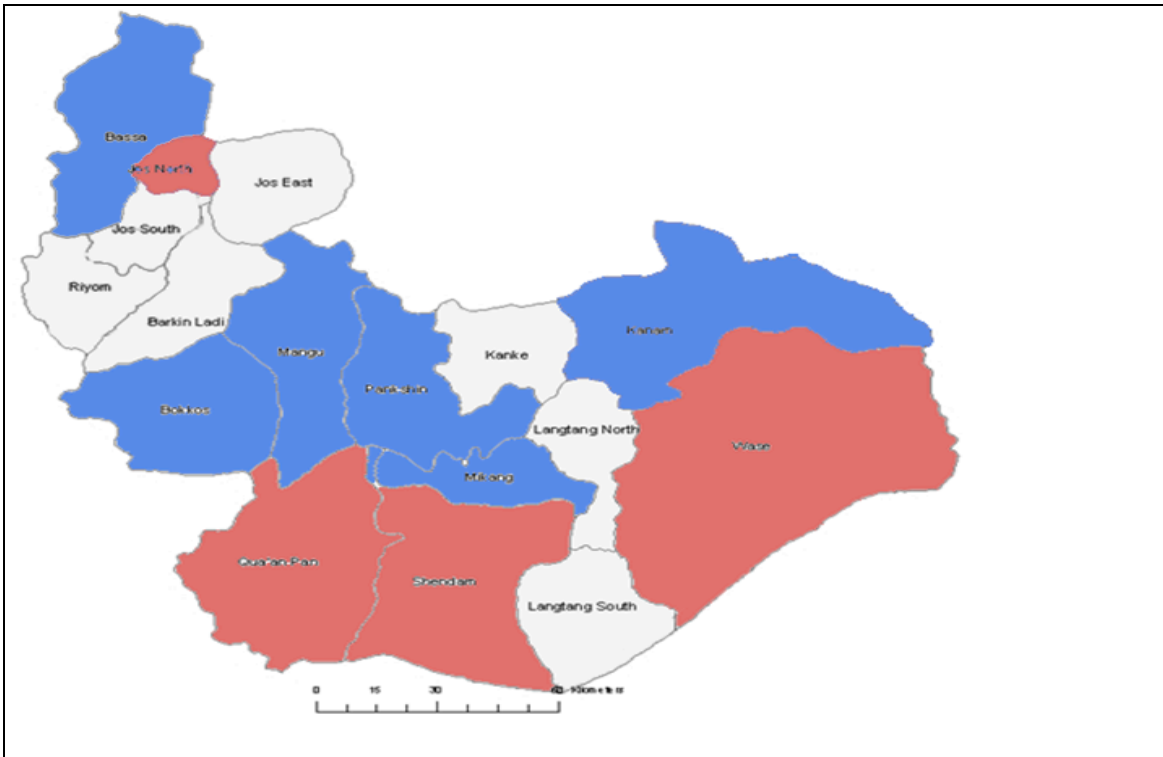
As illustrated above and supporting my theory, local government areas with a pluralistic ethno-tribal community that have a power-sharing arrangement tend to be less prone to inter-religious violence. The designation of power-sharing is derived from examination of electoral/appointment data over time (i.e. is a rotational or zoning arrangement reflected in the pattern of ethnic representation in the seats of Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary and perhaps more broadly?) and from interviews with local officials or community members. As expected, although homogenous LGAs in Plateau state may not have a power-sharing arrangement, they may nonetheless experience relative inter-

religious peace.[357] The logic of this finding is straightforward; it makes little sense that an LGA constructed primarily around one ethno-tribal group would have a power-sharing arrangement, since there are no other major ethno-tribal groups with whom to negotiate representative power.

CONCLUSION

The analysis thus far confirms the hypothesized pattern among the LGAs. Those with power-sharing arrangements tend to be less prone to Muslim-Christian and ethno-tribal violence. One may also observe that the patterns of ethno-tribal and inter-religious violence do not mirror one another in frequency or in their precipitating events or reported causes, as discussed in Chapter 5. What these data cannot reveal, however, is the underlying processes or mechanisms whereby power-sharing in these communities is associated with inter-religious peace. Why did elites adopt power-sharing arrangements, what form do they take, how do they persist, and what explains how a pattern of ethno-tribal power-sharing affects Muslim-Christian relationships? These questions can only be answered in a meaningful way by discussing specific case studies of violence-prone and peaceful LGAs as I do in the next three chapters.

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[357] One should note that four cases of inter-religious communal violence are recorded for Barkin Ladi LGA, but violence in this LGA is largely an ongoing tit-for-tat conflict between the Muslim Fulani cattle rearers and the majority Christian local Berom population.

CHAPTER 7

Power-sharing Case Study Findings:

Jos North & Bassa

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Plateau and Kaduna are two states in the Middle Belt or northern region of Nigeria with higher reported incidence of Muslim-Christian violence over the last two to three decades. Inter-religious violence is not the bane of *all* pluralistic communities or LGAs in these two states, however. Indeed, the reason I focus on these two states for closer analysis and case study comparison is because they constitute a very mixed set of LGAs. Some of the LGAs are largely homogenous; others are more pluralistic. Some of the pluralistic LGAs seem prone to Muslim-Christian clashes; other pluralistic LGAs are relatively peaceful despite the Muslim-Christian violence ripping apart communities in neighboring areas. Clashes between Muslim and Christian, as should now be quite clear, are by no means inevitable.

Building on the findings of the previous chapter – which showed that pre-existing power-sharing between ethno-tribal groups in Plateau state LGAs is associated with a lower likelihood of observing communal violence – this chapter and the next present a series of paired comparison case studies from Plateau state and Kaduna state to explain this relationship. The LGAs selected for case study comparison are heterogeneous in terms of their tribal/religious composition, but have either A) experienced recurrent bouts of inter-religious violence or B) remained relatively peaceful.

Based on these criteria, I focus in this chapter on Jos North and Bassa LGAs. In Jos (See Figure 7.1 below), where I lived during the fieldwork year, my research involved 37 individual interviews in which I spoke with a broad range of religious and political figures (Christian and Muslim), NGO peace activists, and scholars. Apart from interviews, key insights also came from attending approximately 20 peace meetings and religious events during the year. These organized gatherings were particularly insightful;

Figure 7.1. Plateau state 17 LGAs, (case study sites indicated), map
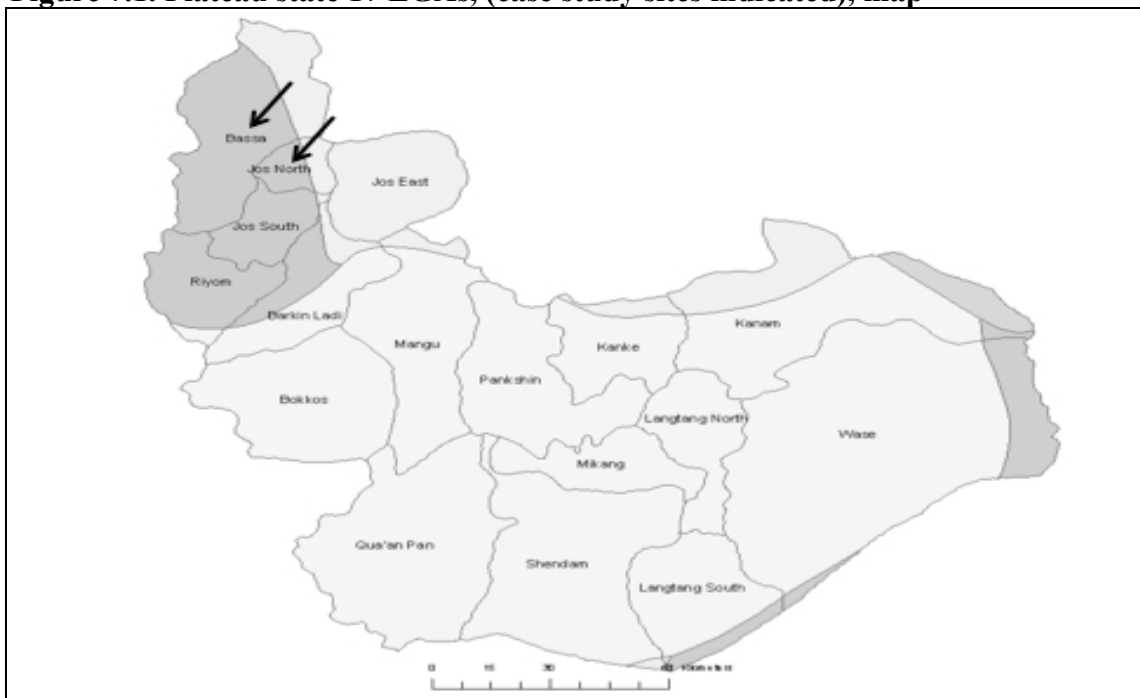
they involved a number of local leaders presenting their divergent perspectives and popular sentiments on the driving forces of inter-religious communal violence in Jos, Plateau state, and northern Nigeria as a whole. This does not count the dozens of conversations I had on a daily-basis with local Nigerians, as well as missionaries long resident in Jos, who have lived through the various episodes of violence. In neighboring Bassa LGA, I also conducted 10 interviews with traditional rulers, political leaders, and

peace activists. In general, most of the Jos interviews addressed not only the Jos North

case, but the problems of inter-religious violence more broadly in the northern states.

In Chapter 8, I look at Kanam and Shendam, and I discuss other LGAs that will

also be relevant at various points. In Kanam, I interviewed a mix of eight religious and

political leaders (including former chairmen of the local government), as well as the

elected chairman of the local government at the time and a group of Muslim and

Christian political representatives. Due to the availability of secondary sources and

reports on the conflict in Southern Plateau state, I relied on these sources to construct the

analysis of Shendam LGA. I did, however, conduct approximately 10 interviews with

political leaders, traditional rulers (in a meeting at the Emir's palace), and peace activists

from neighboring Wase, an LGA also caught up in the violence that spilled over from the

Shendam crises.

In Chapter 9, I focus on Chikun LGA and Zangon-Kataf LGA in Kaduna state, as

well as Jema'a LGA to further illustrate the history and pattern of inter-religious violence

in southern Kaduna state. In Chikun I carried out 8 interviews with, once again, religious

and political leaders, in addition to a focus group style meeting with approximately 30

youth leaders, peace organizers, and local political representatives in which a number of

them spoke to the conflicts in Kaduna state (or more broadly) and the relative peace of

Chikun LGA. As with the case of Shendam, I primarily relied on secondary sources or

reports for analysis of the Zangon-Kataf and southern Kaduna crises, including Human

Rights Watch reports, scholarly work, and local historical accounts.

The diverse sample of LGAs in Plateau and Kaduna present a valuable field of

study for exploring *why* inter-religious is more common in some otherwise similar

communities and not others and how power-sharing may function to stem violent communal disputes.

Caveats

While I do not discuss these cases as cross-state comparisons – an LGA in Plateau state in comparison to an LGA from Kaduna state – the analysis could certainly be presented this way as well. Chikun LGA and Jos LGA, for example, are both metropolitan, while Bassa and Zango-Kataf, as well as Wase and Kanam are more rural areas and the latter three are far from the main state capitals. While I opt to discuss these cases in relationship to their state counter-parts, cross-state comparison does not change the conclusions even though Kaduna is a Muslim-majority state and Plateau is a Christian-majority state.

One final caveat should be mentioned before delving into the data and case studies. The ethno-tribal composition of the LGAs does not necessarily mirror one another. In Zango-Kataf, there are Christian Kataf (also known as Atyap) and Hausa-Fulani Muslims. Chikun, on the other hand, is home to a mix of other ethnic groups, including those from the Zango-Kataf and other conflict areas of Kaduna state. The three major ethno-tribal groups in Chikun are the Gbagyi, Hausa, and Kabilu (people of southern Kaduna state). In Jos North, the Afizere and the Hausa are the majority, while in Bassa there are three main ethno-tribal groups – the Pangana, Irigwe, and Rukuba - as well as a small population of Fulani, Hausa, and six or so other very small ethno-tribal groups. In Kanam, the two main ethnic groups are the Bogghom and the Jahr, and Wase is home to the Hausa and the Taroh.

While one might argue that the analysis is compromised in not comparing apples to apples – LGAs with identical ethno-tribal compositions – there are two problems with this claim: First, one would be hard-pressed to find two LGAs in Plateau or Kaduna state with an identical set and proportion of ethnic groups. Indeed, the national government or local groups generally sought to chisel out LGAs in accordance with the settlement pattern of various ethno-tribal groups. As a result, the LGAs – conflict prone and otherwise – tend to reflect different ethnic majorities and minorities. The particular set and proportion of the ethno-tribal or ethno-religious groups does not, therefore, explain the pattern or likelihood of communal violence

Also, the goal of this study is not to explain *particular* ethno-tribal cleavages and communal violence, but to understand why LGAs with *various* ethno-tribal compositions are prone to inter-religious violence while others are not. As I discovered in my fieldwork, many instances of spill over violence occur between ethno-tribal groups different from those involved in the original clashes. Rather, the Muslim-Christian divide is the common denominator. If these cases were reducible to ethno-tribal identity, one would expect to only see spillover violence in those areas where the ethno-tribal groups are identical. In essence, there is nothing particular or primordial about these Nigerian ethno-tribal groups that makes them prone to communal violence. The findings regarding the politics of identity and conflict, therefore, have potentially broader implications for other countries with pluralistic communities and contentious ethnic politics. The overarching question is, in pluralistic communities undergoing rapid religious change and prone to widespread politicization of religious identity, under what conditions does religious identity become a salient cleavage that leads to communal violence? In this

sense, holding ethno-tribal identity constant is neither feasible nor relevant for the broader theoretical and empirical goals of this study. As one of the most ethno-tribally diverse countries in the world with over 250 ethno-tribal groups, Nigeria is ideal for sub-national comparative study on this topic.

The remainder of this chapter takes up this central relationship identified in the previous chapter – that LGAs with identified power-sharing institutions are also less prone to recurrent Muslim-Christian (and ethno-tribal) communal violence. This empirical correlation, while a novel finding, does not explain *why* a power-sharing arrangement is an effective tool for defusing inter-religious tensions or where the impetus for the institution came from. Understanding the strategic incentives and the institution's durability are critical, particularly considering the inability of national-level power-sharing institutions to effectively resolve group cleavages and build long-term stability and peace (discussed in detail in Chapter 2). The in-depth case studies of this chapter and the next shed light on this empirical relationship and confirm my theory that the pre-existing and informal power-sharing institutions established on an ethno-*tribal* basis before religion became a central cleavage in Nigerian national and local politics created a standard of shared representation that now helps to defuse claims of marginalization on the basis of *religious* identity. As local leaders in communities with power-sharing continually highlighted during my research, the informal institution creates the precedent for collaboration and coordination – as well as peace-building when inter-religious tensions threaten – among the diverse religious, tribal, and political elite and community members. As for why some LGA ethno-tribal elite formed a power-sharing institution for their community following decentralization in the 1970s, the strategic incentives vary

according to the impact of particular exogenous post-colonial political, social, and religious changes on the particular communities. In the case studies below, I discuss the colonial historical context of group relations, but the colonial story does not tell us how these relationships were transformed and evolved into a communal politics of ethno-tribal and religious significance. To understand why some LGAs adopted power-sharing while other similar LGAs did not, I explore the particular socio-economic, political, and religious changes that occurred after independence and affected the perceived balance of power and strategic logic for power-sharing.

RATIONALE FOR THE JOS NORTH & BASSA COMPARISONS

The first paired comparison is that of Jos North LGA and Bassa LGA, both with significant populations of Muslims and Christians, but while Jos North is blighted by endemic inter-religious violence, neighboring Bassa remains relatively peaceful and calm. Peace between Muslims and Christians in Bassa is particularly impressive considering that it is common for inter-religious violence in a nearby town or state to spark inter-religious violence elsewhere. One would think that since Bassa is also at times the recipient of those fleeing the Jos violence literally just down the road, inter-religious conflagration would also flare in Bassa.

One possible explanation of the calm might be the major Nigerian military barracks located near the headquarters of Bassa LGA. This argument does not seem to hold, however, since Jos North is still prone to recurrent inter-religious violence despite the deployment of 16,000 extra troops to the area at the beginning of 2011 and despite its close proximity (perhaps 10 minutes) to the military barracks as well. Furthermore, the

base's location in one particular area of Bassa does not explain why the local government as a *whole* is relatively calm, particularly in Jengre where the Muslim population is greater. The case of Jos North is interesting for another reason: it was largely peaceful up until 2001, apart from a small-scale skirmish in 1994. Like Bassa it too was calm and considered a safe haven for refugees as inter-religious violence unfolded across the border in Kaduna state. What caused this shift in Jos from a city/LGA of relative peace to one of recurring inter-religious violence, an area that people from other parts of Nigeria no longer consider a vacation destination and are afraid to visit? Key, I will argue, is the politics of identity and power-sharing in these two cases.

– JOS NORTH: NON-POWER-SHARING CASE –

As the analysis of power-sharing and LGA communal violence in the last chapter revealed, Jos North is a pluralistic LGA with a high incidence of inter-religious violence and, in contrast to some of its counterparts, lacks an informal power-sharing arrangement between its main ethno-tribal groups. Hence, if the theory holds, one should find that the reason Jos North failed to establish a power-sharing arrangement among the Hausa-Fulani and local ethno-tribal elite is rooted in the exacerbation of ethno-tribal cleavages or tensions in tandem with post-colonial political changes. While the history of assimilation and integration (or lack thereof) among the local populations provides important insight into the constitution of ethnic groups in a particular area, I expect patterns of migration, LGA-engineering, state creation, and the degree of religious change, to name a few factors, to be central to the political power-sharing calculation.

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My case study research confirms this hypothesis. The very creation of the Jos North local government, chiseled out of a single Jos LGA in 1991, significantly and unexpectedly re-drew the boundaries of group political control in the local government without warning. The decision by the national government appeared to re-channel the political authority held by local ethno-tribal groups to "non-indigenous" Hausa-Fulani Muslims, playing easily into a disruptive narrative of political concession to former colonial rulers and rendering a power-sharing approach unacceptable. The hardening of group identities into a Muslim-Christian contest and endemic inter-religious violence, unfortunately, has been the devastating consequence.

<u>Introduction to the Case of Jos North</u>

Jos, the urban center of Plateau state and one of the largest cities in northern Nigeria, is also the headquarters of Jos North LGA. Jos North has a population of 437,217 according to the 2006 census and is settled by both Muslims and Christians (See Appendices I & J for population figures). The Christian population is made up primarily of the Anaguta, Afizere, Berom, and other small ethno-tribal groups, while the Muslim population constitutes the significant Hausa-Fulani minority. Jos itself became more populated in the 1900s during colonial rule when it was discovered as a source of tin. Subsequently, a tin mining industry grew up around the 1920s and attracted migrants, particularly Hausa Muslims, from other areas of northern Nigeria.[358]

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[358] Obadiah Samuel, Chris Kwaja, and Angela Olofu-Adeoye, "The Challenges of PostConflict Partitioning of Contested Cities in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Jos North LGA," in *Religion and PostConflict Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Shedrack Gaya Best (Jos, Plateau: John Archers Publishers, 2011), 184.

In light of this designation of Jos North LGA as a volatile site of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria, one might presume that it is an area where inter-religious violence in the north had its inception. After all, since Jos North and the immediately neighboring LGAs are part of an urban center that is home to a mix of ethno-tribal groups that are largely Muslim or Christian, it seems a likely place for inter-religious violence to flare. Yet, Muslim-Christian violence was largely unheard of in Jos before 2001. While Kaduna, Bauchi, and Kano states were all experiencing inter-religious clashes that would spread like wildfire to other cities in those states, Jos remained peaceful. Furthermore, as the capital of Plateau state, Jos showed strong levels of integration in civic associations – such as in the mining union in the 1960s – and, prior to 2001, Muslims and Christians were very integrated; they engaged in every day interaction, living and socializing together in mixed neighborhoods and buying/selling together in the market. Plateau state itself was conferred the title of "Home of Peace and Tourism," and the communities "largely coexisted peacefully."[359]

Why was it in 1994 that the Muslim-Christian cleavage became more pronounced, erupting in major communal violence in 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010? In a relatively short span of time, Jos transformed from a place of inter-religious peace to recurring violence articulated and mobilized along Muslim-Christian lines. The shift renders Jos North LGA of particular interest for testing the role of religious change and other political shifts in the construction of Muslim-Christian conflict and, ultimately, in the failure of a power-sharing arrangement to emerge.

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[359] Ibid., 184.

The Development and Crux of the Conflict

Muslims and Christians in the Jos area lived side by side in mixed neighborhoods

for decades, inter-married, and shared and celebrated religious holidays together. At a

peace meeting of Christian leaders in early 2011, one Anglican Bishop recalled how

Muslims and Christians used to interact prior to the crises, stating,

> Long before now we had enjoyed so much peace…[we could] go into the house
> of a Muslim and visit freely. Until trouble started in 1994. Because of the
> experience we are going through here, everyone has become an enemy…Trust for
> each other is right now very low. Is there any hope for a return to those days?...I
> remember that in 1975 I was living in Bauchi Street and the people living next to
> us were Muslims, but today, that's not the case – everyone to his tent [religious,
> ethnic, tribal]. So a very old battle line is drawn; whether it's real or imagined, it
> exists.[360]

The breakdown in communal relationships can be traced back to the settlement and

subsequent political developments in the Jos area among both the local "indigenous"

ethno-tribal groups and the "settler" Hausa-Fulani Muslims.[361] The first signs that these

bonds might break down into violent conflict became apparent in the early 1990s, but the

fundamental dispute over rights and representation between the significant Hausa-Fulani

minority and the majority local ethno-tribal groups had long been present.

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[360] Notes recorded by Laura Thaut, Bukuru: Plateau State, 2011.

[361] Indigenous status can confer employment, education access, political representation, and other rights to
which the non-indigenous do not necessarily have access. See Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the
Name of Religion: The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States," *Human Rights Watch Publications*,
May 26, 2005, http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/05/24/revenge-name-religion-0 (accessed August 30,
2011). As the Human Rights Watch (2005, 8) report aptly summarizes, "Throughout Nigeria, groups
considered 'indigenes', or the original inhabitants of an area, are granted certain privileges, including
access to government employment, scholarships for state schools, lower school fees, and political positions.
To secure access to these privileges, they have to produce an 'indigene certificate' which is granted by the
local authorities. 'Non-indigenes' or 'settlers' are denied these certificates and the accompanying
privileges. Different groups are considered 'indigenes' or 'settlers' in different areas. The definition of the
term 'indigene' is commonly understood to be based on a person's place of origin, but many people born
and brought up in a particular area are not accorded that status, even though they may never have lived in
any other part of Nigeria. No official document or legislation defines these categories precisely or sets out
clear criteria as to how a person's 'indigeneship' is determined. The Nigerian constitution refers to the
concept of 'indigene' but fails to define it."

On the one side, the Hausa-Fulani Muslim elite contend that they have been historically under-represented in Jos local government due to their "settler" status, lacking the political and socio-economic rights of their ethnic counterparts despite their original settlement in the area and their central role in its administrative and economic development. One of the primary disputes between the Hausa-Fulani and the local Anaguta, Berom, and Afizere bloc is over the "ownership" of Jos, the capital of Plateau state and a thriving metropolis. The Hausa-Fulani elite assert that they are the original founders of Jos and have resided in the area for generations.[362] Responding to two newspaper Op-Ed pieces written in 1981 on claims to ownership of Jos, Umaru Sani, articulating the side of the Hausa-Fulani community, argues:

> 'Berom intellectuals' claim that Hausa-Fulani never ruled Jos, they were only made 'sarkin Hausawa' [community leaders] in places like Narkuta, Dilimi, Jos etc. …[T]he Hausa/Fulani founded and ruled [Jos] from about 1880 to late 1940s….Since both groups of writers admitted that the settlers did not settle as a result of conquest, it stands to reason that the lands (Narkuta, Jos etc. areas) were virgin lands at the time they arrived. The Anguta were settled around the hills and the Beroms were unquestionably far South of Jos.[363]

Contending that the Hausa-Fulani were the founders of Jos and actively developed the area as colonial administrators up until 1950, Sani goes on to note,

> It could be seen that the Hausa/Fulani were not only the forefounders of Jos but had also played a leading role in developing the area and its people. If there is anybody who deserves honour, respect and the claim of ownership of the town [the Hausa-Fulani] should be at the forefront. The exploitation argument of the Plateau tribes is untenable. If their grand-parents were intensively exploited through the then local chiefs…it was purely an accident of history. The British adopted a uniform system of indirect rule for the administration of its domain not

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[362] Hausa-Fulani Elders' Forum, "Jos Ethno-Religious Crisis is a Time Bomb Capable of Disintegrating Nigeria," *The Guardian*, January 14, 2009: 72-73. Professor of History, interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau (September 7, 2011).

[363] Umaru Sani, "The Hausa/Fulani and Their Lot in Jos (2)," *New Nigerian* (Kaduna: New Nigerian Newspapers Ltd., October 18, 1981), 8-9, 12.

only in Jos but all over Nigeria and indeed throughout its West African colonies. Again the exploitation was not limited to the Plateau tribes, the settlers [Hausa/Fulani] felt the pinch more; they formed over 90 per cent of the labour force in the mines, paid heavy taxes and were forced to license their bicycles and pay for various permits for social functions… The Hausa/Fulani in Jos Township have suffered enough. It's high time they were politically integrated for peace, tranquility and good government of Plateau State. They are now, like other groups, requesting for a local government of their own. It's only fair if they are given. They are not asking for the Jos traditional chief-dom, nor are they asking for political appointments; what they want is fair treatment, just like all the other groups.[364]

In a rejoinder to these claims, historians M. Y. Mangvwat and Charles Gonyok, speaking from the perspective of the local ethno-tribal groups, challenge the lack of evidence for these claims. Among other issues, they note that the Hausa-Fulani had attempted a military invasion in the 19th century from the Bauchi area (warded off by local ethno-tribal groups) and that the Hausa/Fulani – along with the Yoruba, Kanuri, and Igbos – did not establish a significant presence in the Jos area until 1915 during the British tin mining era (when a Hausa leader was brought in from Bauchi by the colonial authorities to preside over the Hausa mining settlements). Instead, Gonyok and Mangvwat argue that colonial direct rule presided in the area of Jos township "pending the indigenous chiefdoms would evolve larger and acceptable form of administration."[365] Upon the effective local organization of the indigenous chiefdoms, they note, "the colonial government did the only logical thing, namely the incorporation of the former so called 'Hausawa Areas' into the various polities and chiefdoms of their habitants," and this "naturally raised the dissatisfaction from the 'Sarkin Hausawa areas' and their clique." While the administration of the Jos Native Authority area following the 1950s

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[364] Ibid., 7.
[365] Charles K. Gonyok and M. Y. Mangvwat, "The Hausa-Fulani and Their Lot in Jos - A Rejoinder," *Nigerian Standard* (Jos: Plateau Publishing Company, October 12, 1981), 6.

was a rocky one and subject to the competing interests of the local and settler tribes in the area, the authors find the claims of exploitation unsubstantiated. Along these lines, the local ethno-tribal groups assert their historical ancestry in the area and, hence, their "ownership" of the contested area of Jos. As one local leader proclaimed during a program intended to promote peace and reconciliation,

> *The Plateau people should be left to rule their own land. [The indigenous of Plateau] can't go to Katsina and take land! Plateau has been too hospitable; the visitor in her home wants to overthrow her from her seat in her own father's home. Whoever does not know his roots should go and find his roots. Settlers want to take over the state, and this is not possible.*[366]

As this brief account highlights, the dispute over rights, representation, and ownership of Jos has been long-standing.[367] Yet, despite the competing claims and clashing historical accounts, violent conflict never erupted in Jos prior to the 1990s. Competing indigenous versus non-indigenous claims did not and do not inherently spell violent ethnic conflict. Indeed, it was not until General Babangida, the military leader of Nigeria, made an executive political decision in 1991 to "resolve" the Jos issue that the tensions morphed into something more threatening and violent. Babangida's solution was to carve up Jos South LGA into an additional two LGAs – Jos North and Jos East. Due to the way in which the boundaries of the local government were newly delineated, the Hausa-Fulani finally achieved one of their central demands – their own local government in the form of Jos North. In reality, the new Jos North LGA was not entirely populated by

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[366] Notes recorded by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State, 2011.
[367] For more on the issue of indigenouship versus settlers, see Philip Ostein, "Jonah Jang and the Jasawa: The Ethno-Religoius Conflict in Jos, Nigeria," *Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa*, eds. Franz and John Chesworth Kogelmann, 2009 August, www.sharia-in-africa.net/pages/publications.php (accessed 18 February 2011).

Hausa-Fulani, but they were now on par in population size with the Anaguta (or perhaps even a majority; this is part of the debate).

Whatever the exact ratio, this political event led to a new more volatile politics of indigenous versus non-indigenous identity and, ultimately, Muslim versus Christian identity politics and violence. The creation of Jos North was a political event deemed offensive and unacceptable to the local ethno-tribal groups. For the first time, no longer a political minority, the Hausa-Fulani could potentially control a local government area that included in its boundaries Jos metropolis, the state capital, and an area the local ethno-tribal groups long considered their own in Nigeria's politics of identity and territory. Describing the evolution of these events, one local historian explains that the creation of more states over time in Nigeria reorganized the colonial pattern of communal relationships. When the national government carved Plateau state out of the former Plateau-Benue state and implemented the 1976 LGA reforms, the Hausa population in Plateau state became a minority among the Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta people in an area where they had previously been a political majority. He notes,

> [W]hen the Benue-Plateau state was created, [the Muslims] had no cause to fear…[b]ecause in that state you had pockets of Muslim emirates in the Middle Belt state to whom they related… So the fear that they [were] being dominated…was less… Then Benue-Plateau state was severed and a Plateau State was created. Now, in the old Plateau state again, they had no cause to fear because the emirates in Nasarawa, in Keffi, in Lafia, in Wase, in Kanam were still there… Wase and Kanam were, you know, and are still acknowledged emirates, created during the Jihad… Now, with the creation of the new state and now local government…when you now merge with that of the natives, the Hausa are about to become a minority. And this is what has happened. And that is why the only local government that they control was now about to be taken over by the, you know, an alliance of the natives and these other Christian groups from the south. Now, it was with the realization of that that President Ibrahim Babangida then

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split Jos into Jos North, Jos East, and Jos South, by which he had hoped that Jos North would belong exclusively to the Hausa-Fulani.[368]

To the indigenous Christian ethno-tribal groups, this move was seen as an affront, an attempt to appease the local Hausa Muslim population that was presumably advocating for more political power than acceptable. Subsequent political moves to resolve the dispute, rather than helping to create a system of power-sharing, reinforced the divisions and made a power-sharing solution all the more untenable to the disputing parties.

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In a short space of time, following the political events outlined above, Jos went from being a peaceful vacation destination and home to refugees fleeing inter-religious violence to one of the hotbeds of recurrent Muslim-Christian clashes generating thousands of refugees of its own. A small-scale violent clash in 1994 over the political appointment of a Hausa Muslim portended more violence to come, violence that would take on a strongly religious dimension and render Jos one of the perceived no-go zones of northern Nigeria. The city itself is now segregated along Muslim-Christian lines, and Christians consider it risking their lives to enter the Muslim neighborhoods and vice-versa. Bouts of violence occasionally flare and are unpredictable, killing anywhere from relatively few to a few hundred. Yet, the conflict was not inevitable. While the relationship between the local ethno-tribal groups and the Hausa-Fulani was clearly shaped by the colonial legacy – lack of assimilation and political integration – it was subsequent political events and changes *particular* to this area of Plateau state that tipped the balance toward conflict rather than compromise. The creation of Jos North

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[368] Interview by Laura Thaut, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, 2011.

established a political impasse, removing incentives for any sort of power-sharing solution. As Ostein notes,

> This subdivision of the old Jos LGA of course changed the local political equations. Within the new Jos North, in particular, the local peoples were no longer so predominant, most of them living with less admixture of other ethnic groups in Jos South; in elections to city-wide offices in Jos North, therefore, other groups, like the Hausas, might now expect to win. This in fact is believed by the Plateau indigenes to have been the exact purpose [for] which Jos North was created: to give the Hausa community of Jos an LGA they could control.[369]

Under these conditions, a divisive religious othering and narrative of Muslim-Christian conflict, already rampant in Nigerian national politics and in communal violence surrounding Plateau state, found fertile ground in Jos. The issue was not ultimately one of integration or lack of prior civic associationalism but, rather, a lack of power-sharing at the local level. This next section discusses some of the details of the events surrounding the iterations of communal and inter-religious violence in Jos

The Violence

Following the creation of Jos North in 1991, the subsequent election for the chairmanship of the LGA went to a Hausa Muslim or "Jasawa" man by the name of Sama'ila Mohammed, much to the chagrin of the indigenous in the area. The chairman's subsequent liberality in dispersing indigenous certificates to Jasawa, as well as their domination of important local government positions, raised the specter of an exclusivist approach to governance.[370] While no violent clashes occurred during Samai'ila Mohammed's leadership, subsequent events created the impression that the Hausa-Fulani

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[369] Ostein, "Jonah Jang and the Jasawa."
[370] Ibid., 11.

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Muslims, former colonial proxy rulers of parts of present-day Plateau state, would once again rule the local ethno-tribal groups.

The political cleavage became starker with new political developments. When the Nigerian state reverted to military rule under General Abacha in 1993, the state nullified local government councils, instituting "caretaker committees" selected by the military regime. Consequently, when Alhaji Sanusi Mato, a Hausa Muslim, was appointed to the Jos North Management Committee in 1994, this raised a firestorm. Not only was the management committee perceived as dominated by Hausa Muslims, but the appointed governor of Plateau state was also a Muslim. These actions were "interpreted by both indigenes and settlers alike as a deliberate removal of Plateau natives (arna) away so as to pave way for the Hausa-Fulani settlers to take absolute control of Jos, the capital city of the State," and "[a]s expected, the Hausa-Fulani settlers jubilated while the indigenes greeted it with anger, anguish, protest and petitions."[371] Members of the local indigenes mobilized in protest, marching to the Jos North Local Government Secretariat to prevent the swearing in of Mato in 1994. When Governor Mato succumbed to the pressure, the Hausa Muslims counter-protested and clashed with police and those opposed to the appointment. In the subsequent violence, markets, parks, and other public places were destroyed, and some four people were killed and others injured.[372]

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[371] Monday Yakiban Mangvwat, "Historical Insights on Plateau Indigene-Settler Syndrom, 1902-2011," in *Workshop on Citizenship and Indigeneity Conflicts in Nigeria* (Abuja, Feb 2011), 14.
[372] Ostein, "Jonah Jang and the Jasawa," 12; Dung Pam Sha, *The Politicisation of Settler-Native Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Jos, Central Nigeria* (Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers, LTD., 2005), 56. Benedict Hart and David Oladimeji, "Curfew Declared in Jos Over Violent Demonstrations" (Lagos: The Guardian Ltd., April 14, 1994), 1. Benedict Hart, "The Battle for Jos North Chairmanship" (Lagos: The Guardian Ltd., April 27, 1994), 13. These sources note that as a result of the dispute, Mato was asked not to assume office. This action then led to the demonstration by Mato's mainly Muslim supporters who clashed with police and indigenes opposed to the appointment. Muslim youth converged at the Islamic Primary

This crisis was the first of what would become endemic violence in Jos over the next two decades. The dispute over political control of Jos North continues and is exacerbated by the now *indigenous* domination of leadership in the local government council, giving rise to accusations by the Hausa-Fulani that elections are rigged and fraudulent. Indeed, since 1994 a Hausa Muslim has not served as the chairman of the local government council despite their significant presence in the LGA. As a result, Hausa-Fulani elite argue,

> It is a government-promoted injustice, targeting total systematic marginalization and exclusion of our people from any benefit connected with state resources, despite our physical presence, contributions to the development of Jos and its environs. The most disturbing aspect of our persecution is the actual steps being taken by the [] indigenesi and their government to annihilate our people from Jos North Local Government.[373]

In contrast, judicial committees and leaders of the local ethno-tribal community continue to refer to their indigenous status and dismiss the "rights" of the Hausa Muslims to rule what does not belong to them.

Since 1994, there have been five major inter-religious clashes in Jos – in 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 – in which hundreds of people have been killed. This does not include the number of "smaller" cases of deadly communal inter-religious violence that continue to fuel conflict and solidify the acrimonious nature of religious identity in parts of Plateau state.

School and marched to town chanting slogans in support of Mato, and they forced passerbyers/motorists to repeat the slogans. The police presence was minimal and overwhelmed by stone throwers. The rioters went on to destroy markets, parks and other public places, and demonstrators and indigenes clashed at Gada Biu junction.

[373] Hausa-Fulani Elders' Forum, "Jos Ethno-Religious Crisis."

Inter-religious violence

While the violence in Jos North is rooted in the political exacerbation of disagreements over local government representation, a religious dimension or a "religious coloration" has increasingly characterized and fueled the violence. Observing the dialogue on the crisis at meetings of government officials, peaceworkers, academics, and religious leaders during the course of fieldwork, it is clear that residents of Jos and Plateau state struggle to define whether the conflagrations are religious, tribal, political, or a messy combination of all three. As one participant at a meeting of high-level officials and community leaders in Jos emphasized, part of the danger of recognizing the religious dimension of the conflict is that it may make the conflict intractable. "Be careful not to paint it as a religious crisis," he urged, "If it's ethnic, it can be resolved…but when it becomes religious, we cannot go anywhere…religious crisis will break the country."[374] Despite the broader and varied dimensions of the conflict, the perception is that it pivots around religious identity. There is plenty of evidence that the religious dimension has increasingly fueled the conflict since the 1990s. Religious events or perceived offenses are now sufficient to spark devastating violence mobilized along Muslim-Christian lines. Indeed, as highlighted in Chapter 6, a religious event is far more likely to spark communal violence between Muslim and Christian ethno-tribal blocs than other political or economic events, such as an election or land dispute.

A number of cases speak to this new reality of sacralized communal violence. Prior to the September 2001 violence in which as many 1000 people were killed in Jos North and surrounding neighborhoods, a political dispute was simmering over the

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[374] Recorded notes by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, Nigeria, 2011.

appointment of one Mallam Muktar Usman Mohammed, a Jasawa (Hausa-Fulani) man,

to the position of Coordinator and Chairman of the Monitoring Committee of the

National Poverty Eradication Program. The opposition of the local ethno-tribal elite to

this appointment was strong, but the event that lit the fuse on the communal tensions was

a scuffle that ensued at a local mosque. A Christian woman reportedly attempted to cross

directly through an area outside of a mosque where Muslim men were holding their

prayers. When she returned from the market the same way despite their warning that she

take an alternate path, the encounter with the annoyed worshipers turned violent.

Christians appeared on the scene to defend her – either because they happened to observe

the altercation or, as some claim, because they were standing in wait to carry out an

attack. Whatever the exact details of that day, Human Rights Watch recounts the

subsequent events,

> [Both sides] set up roadblocks all over the town, allowing people to pass if they
> were of their own faith and stopping and attacking those of the opposite faith.
> People were targeted clearly on the basis of their religion or ethnicity. A Christian
> man who was stopped at a Muslim roadblock told how Muslim youths were
> encouraging each other to pick out as many Christians as possible, as if it were a
> kind of competition to see who could kill the most Christians. A Muslim leader
> was stopped by about eighteen Christian youths armed with sticks and machetes
> who were shouting "Useless Muslim!" and "Useless Hausa man!" at another
> Muslim ahead of him. In some areas, Christians and Muslims set up joint patrols
> in a bid to limit the spread of violence, but it became difficult to maintain these
> once the fighting had escalated.[375]

Even members of small ethno-tribal groups from southern states who were residing in Jos

but were not involved in the political dispute between the indigenous and settlers were

targeted on the basis of religion. One report notes that although Christian Igbos were not

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[375] Human Rights Watch, "Jos: A City Torn Apart," *Human Rights Watch*, December 18, 2001,
http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/12/18/jos-0 (accessed January 22, 2011), 9.

initial targets, they too were engulfed in the violence, since "Hausas regarded them same as unbelievers like the indigenous."[376] In the end, Human Rights Watch and other reports recorded approximately 1000 deaths, dozens or hundreds injured, 50,000 displaced in 16 refugee camps, and billions of naira in property destroyed including a number of places of worship.[377]

In the large-scale violence in 2008 and 2010, the disputes once again took on a religious coloration with churches and mosques targeted and burned to the ground. In one account, the major 2010 inter-religious violence was sparked by the refusal of Christians to allow a Muslim man to rebuild his home (destroyed in previous communal violence) in an area now dominated by Christians. Another account is that the mobilization of violence occurred following a Muslim man's attack on a church full of Christian worshipers in Jos. Either way, the perception of a Muslim versus Christian conflict was clear. Both the 2008 and 2010 inter-religious violence resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, further creating the perception of an insurmountable religious cleavage in Jos. In a smaller incidents constructed as religious in 2010, "hoodlums" reportedly attacked members of the Christian Association of Nigeria while they were leaving a meeting in Jos. On August 30th, 2011 a church was destroyed and two-dozen Christians and Muslims were killed following a confrontation between Christians and Muslims when Muslims went to pray at an abandoned mosque in a now predominantly Christian area of the city. Recently, in March 2012, suspected Boko Haram extremists bombed the COCIN church and headquarters in the city, which led to at least 10 retaliatory killings of Muslims as

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[376] Isa Abdulsalami, "Jos Crisis Ignites Exodus," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, September 16, 2001), 7.
[377] Human Rights Watch, "Jos: A City Torn Apart," 10; Abdulsalami 2001, 7; Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: Use Restraint in Curbing Jos Violence," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, January 21, 2010), 7.

Christian youth set up roadblocks to kill Muslim motorcycle transport drivers who had nothing to do with the incident.

As these few examples highlight, whatever the underlying political dimensions of the dispute in the Jos North crises, the violence is either propelled in the first place by an event of some religious significance or it quickly takes on the garb of a religious conflict as Muslims and Christians mobilize to confront one another. Remarking on the 2008 violence in an interview with *The Guardian*, Alhaji Alhassan Shaibu, the Secretary General of Jamatu Nasri Islam (JNI), observed, "The cause of the crisis to me is political. But when it took off, it metamorphosed into a religious dimension."[378] The narrative of the Muslim-Christian conflict is particularly embittered. Christians in Jos fear a political-religious agenda of northern Muslims, and many blame the conflicts in the region on a "jihadist" agenda. As a local professor of religion explains, there is a very strong fear among Christians that Muslims are intent on "taking over the whole of Plateau State and making it an Islamic state…everybody becoming a Muslim by force," and ultimately pushing south to take over the whole of Nigeria. Although rather an extreme view, he emphasized that it is a "very strong fear."[379] This fear was reflected on a number of occasions in meetings or interviews with locals and religious leaders who believe that Muslims and Christians are in a state of war and peace is no longer conceivable.[380]

Nonetheless, there are a plethora of moderate religious leaders and activists on both the Muslim and Christian side who are aghast at this kind of thinking and actively

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[378] Isa Abdulsalami, "'We Should Learn from the South Where Muslims and Christians Live in Peace'," *Guardian* (Lagos: Guardian Newspapers Ltd., December 20, 2008), 8.
[379] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, Nigeria, 2011.
[380] Notes recorded by Laura Thaut, 2011

organize their people to stand for peace and to restore the relationship between Muslims and Christians. The Sultan of Sokoto himself has repeatedly called for the violence to end and admonishes Muslims to follow the commands of Islam to live in peace. At a peace meeting in 2008 in Jos with political and religious leaders (including the CAN president), the Sultan of Sokoto appealed to adherents stating,

> When the Almighty God created us in different places and into different religions so that all of us can become one and we are all equal in the eyes of the Almighty… therefore, we cannot fathom how individuals will just get up one night and tear apart all that Almighty God declared holy and sacrosanct, claiming people's lives in the name of religion or in the name of ethnic background or whasoever, destroying people's property in the name of religion, in the name of ethnic background. This madness must stop.[381]

Similarly, one Anglican Bishop observed,

> *War will beget war, peace will give birth to peace…the peace brought by the Prince of Peace is all-embracing, it does not discriminate. When Christ gives the peace it is for everyone…Peace is difficulty, but that is what is expected as people of God…If we are still living today, it means that God expects better things. Call them [Muslim] friends, give a text to them. If we expunge a whole people from the community, do you think peace will be there for us?*[382]

 In the meantime, however, moderates appear to have an uphill battle. It is evident that the emotions run deep when it comes to the conflict and that God has been co-opted into it.

The Religious Change

The phenomenon of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria is inseparable from the story of religious change in Nigeria since the 1970s. Plateau state, along with a number of other Middle Belt states, experienced a rapid conversion of its non-Muslim

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[381] Isa Abdulsalami and Kelechi Okoronkwo, "Sultan cites hunger, poverty in Jos crisis," *Guardian* (Lagos: Guardian Newspapers Ltd., December 17, 2008), 2.
[382] Notes recorded by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

population to Christianity following the end of colonial rule with the removal of the

barrier to missionary evangelism. The Pentecostal-charismatic revival that swept from

south to north in the 1960s and 1970s could easily be constructed as a threat to the

predominance of Islam in northern Nigeria where religion and politics have been

integrally linked as far back as the rule of the Sokoto Caliphate. In Plateau state,

Christianity was virtually non-existent at the beginning of the 20th century. Today,

Plateau state is majority Christian, around 70 percent of the population, and the

population of Jos is also around 50 percent Christian. Evangelistic crusades and

enthusiasm along with the establishment of countless new neighborhood Pentecostal

churches and mega-churches interspersed all speak to the rapid religious change that has

occurred in northern Nigeria and the potential for it to be perceived as a "threat" in the

minds of Christians. As Shedrack Gaya Best observes,

> Pentecostal Christianity has…been accused of creating a rumbling effect,
> threatening other faiths in the process. Religious revivalism, a general upsurge in
> religionism and the resort to religious propaganda as evident in the proliferation
> of religious groups, places of worship, clerics, etc. and the links they maintain
> with external bodies (Tamuno 1993) are additional factors for the activation of
> fanatical religion and subsequent violent conflict.[383]

While describing the political and economic dimensions of the religious crises in Nigeria,

one peace activist in Jos commented that the Pentecostal/charismatics are "more pushy in

their approach and among Muslims," but "if you follow the preaching, across the divide,

you find both Christian and Muslim preachers who bury political issues into their

preaching and, by implication, preaching hatred, creating fear of the other, and to some

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[383] Shedrack Gaya Best, "Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding: Conceptual and Theoretical
Considerations," in *Religion and PostConflict Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria*, 33 (Ibadan: John
Archers Publishers, 2011).

extent encouraging people to rise up…not to accept defeat of opponent – and whether by omission or commission…that kind of preaching – to feel that spirit of being strong – are contributes…to that kind of rivalry feeling.[384]

Similarly, the emergence of Islamic extremist movements in the north – evidenced in intra-Muslim riots and violence at the beginning of the 1980s and the emergence of the radical and deadly Boko Haram sect – also reinforce fears of an Islamic Jihad intent on wiping out Christianity in the north. As Best notes, "Many have argued that the radicalisation of Islam, its provocative public preachings and statements attributed to some of its leaders and clerics helped to inflame Nigerian passions in the direction of religion."[385] Jan Boer points out that the surge in Christianity in the Middle Belt region "has made Islam even more nervous, for it stakes its claims on basis of an alleged continued majority," and "increasing nervousness spells greater volatility."[386]

This religious changed, analyzed in greater depth in Chapter 4, does not mean that the religious violence is inevitable. Rather the Christian religious resurgent and radicalization of Islam helps to explain why religious identity – its language, beliefs, and symbolism – is a salient category of belonging in Nigeria that can be co-opted for violence as well as peace and blur the underlying political context of local communal disputes.

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[384] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.
[385] Best, "Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding," 33.
[386] Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: 1980-2002* (Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, to explain why a power-sharing arrangement never took shape in Jos and religion emerged as fault line of conflict, the political events and changes of the post-colonial period are key. In particular, General Babangida's decision to create Jos North LGA heightened political conflict to an unprecedented degree. Whether or not his intentions were good – to resolve a long-standing dispute –local ethno-tribal groups viewed the creation of Jos North as a regression, a concession of land to former colonial-era power-holders in an area that had activity resisted Hausa-Fulani Muslim incursion and colonial rule. General Babangida not only chiseled out an LGA that gave the Hausa-Fulani population an opportunity for local government leadership and representation, but also included the state capital city in its domain. Rather than providing an incentive for power-sharing, this particular political event exacerbated local cleavages and enhanced the competition between communal groups. The creation of the LGA was, therefore, a game changer in socio-political relations. The stakes were suddenly far greater, as local government rule represented for both sides the potential to legitimize and claim their stake, their right to self-governance in the post-colonial period. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that the domination of the local government council by Christian indigenous leaders angers Hausa-Fulani and yet seems only just to the indigenous of the area. It is in this political context that power-sharing in Jos North failed to emerge as a viable alternative among the local ethno-tribal groups.

– BASSA LGA: A POWER-SHARING CASE –

Like Jos North, Bassa LGA is pluralistic, home to a handful of larger ethno-tribal groups and a number of smaller ones – both Muslim and Christian. As the last chapter highlighted, the data on power-sharing confirm that Bassa posses some manner of informal power-sharing institution and a lower incidence of inter-religious violence (despite being a neighbor of Jos North LGA). If the theory holds true, I expect to find evidence that power-sharing helps to quell claims of political marginalization both along ethno-tribal and religious lines through the rotation of leadership of the local government among the various ethno-tribal groups. In contrast to Jos, I also expect to find that power-sharing was a more viable political negotiation in Bassa due to the absence of a significant political threat to the local ethno-tribal groups that together make up the majority of the population. As I will discuss, my findings confirm this hypothesis. In contrast to Jos North, power-sharing in Bassa, even with Hausa-Fulani, did not jeopardize the opportunity for local ethno-tribal blocs to achieve significant self-representation in the post-colonial and decentralization period.

Introduction to the Case of Bassa LGA

Like many of the other LGAs in Plateau state, Bassa LGA was founded in 1976 during the decentralization reforms that reshaped local government representation in Nigeria. Bassa LGA is home to a population of around 190,000 and sits on the border with Kaduna state and neighbors Jos North and Jos South LGAs. The main local or indigenous ethno-tribal groups (i.e. major chiefdoms) are the Rukuba, the Pengana, and

the Irigwe, along with a significant minority population of Hausa-Fulani Muslims and a small representation of perhaps a dozen other ethno-tribal groups. While the three main local ethno-tribal groups are largely Christian, there are areas of the local government where Muslims are in the majority, including Jengre, which is one of the most ethnically diverse and more populated of the towns in Bassa LGA. Yet, despite this pluralism and the LGAs proximity to Jos North, Bassa is one of the most peaceful LGAs in Plateau state. While there is an occasional flare up of violence in the Miango district of Bassa, this is the product of a very localized and longstanding land dispute between ethno-tribal Fulani pastoralists and local farmers. Inter-religious violence of the type that has occurred in Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and other areas of the Middle Belt is absent.

The Relative Peace

In contrast to its volatile neighbor, Jos North LGA, Bassa remains one of the more peaceful LGAs in Plateau state. This does not mean that the LGA is immune from inter-religious tensions. As one peace activist noted, religious tensions in Bassa have arisen on several occasions due to the inter-religious violence taking place elsewhere in Plateau state or neighboring states. "Where one's brother is being attacked elsewhere, there is pressure to retaliate against the religious other in one's own community," he explained.[387] Indeed, events in Jos have threatened to spillover into Bassa on several occasions. For example, another peace activist noted that, on one occasion following violence in Jos, a number of Muslims from the city started fleeing to Bassa. Tensions in the area began to rise as a rumor spread that the Muslim refugees were armed with the intent to attack Christians in Bassa late in the night. Violence was ultimately averted, however, when

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[387] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

local leaders and peace activists, in conjunction with the local government Chairman, organized a spur of the moment meeting with Muslim, Christian, and tribal leaders from the area to appeal to their youth for calm as they sorted out the situation. After investigating where the rumor was coming from, the leaders discovered that the Muslims were afraid because *they* had heard a rumor that the Christians in Bassa were going to attack them.[388] Once this became clear, the rumors were soon put to rest. Bassa is "not as turbulent as Jos," argued one peace activist, because of the many measures community leaders take to keep the calm. They "always preach peace" and there is a forum in which they come together to discuss events taking place when there is an alarm.[389] Whenever there are hints of trouble, they are able to call the Hausa and Fulani leaders and engage with them, he explains.

Why is this? What explains why the leaders are able to organize effectively across tribal and religious divides to stem hints of trouble? Despite the many peace meetings, NGO activities, and community peacebuilding activities that occur in Jos – sometimes even bringing Muslim and Christian leaders or community members together – this type of effective organization and gathering of local leaders to quell conflict is largely unheard of in Jos. Here, I point to the importance of Bassa's foundational power-sharing institution established between the major ethno-tribal blocs, which has provided the basis for inter-tribal and inter-religious understanding and coordination of peace activities, keeping major conflict in the LGA at bay.

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[388] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.
[389] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

<u>Power-Sharing in Bassa LGA</u>

Since the inception of Bassa local government in 1976, a rotational power-sharing

institution has characterized its system of local level representation. This takes the

following form: If one of the three major chiefdoms – the Rukuba, the Pengana, or the

Irigwe enjoys leadership of the local government one election cycle, then the

Chairmanship will go to another chiefdom in the subsequent election. Although the

power-sharing arrangement is not a formal, codified agreement between the local ethno-

tribal leaders, one community leader notes, "you discover that even in the different

political parties that we have, they will only fill in candidates from that chiefdom [whose

turn it is] for that office." The tradition of power-sharing has so infused the local

government that political parties only run candidates as the institutional arrangement

dictates. Consequently, according to this arrangement, the elected chairman is only able

to serve one term so that the office may rotate to a representative of one of the other

chiefdoms. As one community youth leader explained,

> *...for the position of local government chairman, usually it is rotated to the chiefdoms. Like presently, Rukuba chiefdom was supposed to be occupying [the chairmanship], but unfortunately the man...passed away some time last year in a motor accident, and his deputy who is from Pengana chiefdom assumed the responsibility of local government Chairman. So, the late chairman's wife from Rukuba [chiefdom] was made...the deputy chairman, while the secretary of the local government is from Irigwe chiefdom. So, that is how you have the spread. And truly they have respected [the agreement] very well over the years. So after this particular thing...is going to elapse by November [with new LGA elections] with the top of the chiefdom[s] to contest the imposition of the local government Chairman. So you discover that even in the different political parties that we have, they will only fill in candidates from that chiefdom for that office.[390]*

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[390] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

Regarding its effectiveness, he continues, it is an "unwritten agreement, it has worked perfectly."[391]

If the power-sharing arrangement is primarily between the three main Christian-majority ethno-tribal groups, how does this prevent Muslim-Christian tensions or dispel claims of marginalization by the significant Muslim minority? In Jengre, the area of Bassa where Hausa-Fulani Muslims are the majority, a local chief explained that while the three major chiefdoms rotate the chairmanship of the local government council and generally rotate the positions of deputy chairman and secretary among themselves, some Fulani Muslims have even held the position of Deputy Chairman. In this sense, the rotation is not exclusive.

Although the power-sharing arrangement for the core leadership of the local government council is largely coordinated between the three major ethno-tribal groups, since they constitute the majority of the LGA and the three main indigenous chieftancies, the non-indigenous and smaller ethno-tribal groups are still able to achieve some level of representation in the local government through councillorship or legislative positions. Councilors are elected from the various wards of an LGA, and it is likely that the group – be it indigenous or non-indigenous – that most populates that particular ward will achieve councillorship representation. For example, in two previous election cycles, the minority Jere, Amo, Lemoro, Buji, and Hausa ethno-tribal groups, along with the Rukuba, Irigwe, and Pengana have filled councillorship posts. As members of the Mista-Ali community noted, for example, even non-indigenous persons are elected as councilors. While non-indigenous representation in the executive positions of the local government council is

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[391] Ibid.

less common, it has been known to happen. Furthermore, the ethno-religious identity of representatives are taken into account, as locals emphasized, noting that a Muslim is currently serving at the top of the local government council despite the Christian majority composition of the LGA.

The system of power-sharing extends beyond the political and electoral arena to the chieftaincy system as well, which also helps to maintain peaceful relationships among the ethno-tribal groups and foster communication and cooperation. The three main tribes rotate the position of the Paramount Chief, the most highly distinguished traditional leadership position in the community. The Paramount chief, as the traditional ruler, presides over the chiefs of all of the other local ethno-tribal groups and helps to foster a good relationship among the different ethno-tribal groups. During an unannounced visit to one local chief, a host of both Muslims and Christians from different ethno-tribal groups in the area were observed calling on the chief. In attendance was a Muslim chief from a neighboring Hausa community who, while the other was absent from the room, described their friendly relationship. Their religious differences, he explained, had never been a barrier to them working together.[392]

Like all the local governments in Nigeria, periods of military rule have interrupted the local government electoral system. During such times, the national government imposes "sole administrators" on local governments, sometimes represented by an individual from the local government or from another LGA or state. When looking at the system of rotation, therefore, these periods of rule will sometimes represent aberrations in the power-sharing system, since the military sole administration does not necessarily

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[392] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

reflect the power-sharing arrangement existent in communities. Nonetheless, the rotational system of representation in Bassa LGA is a defining feature of the local government, a feature absent in the case of Jos North LGA. The informal institution provides the foundation for the cross-tribal and cross-religious peace activities in Bassa.

Origin of the Institution

According to an important local chief, the power-sharing institution originated when three of the leaders – one from each of the major chiefdoms – sat down and formed the agreement. While the younger generations in the local government are not necessarily sure how the power-sharing arrangement originated, one local teacher and peace activist echoed the chief's account, commenting that some elders simply sat down together and saw the need for it. Their purpose was to avoid marginalization of any one of the groups, since each of them constitutes a significant portion of the local population and is considered indigenous to the area.[393] This assessment may not be far off the mark. In a conversation with a long-time Fulani traditional ruler or chief and member of the Islamic Jama'atu Nasril Islam (Muslim umbrella body), he recalls a pattern of power-sharing dating back to the colonial period when local leaders would meet with colonial authorities in neighboring Jos to come to coordinated decisions.[394] In this sense, Bassa LGA had historical precedent for power-sharing, rooted in the colonial method of achieving political solutions in their area.

Ultimately, however, the colonial legacy was not sufficient to guarantee cooperation even among the indigenous ethno-tribal groups and with the minority ethno-

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[393] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.
[394] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

tribal groups around which Bassa LGA was chiseled in 1975. For this reason, consideration of the particular political incentives for power-sharing and the ethno-tribal composition of the local government at the time of the decentralization reforms in 1976, is key. To wit, the local elite had strategic political incentive for power-sharing. On the one hand, it was in the interest of the majority ethno-tribal blocs to form an agreement so that local minorities in the LGA did not employ a divide-and-conquer electoral strategy to prevent the Pengana, Rukuba, or Irigwe from achieving significant leadership positions in the local government council. On the other hand, it was not in the interest of the smaller ethno-tribal leaders to contest the power-sharing arrangement, since, depending on how the electoral chips fell without such an institution in place, the minorities might fail to achieve any electoral representation in the local government. Hence, with the formation of the LGA and the enactment of decentralization reforms designed to be more representative of the population, the leaders of the major local ethno-groups drew on their historical precedent to mutual advantage, ensuring that each ethno-tribal group had a key stake in the system of local representation.

An informal institution, power-sharing in Bassa offers three important insights: First, one has too look beyond the colonial experience and legacy to understand the stability of ethno-tribal relationships since the 1970s. The formation and demarcation of Bassa LGA itself in the post-colonial period shaped what ethno-tribal groups would form the majority in the local government, as well as the political incentives that local leaders might have to form a power-sharing arrangement. Second, this case demonstrates the persistence of an *informal* power-sharing arrangement, which, based on the spoken promise of a few elites or community leaders, can entrench itself in the communal logic

and political life of a community, functioning as effectively as a formal codified arrangement (or perhaps more effectively, since it allows political flexibility) and providing a foundation for communal peace, as I discuss further below. Finally, although the Muslim Hausa-Fulani population does not form a major ethno-tribal bloc as in Jos North, the principle finding still holds: power-sharing between the three main Christian ethno-tribal groups reinforced political stability in a context in which competition over representation following decentralization reforms could have spelled trouble. Due to the stability of the arrangement over the years, its flexibility has provided room for even non-indigenous Muslims to serve in important local government posts, helping to defuse claims of religious marginalization or fears of Muslim-Christian violence. Thus, the case of Bassa reinforces the argument that power-sharing at the local level and on an informal basis can be both a politically strategic and effective means of promoting ethno-tribal *and* inter-religious peace.

Alternative Explanations: Civic Integration & Peace Activism?

One could argue that perhaps the key to peace in Bassa is that it has strong civic peace organizations and activism, or that the population is more integrated than areas like Jos North. The case of Jos North, however, is a foil to this argument. As noted previously, Jos too was free of inter-religious conflict until the mid-1990s and 2001 in particular. Even while refugees poured into Jos and inter-religious violence threatened to spillover from Kaduna state and Kano state, peace persisted in Jos and the neighborhoods were highly integrated. Muslims and Christians celebrated holidays with one another and interacted on a daily basis. Religion was not a defining cleavage in Jos prior to 2001 any more than it was a defining cleavage in Bassa now. In short, the integration of

communities and the presence of peace organizations cannot explain why Bassa, home to

a large minority of Hausa-Fulani Muslims, does not have major inter-religious violence.

While Bassa currently has peace efforts spearheaded by local leaders, Jos also hosts

countless groups working to promote peace. Peace activities, meetings, and seminars

coordinated by various organizations at both the grassroots and government level are

seemingly taking place every week in Jos if not multiple times a week. Nonetheless,

despite these efforts, periods of calm continue to be very fragile and violence

unpredictable. The argument, therefore, that peace in Bassa is simply a product of

communal integration or the number and breadth of peace activities does not hold up

when comparing the stories of Bassa and Jos.

Instead, my research indicates that it is the institution of power-sharing that

provides the foundation for inter-religious and inter-tribal peace in Bassa LGA. An

account by a youth leader and local peace activists is indicative. He notes that following

the resolution of fears concerning a potential clash with Muslim refugees in 2010,

Muslim and Christian religious, tribal, and political elders in Bassa met to brainstorm

efforts to prevent inter-religious violence from sprouting in their communities. One

solution they agreed to with the local vigilante leaders was the formation of integrated

Muslim-Christian vigilante teams (similar to a neighborhood watch system) to protect

neighborhoods at night. "So the vigilante group are always keeping watch over the

community," he notes, "10 o'clock every night they begin… and if you are seen after that

time, you will have to give a concrete reason as to why you are going around at that

time."[395] When local leaders and community members were discussing the formation of separate Muslim and Christian vigilante groups, they quickly realized that integrated vigilante groups could serve a far more effective symbolic unifying purpose. The peace activist explained that, most importantly, the integrated vigilante groups can help to dispel claims that one or the other Muslim or Christian vigilante group is to blame if trouble occurs.

While tensions are not non-existent in Bassa, they are less common and more likely to be solved through the structure of leadership and authority established among the local leaders and peace activists. As a local chief noted, there is peaceful co-existence among the Muslim and Christian communities in his area despite the majority Muslim population. This is due to their commitment to treating people fairly, he explains. The Fulani are given land in Bassa and are not rejected as strangers. To treat people otherwise, he notes, "will definitely lead to failure in the community."[396]

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In sum, I find that it is the formation of a power-sharing institution in Bassa that has made the difference between inter-religious peace and violence. Peace efforts and coordination among the tribal elders and religious leaders are effective *because* communal relationships are built on the foundation of an integrated and rotational power-sharing system that quells claims of marginalization and exploitation that could otherwise morph into and take on the narrative of religious discrimination. The power-sharing arrangement enables leaders – political, religious, and traditional – to garner respect and

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[395] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.
[396] Ibid. interview with local Bassa traditional ruler or chief.

maintain authority and peace among their subjects. The matter of indigenous status is still an important issue in Bassa like all other LGAs, but where power-sharing exists among the main tribal groups and avenues are open for minority ethno-tribal groups to also represent their groups in local government, identity cleavages are much less likely to produce full-scale inter-religious or inter-tribal violence. Instead, issues are resolved among the leaders through community gatherings and peace activities. There is also less incentive for politicians to exploit religious cleavages, and perhaps less opening, since the question of which group will be represented when and in what capacity is already understood beforehand. The ability of trouble-makers, including politicians, to exploit religious identity is quickly diffused and condemned by local leaders, and they take active efforts to integrate the communities both in terms of their daily business, peace activities, and in the protection of one another's communities.

CONCLUSION

Jos North and Bassa LGAs clearly highlight the significance of local representation in Nigeria politics. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Jos North, because it lacks a power-sharing arrangement among the major ethno-tribal blocs, is now susceptible to communal inter-religious violence. The politicization of religious identity in national politics and religious change in northern Nigeria renders it a powerful symbol of group belonging and an effective narrative to explain the "have and have not" power relationships in local communities. Not only has the violence taken on a religious narrative, the communal violence has essentially morphed into an inter-religious conflict, blurring the original and underlying political dispute. Up to the present, the numerous

peace organizations and activities present in Jos North, while they have likely helped to prevent a number of crises from spiraling out of control, they have yet to quench the tide of clashes. Now, religious events or offenses, small or large, easily ignite Muslim-Christian violence, rendering Jos North LGA one of the hottest cauldrons of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria.

Bassa LGA, in contrast, remains an area of calm without major inter-religious or ethno-tribal violence despite its proximity to the Jos North conflict and troubles of surrounding Middle Belt states. This does not mean that tensions are completely absent; rather, power-sharing has persisted since the 1970s as a stable foundation for negotiation and collaboration to prevent the escalation of ethno-tribal or religious cleavages into major communal violence. Both cases do show, however, the importance of the post-colonial politics of group identity. Inter-religious violence in Jos was not inevitable. The colonial legacy – patterns of assimilation and integration – in these areas of Plateau state helped to shape ethno-tribal relationships, but the political events (e.g., formation of states and LGAs), religious changes, and political decisions were all key in shaping the political incentives for power-sharing in each local government. Indeed, had General Babangida come up with a political solution to the long-standing disputes over representation in Jos – such as a partitioning of the old Jos South LGA in a way that made power-sharing between the local ethno-tribal groups and the Hausa-Fulani a more attractive or less "historically offensive" option – the violence of recent years might have been averted.

While one can imagine a host of different scenarios that *could* have played out, the point is that conflict was not pre-determined in Jos and peace not inevitable for Bassa.

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In pluralistic local governments, the purpose of this study is to show the feasibility and effectiveness of power-sharing as a tool to mitigate disputes over representation and promote peace. The following chapter extends this analysis to cases of peace and conflict in southeastern Plateau state.

CHAPTER 8

Power-sharing Case Study Findings:

Kanam and Shendam

The previous chapter took up two cases – Jos North and Bassa LGAs – which shed light on the relationship between power-sharing and inter-religious violence. Unlike Jos, the informal institution of power-sharing in Bassa provides a political foundation of representation that promotes inter-tribal and inter-religious understanding and peace-promoting collaboration. Jos was not doomed by its colonial legacy to a cycle of violence; rather, the post-colonial politics of state creation and LGA formation, particularly with the intervention of the national government, created conditions that destabilized ethno-tribal relationships in the 1990s as they never had been before. The religious change and national politicization of religion, in this environment and like other areas of northern Nigeria, enabled the conflict to morph into a more volatile pattern of religious violence. Under these conditions, power-sharing never emerged as a viable option.

This second paired case study comparison is that of Kanam LGA and Shendam LGA in southern and eastern Plateau State. In Shendam (as well as neighboring Wase, Langtang North, and Langtang South) major rounds of Muslim-Christian violence in 2004 led to hundreds of deaths and massive destruction of property. Whatever the underlying socio-economic and political tensions that led to the communal conflict in Shendam, religious identity – Muslim versus Christian – became the defining cleavage as

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the conflict evolved and engulfed people from various ethno-tribal groups who had nothing to do with the original cause of the Shendam violence. Muslims and Christians in nearby Kanam LGA, however, remained relatively peaceful despite their proximity to the clashes, despite the flow of refugees into the LGA, and despite the ethno-tribal affinity shared with some of the perpetrators and victims in the neighboring LGAs. Why is this? Why did religious identity – the symbolic significance of Christians killing Muslims and vice versa – galvanize the populations in Shendam, Wase, and surrounding LGAs but not in Kanam? Again, the history of communal politics in Kanam LGA – and power-sharing in particular – is central to explaining the variation in Muslim-Christian and ethno-tribal communal conflict in this area of Plateau state.

Figure 8.1 Plateau state 17 LGAs, (case study sites indicated), map
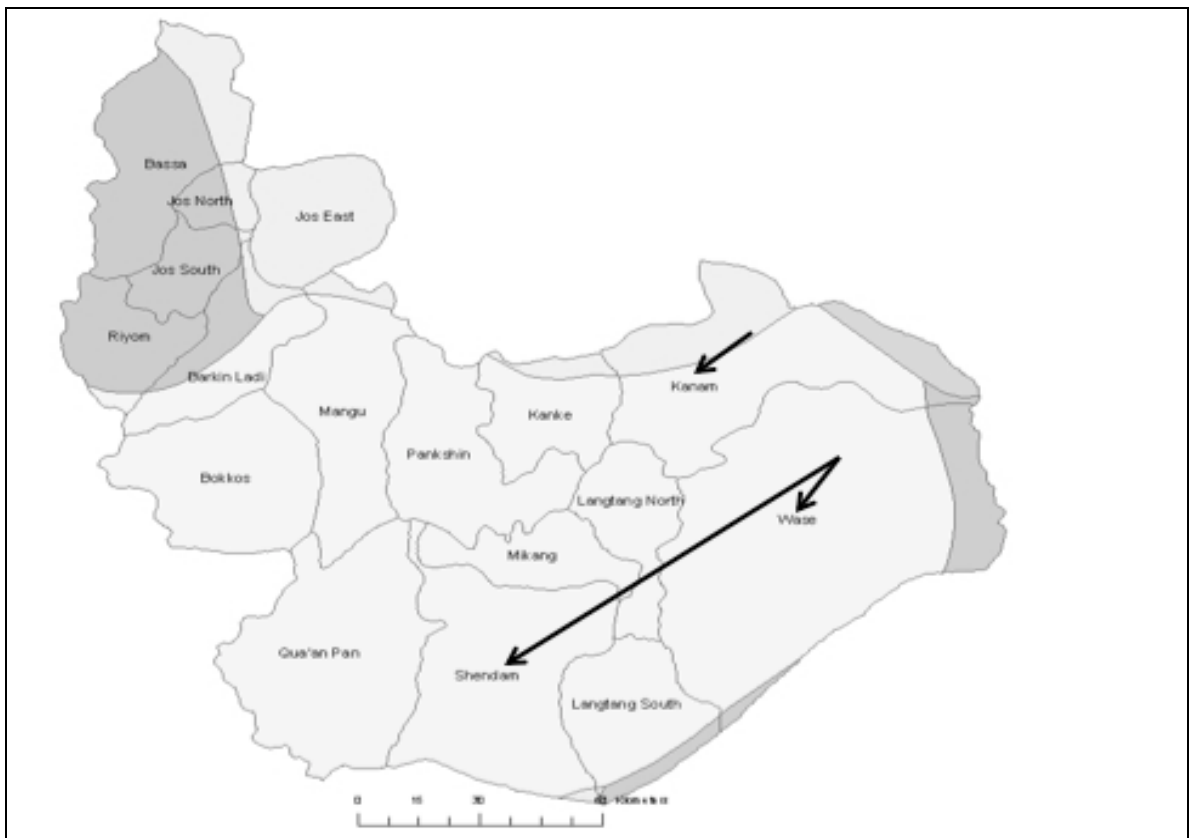
– KANAM LGA: A POWER-SHARING CASE –

Kanam local government, established in 1976 and forged out of neighboring Pankshin local government, is home to nearly 180,000 people and has two predominant ethno-tribal groups – the Boggham and the Jahr – although there are subdivisions within them.[397] The Bogghom are primarily Christian while the Jahr people are mainly Muslim. The Hausa people also have an important history and presence in the local government although they constitute a smaller ethno-tribal bloc. Recounting the history of the area, a former chairman of the local government, noted that the Hausas came to the northern part of the local government not through conquest or war but through migration from Kano and settlement in Kanam.[398] During the colonial period, when the colonial authorities set up their system of Native Authority or Indirect Rule, it was the Hausas, the dominant political power in the north, which came to rule over the people of what is now Kanam LGA.

The pattern of political authority changed, however, in the post-colonial period and with subsequent local government reforms. As highlighted in Chapter 3, reforms re-shaped the structure of leadership and representation in northern Nigeria. This was true in Kanam local government. The 1970s reforms, in combination with the expansion of Christianity and the educational opportunities that came to the area through missionary schools, brought to the fore a local political class that recognized an opportunity for self-representation. The reforms also decentralized authority, removing the political authority

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[397] Plateau State, *Local Government Areas: Kanam LGA*, June 2, 2010, http://www.plateaustate.gov.ng/?ContentPage&sub_cnt=sectionpage&secid=58&sub_cntid=177 (accessed January 23, 2012).
[398] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State, 2011.

of chiefs and placing it in the hands of elected representatives. Subsequently, with the political demotion of the emirate ruling class, the question of which ethno-tribal groups would rule became a significant question. Yet, in contrast to other LGAs where the issue of local government representation has become a divisive issue and spawned inter-religious violence, Kanam LGA has remained relatively peaceful despite its ethno-tribal and ethno-religious diversity. I trace the roots of this inter-religious peace to the institution of power-sharing coordinated between the major ethno-tribal blocs at the end of the 1970s.

Kanam Power-Sharing

Unlike many other LGAs in Plateau state, Kanam local government has a larger Muslim than Christian population – somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 to 75 percent Muslim according to local estimates – but there is also inter-marriage between Muslims and Christians.[399] While one could argue that the prevalence of inter-marriage may help to explain the lack of inter-religious violence, this hypothesis lacks empirical basis. As other experiences of communal violence demonstrate (e.g., Rwanda and Indonesia), inter-marriage is not a necessary or sufficient condition for ethnic peace. Furthermore, violence in Plateau state in Mikang LGA in 2004 turned families against one another despite intermarriage. Dinshak notes that the violence in Mikang "metamorph[iz]ed into waves of violence by 2004, when the prominence of religion had become quite evident by the way and manner in which they were carried out: members of the same ethnic identity in the same community and even families turned against one another under the banner of

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[399] Estimates were based on interview information, since not official census figures exist. The 75 percent estimate was noted by one of Kanam's former chairmen during an interview in Kanam LGA. A scholar of local government politics at Jos University estimated that the religious balance is close to 50/50.

their religions."[400] Instead, I argue that it is the system of power-sharing between the two

main ethno-tribal groups – the Bogghom and the Jahr – in Kanam local government that

provides the foundation for relative peace among Muslims and Christians.

Similar to the system of power-sharing in Bassa LGA in the northwest corner of

Plateau state, the power-sharing institution in Kanam LGA rotates the leadership of the

local government council between the majority ethno-tribal groups from one election to

the next. As another former chairman of Kanam local government, explained, if the last

local government chairman was Bogghom, "if there is going to be an election, there must

be a Jahr man who will be the chairman."[401] Indeed, in this scenario, "if any party files a

candidate who is not a Jahr, it is going to be difficult for him to win an election," he went

on to note. Observing that the power-sharing arrangement also takes on a zoning

rotational form, a traditional and political leader describes the nature of the power sharing

arrangement as follows:

> *Kanam is one of the most democratic in power-sharing. Power is shared between*
> *the two ethnic groups. If the chairman is from one ethnic group, then the deputy is*
> *from the others. It is the same with other positions. They believe in*
> *rotational/zoning – if today the person comes from one side, the next is from the*
> *other side…There is no village that is not given an opportunity to present one or*
> *other for position. There are six zones for chairman to come from, for example.*
> *Three for each tribal group. If the chairman comes from one zone of one ethnic*
> *group, for example, it changes to another the next time. That group/zone that*
> *represented the previous time will not even attempt to put up a candidate the next*
> *time around. It even goes this way with political appointments – it switches from*
> *one side to the other. It is practiced in the localities too – at even the village*
> *level.[402]*

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[400] Luka Dinshak, "Conflict Escalation and the Effects of Conflict: The Case of Mikang Local Government
Area, Plateau State," in *Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria*, ed.
Shedrack Gaya Best (Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2008), 88.
[401] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State (October 18, 2011).
[402] Interview by Laura Thaut, Plateau State, 2011.

The informal arrangement, not codified in any legal sense, has persisted since the 1970s. "It wasn't an established rule… it is a concept that we buil[t] within ourselves, and everybody is respecting it," a former chairmen explains, going on to note that the power-sharing arrangement in so ingrained in the political and communal consciousness of the people that even the political parties will present a candidate to reflect the rotational power-sharing arrangement.[403] Describing the informal nature of the agreement, the chief explains, "Yes, it was an unwritten understanding/agreement. An MOU. This aspect is very strong and has kept the peace. Everybody abides by the power sharing arrangement, even councilors."[404]

Origin of the institution

In an interview with another former chairman in Dengi, the province headquarters of Kanam LGA, he reflected back on the emergence of the power-sharing arrangement in the local government between the Boggham and the Jahr people. He explained that the elders or leaders of the two tribal groups "sat down and agreed to the arrangement based on the understanding that the national cake should be shared equally."[405] Pressing the former local government officials on where the power-sharing agreements came from or why local elite of the different ethnic groups agreed to them, one former Chairman observed, "It was just a conception that we built within ourselves" that the people have continued to respect.[406]

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[403] Ibid., interview with former chairman.
[404] Ibid., interview with chief/politician.
[405] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State, 2011.
[406] Ibid., interview with former chairman.

As with the other LGAs with power-sharing institutions, however, the question arises: Out of what historical context did the power-sharing arrangement emerge? What incentives did the elite have to agree to rotate power and why or how does the informal institution persist? As I explain here, while the pattern of colonial assimilation and integration tells us something about the ethno-tribal cleavages or cohesion in Kanam at the time of independence, the emergence of the power-sharing arrangement is rooted in post-colonial political and religious changes in the communal life of the LGA.

The nature of colonial rule in Kanam area highlights the significance of the 1970s reforms in the LGA and the strategic incentives for the two major local ethno-tribal groups to form a power-sharing arrangement. As a former chairman noted, during the colonial period the British propped up the Hausa-Fulani emirate system, rendering the local ethno-tribal groups subject to this powerful emirate rule.[407] The chief of the Hausa people, "became the paramount chief of all of us, and also the leader of the Native Authority," another former Chairman observed.[408] At the same time, however, he noted that the Hausa ruled by the "collective will of the people," since the manner in which the Hausa people first arrived in the area was not through conquest but, rather, migration. For this reason, the relationship between the Hausa and the local indigenous groups in Kanam has been less combative than in other areas of Plateau state or Kaduna state where the non-Muslims local ethno-tribal groups were engaged in organized resistance against the Hausa-Fulani Caliphate even prior to colonial rule. With the arrival of Hausa Muslims in the Kanam area, the population became more Islamized with the conversion of local Jahr

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[407] Ibid., interview with former chairman.
[408] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State, 2011.

and Bogghom to Islam, and, hence, the people were more loyal to their Hausa rulers upon the establishment of a major emirate in Kanam.[409]

In this sense, the local ethno-tribal groups in the Kanam area were more politically integrated and culturally assimilated with the Hausa than were ethno-tribal groups in other areas of Plateau state. Even today, Kanam is one of two remaining emirate sites in the state. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, all political authority remained under the emirate, and members of the ruling family always received the emir-ship and served as both traditional leaders and administrative heads.

In 1976, however, the politics of rule in Kanam LGA underwent a major shift with the implementation of the national decentralization reforms. Although the indigenous ethno-tribal groups (non-Hausa) were more integrated and assimilated into the religio-political system of colonial rule, their lack of opportunity for self-representation, combined with the realization that they would now have a say in the election of local government officials with the implementation of the reforms, created incentives for indigenous leaders to form a power-sharing arrangement. Prior to the 1970s, the emirate rulers served as political councilors or legislators, but with the establishment of local level elections and the diffusion of power from traditional rulers to the people, it became possible for the local ethno-tribal groups to elect members of their own to the local government council. They "still had respect for the emirate traditional rule," one non-Hausa chief observed, "but the local man had a say now."[410] Although a Hausa man was the first elected government chairman in 1976, in 1979 the chairmanship for the first time

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[409] Ibid., interview with former chairman.
[410] Ibid., interview with chief/politician.

went to a local leader, rather than a man from the ruling emirate family. "This time around," a former chairman observed, "they found it difficult to go to impose their people to these wards….we had about 14 wards. So, each members came from the indigenous of that place and not the Hausa people again."[411] "Because of elections," he continued, "[the Hausa rulers] found it difficult…to go and impose their people there." Although the royal family saw the developments as "a strange thing" that they did not desire, they had to "accept the voice of democracy."[412] Since the ruling Hausa formed a smaller ethno-tribal bloc among the population compared to the Bogghom and the Jahr, decentralization of local government authority naturally shifted the balance of power to the local ethno-tribal groups that make up the majority in the various wards. Subsequently, the Bogghom and Jahr gained a number of political appointments and, since the 1980s, have dominated the local government leadership.

In light of the democratization of local government rule, local ethno-tribal leaders acted on the opportunity to achieve greater representation by combining their political weight as a voting bloc. Considering the strategic advantages, they instituted an informal power-sharing arrangement. It no longer made sense to the local ethno-tribal elite in the new political environment (nor was electorally feasible) for the Hausa-Fulani to dominate politically, since the local ethno-tribal groups constituted the vast majority of the population. Thus, to avoid Hausa political elite from splitting the indigenous vote, local leaders found it advantageous to agree to share the executive seats of local government authority in exchange for support for each other's candidates. Hausa representatives,

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[411] Ibid., interview with fomer chairman.
[412] Ibid.

meanwhile, would still be able to participate and gain representation as legislative councilors or through local government appointed positions.

It was not simply this watershed moment in Nigerian national politics that suddenly rendered a power-sharing arrangement an attractive political option for local elite. Nor can the decision of the Muslim/Christian Bogghom and Jahr elite and the peace with the Hausa Muslims simply be ascribed to the colonial legacy of assimilation and integration. The religious change occurring at the very end of the colonial period and into the post-colonial period explains the formation of a distinct Bogghom and Jahr political identity. In particular, the religious change with the spread of Christianity and missionary work affected not only the ethno-religious composition of Kanam, but brought western education to the local population. This change shaped the political self-awareness of the Bogghom and the Jahr. Like other areas of the Middle Belt, Christian missions were able to make some in-roads in Kanam during the colonial period. Although the British limited the incursion of Christian missionaries in the north so as to protect their relationship with the Muslim authorities, some exceptions were allowed in areas of the Middle Belt. The subsequent religio-political changes in Kanam came about as Christian missionary work and education expanded in the Middle Belt in the post-colonial period. This was extremely important for the non-Hausa-Fulani groups, as they were the most disadvantaged educationally during colonial rule.[413]

As more than one local interviewee noted, with mission schools, the now "more enlightened indigenous groups" began to organize themselves politically to contest the

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[413] See Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy In Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria* (Dr. Yusuf Turaki, 1993); Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

oligarchy of the emirate system. Indeed, as a former chairman explained, western education shaped their political awareness and the decision to pursue a power-sharing arrangement: "So, in fact, most especially the Bogghom and Jahr [gathered] themselves to say that 'why should we be ruled by the Hausa man, imposing people on us.' So, we grouped ourselves to say that we should elect *our* people, not that they should impose their people on us."[414] The expansion of missionary education produced a new generation of political leaders and demands for political rights and autonomy from the emirate system. A local chief observed that, with the "advent of western education, the children of the ruled came back to challenge the oligarchy of the emirate system."[415] A power-sharing arrangement, they concluded, was the most effective political strategy for ensuring the local ethno-tribal majority did not lose out to a Hausa alliance in the new era of decentralized and democratized local electoral politics.

The Basis for Peace

As a product of this ethno-tribal power-sharing arrangement, ethno-tribal relationships have been far more stable in Kanam than in other LGAs, and power-sharing has helped to defuse the threatening specter of inter-religious conflict that permeates communal life in many Middle Belt LGAs. Although Kanam is a Muslim majority LGA, the Christian population constitutes a sizeable ethno-religious minority, rending the LGA a potential site for politicization of religious identity and the spillover of Muslim-Christian violence from other areas. Yet, despite the religious tensions and occasional conflagrations elsewhere in Plateau state and the region, the tensions have difficulty

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[414] Ibid., interview with former chairman.
[415] Ibid., interview with chief/politician.

finding fertile ground in Kanam. The explanation is rooted in the informal power-sharing

institution, which provides the basis for communal cooperation.

Power-sharing not only ensures representation among the two prominent ethno-

tribal groups, it also enables smaller ethno-tribal groups in various wards to have a stake

in local government affairs. By default, it is also more difficult to render religious identity

a major cleavage; both Muslims and Christians are invariably elected or appointment to

local government positions even if the power-sharing arrangement is not specifically

organized to rotate leadership on the basis of religious identity. The Bogghom, for

example, are majority Christian, but there are also Christians among the Jahr population

as well. Describing his period of tenure, a former Chairman notes:

> *[T]he issue of religious difference [is] not all that prominent in our politics or in the living. That's why, like myself when you look at it, when I was elected as a chairman, I was elected along with a deputy who is a Christian. So even the council members of mine…because we have 10 councilors, I think about three or two of them [were] Christians. And one of my councilors [was] a pastor… Yeah, three. So that is how we operated.[416]*

Highlighting this pattern of representation, the local chief noted previously observed,

"Before now, there is no way you would have a chairman being a Muslim where the

deputy was not a Christian," and sometimes the supervisory council would even be

represented equally between Christians and Muslims. Although most of the wards are

Muslim majority, he noted that in some of the wards the religious split is around 40/60

Christian/Muslim respectively, but one can "equally elected Christians" as councilors to

the LGC from those wards, and "in all those wards there have been cases where

Christians are the representatives" and elected by a Muslim majority. He continued,

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[416] Ibid., interview with former chairman.

"people will elect persons from either side (regardless of their ethno-religious identity). So people don't look at the candidates on religious grounds. Religion hasn't been an issue in this place."[417] During a meeting at the local government headquarters with Dr. Saleh Galadima Kanam, the elected Chairman of the LGA in 2011, and a dozen or so local government officials, a question regarding the religious balance of the local government council raised a chuckle. Going around the room, he began introducing the Christian officials present.[418] In other words, religious differences did not prevent him, as a Muslim, from appointing Christians to his administration or prevent Muslims from voting for Christians.

Threats to power-sharing

Power-sharing in Kanam, as the discussion thus far highlights, is an arrangement that grew out of historical realities and changes that had manifested themselves upon the implementation of local government reforms in 1976 and rendered power-sharing a strategic political move. Despite the informal nature of the institution, it manages to persist, reinforcing and legitimizing itself due to its success in representing the major ethno-tribal groups in the LGA. Claims of religious marginalization, in this context, are far more difficulty to politicize. Thus, Kanam local government is another example of how an informal and locally-birthed institution has the self-reinforcing capacity to survive absent formal enforcement mechanisms. Referring to the informal understanding that local government leadership and electoral candidates abide by the power-sharing

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[417] Ibid., interview with local chief/politician.
[418] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State (October 19, 2011).

arrangement, a local leader notes, "Whoever does not give us mixed, we will not go with him."[419]

The power-sharing institution is not impervious, however. While Kanam remains a relatively peaceful LGA and without internally generated communal violence, recent inter-religious violence in surrounding LGAs and Jos North has threatened these peaceful relations in Kanam as acknowledged by some former local government leaders. For example, during the 2004 communal violence in Shendam LGA to the south, which fell out along Muslim/Christian lines, the violence soon spread to neighboring LGAs, including Wase, Langtang North, and Langtang South – all of which border Kanam. Fellow Christians in Langtang North, identifying with their co-religionists in Shendam and Wase mobilized to defend Christian Taroh in southern Wase who were fighting against the Hausa Muslims. In response to these events, one local Christian religious leader noted that many Christians in Kanam fled Dengi to other areas "just in case," out of fear of retaliation, since Kanam is home to some of the ethno-tribal groups involved in the conflict in the neighboring local governments.[420] Similarly, it was perhaps no surprise that Christians who were living along the border area with Langtang North, a Christian majority LGA, migrated to Langtang. Indeed, the religious leader recounted how one Christian man was killed in Dengi during this time.

While this crisis was not conceived in Kanam local government, it did create tensions that put pressure on communal relationships in the local government, raising the question of whether power-sharing can ameliorate or survive this type of exogenous

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[419] Ibid., interview with local chief/politician.
[420] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State, 2011.

shock – the incidence of Muslim-Christian violence and its symbolic significance in current day Nigerian politics. According to the religious leader, non-indigenous Christians, in particular, felt most threatened. Kanam local leaders, therefore, face the question of how power-sharing can accommodate the concerns of non-indigenous ethno-tribal groups. Furthermore, in the last few years, in light of the religious tensions prevalent in the state, one politician observed that the few local government positions that have gone to the indigenous Christians are now threatened, and Christians are now perhaps less likely to take Muslims as running mates.

It remains to be seen, however, whether a new pattern of local politics will challenge the power-sharing status quo in response to these exogenous shocks. As with General Babangida's political intervention in the Jos ownership debates of the 1990s, outside politicians can disrupt local politics in potentially destabilizing ways. The intervention in the outcome of the Kanam electoral results in 2011 by Governor Jonah Jang, the Plateau state governor, raises these very concerns. Disgruntled with the elected Chairman for abandoning the Governor's political party after being elected, Governor Jang decided to dissolve the local government council and appoint an administrator of his own choosing. Refusing to accept this interference, the elected Chairman obtained two high court orders to reverse the Governor's decision and reinstate the elected council, although the Governor still refused to recognize the council. More significantly, highlighting the potential for the politics of Kanam to be influenced by the narrative of religious conflict, the Chairman noted in the *Daily Trust*, a national Nigerian newspaper, that political interests in opposition to him had

created a negative impression that I do not like the Christians in the local government which is not the case because that has never been an issue before we were forced out of office. Again there has been negative propaganda about lack of peace in Kanam, which is not also the case because no local government in Plateau is as peaceful as ours. So our priority is to restore confidence in our people and correct some of these negative impressions.[421]

In other words, such "exogenous shocks" or outside political interference has at least the potential to create instability in local political relationships, requiring more concerted efforts on the part of local elite to maintain the power-sharing status quo and to defuse rumors.

Despite these potential challenges, my data reveal that a Christian still fills at least one of the three top local government positions from one election or administration to the next. In general, the strength of the ethno-tribal power-sharing arrangement is that it does not discriminate on the basis of religious identity, but, rather, is designed so that both the Bogghom and Jahr rotate leadership and are represented in the leadership of any administration. The task ahead, for the Bogghom and Jahr elite, therefore, will be to ensure that religious discrimination does not influence candidate selection and political appointments. If it is true, as one interviewee claimed, that the Hausa-Fulani are the ones who are primarily trying to stir up religious trouble in Kanam LGA, the fact that Jahr and Bogghom power-sharing by default implies both Christian and Muslim representation is one thing that Kanam has in its favor. It is more difficult to make the case, in this context, that groups are being marginalized politically due to their ethno-religious identity. Dispelling the notion that religious identity is a cleavage issue in the current local

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[421] Andrew Agbese, "How I resumed as Kanam LG Chair," September 14, 2011, http://dailytrust.com.ng/index.php/politics/31939-how-i-resumed-as-kanam-lg-chair (accessed February 4, 2013).

government council, one local political figure noted that the Secretary is a Christian, three of the current councilors are Christians, and the Advisor on Education to the Chairman is a Christian.[422]

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In sum, unlike Jos North LGA, the creation of Kanam and the implementation of local government democratic reforms in the 1970s were not seen as political concessions to former colonial rulers. Just the opposite, the reforms opened up space for local Bogghom and Jahr, the majority ethno-tribal groups in the LGA, to achieve representation. The religious change with the expansion of Christianity in the area in the post-colonial period and the advent of western education helped to create the political awareness and activism for their greater self-representation. While the greater integration and assimilation of the Kanam populations to Hausa emirate rule and Islam rendered relations between the local and colonial rulers less hostile, the post-colonial changes in the local government were the primary determinants of the politics of power-sharing and the non-politicization of religious identity. As the case of Jos revealed, strong integration and civic integration is no guarantee of peace. Absent the heightened politicization of identity associated with the creation of Jos North LGA, power-sharing in Kanam was a strategic and viable option for local leaders and continues to be a salient foundation for negotiation of inter-religious tensions.

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[422] Interview by Laura Thaut, Kanam LGA, Plateau State, 2011.

- SHENDAM LGA: A CASE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE -

Shendam LGA, created in 1976, is considered the breadbasket of Plateau state and is

home to approximately 210,000 inhabitants.[423] Since the 1990s, however, violent clashes

between communal groups have rendered Shendam one of the more volatile LGAs.

While occasional skirmishes between farmers and cattle-rearers have resulted in the

deaths of perhaps a handful of people, the cases of inter-religious violence (or cases that

have morphed into a religious conflict) over the past 10 years have led to the deaths of

hundreds and sparked retaliations and clashes in surrounding LGAs of Plateau state. Why

is it that Shendam LGA, unlike other pluralistic communities in Plateau state, has been

more volatile and more prone to inter-religious violence? While the clashes do not

always derive from political events, I argue that the lack of power-sharing among the

ethno-tribal groups in Shendam created the socio-political conditions for inter-religious

discord to thrive.

The Violence

In September 2002, inter-religious violence in the Shendam LGA town of Yelwa

spilled over into surrounding areas. Reprisal attacks occurred in nearby villages and, as

victims fled, flared in Wase, Langtang North, and Langtang South LGAs. The trouble

started in Yelwa with a Muslims attack mainly on local Christians. Earlier in the year in

June, at least 6 people were killed in Yelwa when a Christian girl was assaulted after she

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[423] Katherine Naanzoem Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State," in *Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria*, ed. Shedrack Gaya Best (Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2008), 25; "Shendam Local Government Area: Change The Home of Peace and Hospitality" (Shendam: Shendam Local Government), 4.

rejected warnings from her kinsmen about courting a Muslim boy. In addition to those

killed, many people were injured, and rioters vandalized or burned several worship

centers, fuel stations, and vehicles.[424]

It was the Feb 2004 violence, however, that sent shockwaves throughout Plateau

state and other states in northern Nigeria. While accounts of the precipitating events vary,

on February 24 of that year, Christians who took refuge in a COCIN church in Yelwa

were hacked and burned alive after fleeing to the church for safety in response to the

report that armed Muslims were coming to attack the residents in the town. Around 78

people were killed in the church and as they tried to escape.[425]

In response to this violence and other violence in the area between February and

May,[426] the Christian majority Goemai population along with other minority Christian

ethno-tribal groups carried out a massive retaliation against the Muslims of Yelwa town

on 2-4 May 2004. According to Human Rights Watch, the retaliation was well

coordinated and pre-planned. By the time of the Yelwa attack, the violence had taken on

broader ethnic dimensions, attracting Christians from neighboring LGAs to join their co-

religionists in the attack.[427] The conflict in Shendam LGA had clearly spiraled beyond a

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[424] See Shedrack Gaya Best, "Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding: Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations," in *Religion and PostConflict Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria*, 33 (Ibadan: John Archers Publishers, 2011); Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the Name of Religion: The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States," *Human Rights Watch Publications*, May 26, 2005, http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/05/24/revenge-name-religion-0 (accessed August 30, 2011).

[425] Human Rights Watch 2005, "Revenge in the Name of Religion," 15.

[426] Ibid., 20-1. The report notes that up to 22 different attacks of Christians against Muslims or Muslims against Christians occurred between the end of February and beginning of May in 17 different locations that may have killed up to 82 people.

[427] Human Rights Watch (2005, 21) notes, "As in the case of some of the earlier attacks by Christians, the perpetrators were initially described as Tarok [or Taroh] by the media and others; in reality, it was not only the Tarok but many different groups who participated in this attack. Eye-witnesses mentioned a wide range of tribes among the attackers, including the Tarok, Gamai, Montol, Angas, Kwalla, Birom, Sayaway, and Jukun. See also Act!ionaid, "Middle Belt, not Killing Belt!: The History, Dynamics and Political

local issue. Furthermore, religion emerged as the primary ascriptive and mobilizing

narrative. Despite their shared ethno-tribal identity, even the Muslims who were Goemai

were not safe from the violence unleashed by Christian Goemai. Ethno-tribal groups who

had no association with the conflict other then their religious affinity were drawn to

participate in the violence to defend their "brothers." As Human Rights watch notes,

"The victims were also from many different tribes, with only their religion in common:

almost all of them were Muslim."[428] In a period of two days, well-armed groups of men

surrounded Yelwa and began systematically eliminating any Muslims. In the end, after

two days of attacks when soldiers finally came in to quell the violence and mass burials

began, they found 660-700 Muslims slaughtered. Human Rights Watch provides the

following account of the displacement:

> After the February 24, 2004 attack, almost all Christians moved out of Yelwa, and
> the town became a no-go zone for Christians. After the May 2004 attack, the
> number of displaced was even higher: tens of thousands of Muslims moved out of
> their homes in Yelwa and the surrounding area. Of a population of around 32,000,
> only around 1,000 people were left in the town of Yelwa following the May 2004
> massacre. It was an indication of the extent of Muslims' fears that most of them
> felt safer fleeing to neighboring Nasarawa and Bauchi states, rather than to other
> parts of Plateau State….By June 2004, an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 people from
> Plateau State were internally displaced, either within the state or in neighboring
> states.[429]

This account of the violence highlights a number of important characteristics or

trends of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria since the 1980s. First, communal

clashes increasingly take on a religious dimension. Religious identity has become the

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Dimensinos of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in the Middle Belt," *Act!onaid*, 2008,
http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/middle_belt1.pdf (accessed March 10, 2012), 142-3.
[428] Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the Name of Religion," 21-22.
[429] Ibid., 44.

central cleavage in communal disputes, and religious offenses are sufficient to spark violent clashes. Second, because northern Nigeria is made up of a variety of ethno-tribal groups, Plateau state being one of the most diverse with an estimated 58 different tribes,[430] politicization of religious identity and identification with co-religionists is a far more dangerous phenomenon in the context of communal conflicts or violence. Communal violence in southeastern Plateau state has lead to violent reactions against Christians or Muslims in neighboring LGAs and other northern states where the combatants are wholly unassociated with the instigators or victims and their dispute, but they mobilize nonetheless on the basis of religious affinity. As the Shendam LGA violence in and around Yelwa demonstrates, this sense of "brotherhood" with fellow Muslims or Christians can cause an otherwise localized dispute to snowball into state-wide and even region-wide violence, traversing ethno-tribal differences. Third, LGAs with ethno-tribal groups composed of both Muslims and Christians, such as among the Goemai in Shendam LGA, are not immune to inter-religious violence. Finally, as in Jos and contrary to what some Christians would prefer to claim, Christians are clearly culpable in some cases of inter-religious violence in northern Nigeria; Muslims certainly do not always instigate the inter-religious communal violence.

Power-Sharing

From analysis of fairly extensive secondary sources of research on the history and violence of Shendam and neighboring LGAs, it is clear that the issue of local governance (or lack of power-sharing) is at the center of the disputes in Shendam that spiraled into inter-religious violence. That is, Shendam is beset by a long-standing dispute over which

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[430] Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict," 24.

ethno-tribal groups are "indigenous" versus "settlers" and which groups are entitled to "ownership" of certain areas and the benefits associated with the indigenous category. In comes as no surprise then that the town of Yelwa is at the heart of the conflict and inter-religious violence, since Yelwa is both an important metropolis or market town in the southern senatorial zone of the state and also the area settled by a large number of Muslims as well as Christians. The two primary ethnic groups are the Muslim Jarawa (the Hausa) and the Goemai (Christian and Muslim), and a diverse set of smaller ethno-tribal groups such as the Taroh and Montol from surrounding LGAs who also settled in Shendam. As in Jos North LGA, the Muslim "non-indigenous" claim to be indigenes of the area dating back some 200 years to the migration from Dass in Bauchi state.[431] Thus, both the Jarawa and the Goemai present various arguments and documents to substantiate their story and claims to indigenous identity.

In contrast to LGAs that also have an ethnic pluralism but balance competition claims through a power-sharing arrangement – such as Bassa and Kanam, as well as Chikun in Kaduna state – elite adopted no such institution in Shendam. Instead, research that investigates the historical background and causes of the conflict in Shendam highlights how the lack of power-sharing entrenched political tension between ethno-tribal groups. One key benefit of power-sharing institutions, according to Lijphart, is that "groups have authority to run their own internal affairs, especially in the areas of education and culture."[432] Concurrently, one of the grievances posited by the Muslim Jarawa is that they are not allowed the right to appoint their own traditional leader. When

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[431] Ibid.
[432] Lijphart, Arend, 2002, "The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy," in Andrew Reynolds, ed., *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy,* 39.

their former traditional leader passed away in 1992, the Long Goemai (the traditional

leader of the Goemai people) appointed a Muslim leader to fill the Jarawa position.

However, this leader was removed upon Jarawa protests, as they demanded the right to

elect and install their own village head according to their own procedures. The Goemai,

on the other hand, pointed out that the Long Goemai always appoints the village heads or

traditional leaders.[433]

The political grievances go two ways. The Goemai claim that they have been

welcoming to ethnic groups and allowed them to settle in and participate in their political

process and serve in elective office, and so they take offense at claims to the contrary.

The Jarawa, however, claim to be excluded from self-representation. The creation of

Nshar district in Shendam LGA in May 2002 further accentuated the cleavage.

Hoomlong recounts the ordeal:

> ..during the confirmation of the districts…the composition of the districts was
> read out and to the anger of the Yelwa community, their request was turned down
> and places the Muslims had thought belong to Yelwa community were given to
> Nshar community….Also, wards in Nshar which had formerly been named
> Angwan Madaki were renamed Angwan Kangtun (the names which used to be
> Hausa were changed to names in the Gamai dialect).[434]

The general lack of anything bordering on a power-sharing arrangement rendered

one political issue after another a potential trigger for communal violence – everything

from relationships between Christian girls and Muslim boys, the opening of a new market

in Nshar district, cultural festivities, and cattle-grazing disputes, to name a few, became

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[433] Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict," 35.
[434] Ibid., 36.

points of conflict and justifications for violence.[435] No institutional mechanism was in place to mediate or resolve conflict among the competing ethno-tribal groups. Because political leadership and participation in the local government council serves not only as a form of political representation but also gives groups a say in the organization of local government affairs and distribution of resources, a power-sharing institution could potentially have done much to quell inter-religious tensions and promote inter-tribal and inter-religious peace. As Human Rights Watch reported, "the fundamental problem which gave rise to the conflict" in Shendam was the "different communities' longstanding grievances over the control of economic resources and political positions and the definition of 'indigeneship.'"[436]

While power-sharing arrangements in other local governments provides a political foundation for inter-religious and inter-ethnic cooperation and peacekeeping or peacebuilding, the lack of such an institutional mechanism in Shendam local government is its bane. Yet, why did local elite in Shendam not follow the path of Bassa and Kanam elders.

Like other areas where colonialism imposed Hausa-Fulani rule, Shendam in southern Plateau state was largely non-Muslim or non-assimilated and -integrated into the pre-colonial Hausa-Fulani political empire. The colonial period did not change this dynamic. Certainly, as in the case of Jos, it is possible for various ethnic groups to live together peacefully, whether Muslim or Christian, but post-colonial changes did nothing to shore up relationships between the local ethno-tribal groups of the Shendam area. The

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[435] Ibid..
[436] Human Rights Watch, "Revenge in the Name of Religion," 48.

gradual exacerbation of socio-political relationships in the context of the eruption of inter-religious violence in Jos North in 2001, Bauchi, Kaduna, and Kano provided a framing narrative for conflict to flare in Shendam. The decades long failure to resolve long-standing political and economic disputes culminated during a period of intense Muslim-Christian violence in other areas of Plateau state and the Middle Belt, It is difficult to place one's figure on the precise political events that negated the possibility of a power-sharing solution. Certainly, as in the case of the Jos area, the predominant Goemai population and the large Jarawa Muslim minority had a long-standing debate over ownership of the central town of Yelwa, and each side could cite a history and raise documents as proof of ownership or original settlement.[437] The notion that Shendam has historically been characterized by more violence between its ethno-tribal communities does not fit the bill, however (i.e. that recent violence between Muslims and Christians was more likely because it is characterized by a history of violence). To the contrary, this claim would not explain why the violence only erupted (on a grand scale) in 2002 and not earlier, or why it took on a starkly religious dimension.

Instead, secondary source material highlights a series of events and changes to the communities that, lacking any outside political mediator, emphasized their cleavages more than anything else and created a context within which religion could become the basis for violent mobilization in June 2002, February 2004, and May 2004. Hoomlong's qualitative onsite research highlighted a number of post-colonial political events and

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[437] Hoomlong, "The Causes and Effects of Conflict," 29-33; Z.D. Goshit and Ponfa Kums, "Land Conflicts in Plateau State Since the 1980s," in *Historical Perspectives on Nigeria's Post-Colonial Conflicts*, ed. Olayemi Akinwumi, Sati Umaru Fwatshak and Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh, (Lagos: Unimark Limited, 2007), 235; Plateau State of Nigeria, *Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference 2004 (18th August-21 September 2004)*, Plateau State Notice No. 2 (Jos: Government Printer, 2004), 26, 38.

religious changes that affected communal relationships. First, the inability of the Muslim

Yelwa residents to elect their own traditional leader after his death in 1992 created a

debacle. As mentioned earlier, the Yelwa Muslims "decried the absence of their own

leader, a leader of their choice and culture [to] whom they could owe allegiance," and the

appointment of a Muslim by the Long Goemai – based on the premise that it is within his

traditional authority to appoint chiefs – did little to promote understanding between the

ethno-tribal groups.[438]

Second, the 2002 election of the Ward Chairmanship of the PDP political party

became contentious when the Muslim and Christian contender mobilized PDP's

otherwise mixed constituency along religious lines in order to guarantee the electoral

outcome. Claims of vote manipulation and fraud on both sides added fuel to the

perception that religion would become the basis for political exclusion.[439] Reminiscent of

the political havoc associated with the creation of Jos North, the local government

accepted requests for the creation of new districts in Yelwa not long after the debacle of

the PDP ward elections. The expectations of the Muslim community were sorely

disappointed; "the composition of the districts was read out and to the anger of the Yelwa

community, their request was turned down and places the Muslims had thought belonged

to Yelwa community were given to Nshar community."[440] Not only were wards that the

Jarawa/Hausa Muslims thought belonged to them included in Nshar non-Muslim area,

but leaders also added insult to injury by changing the Hausa names of communities to

the Goemai form. While the data on election and appointment results for Shendam could

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[438] Ibid., Hoomlong, 35.
[439] Ibid., 34-5.
[440] Ibid., 36.

not be completed for many administrations, the data that was collected shows that Christian Goemai dominate not only the positions of local government leadership but also the legislative/councillorship positions that derive from ward elections. Even in the wards or districts where smaller ethno-tribal groups are more likely to gain legislative representation, Goemai Christians dominate. It was no wonder, therefore, that the establishment of new districts aggravated the relationship between the ethno-tribal groups.

Finally, the religious changes in the local government with the expansion of Christianity in the post-colonial period among the non-Muslims also refashioned socio-religious relationships. In the middle of these political events, local Christian religious leaders instigated a new effort to keep a tight reign on their youth (with the support of some Muslim religious leaders) by banning relationships between Christian girls and Muslim boys. Religious leaders were so series about this order that they set up "a vigilante patrol team…to enforce the separation" and "[g]irls caught relating with Muslim boys were to be punished."[441] Somehow tied up in this issue was Christian opposition to the opening of two new mosques in the Yelwa market area, which the Christians complained about and sought a local government order to prevent. When the Long Goemai attempted to visit the market to investigate the matter and Muslims "retaliated by stoning his entorage and calling him the Chief of Infidels," Hoomlong notes that this "insult led to the banning of the unholy yoke [between Muslim men and Christian women] and the Muslim community responded by also banning their people from eating at restaurants owned by Christians or buying meat slaughtered by Christian

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[441] Ibid., 37.

butchers."[442] The first major incident of communal violence occurred two days later. Although the two communities dispute the details of the events or incidents leading up to the violence, in a context of foggy rumors and threats being flung around, Muslims men ultimately attacked a church in which dozens of Christians were hiding, killing 78 in gruesome fashion.[443]

The combination of these events – political disputes over traditional leadership roles and rights, the threat of political re-engineering with the politicization of religious identity, the actual re-engineering of districts, and the underlying tension between Muslim and Christian religious leaders over local predominance (particularly with the rapid growth of Christianity among the non-Muslim population in the post-colonial period) – created a power-sharing impasse between the Christian Goemai and the Muslim Jarawa/Hausa. This analysis does not mean that it was impossible for the ethno-tribal leaders to come to a power-sharing solution and avoid inter-religious violence. If nothing else, in light of the success of power-sharing in promoting ethno-tribal cooperation in nearby LGAs, the case of Shendam highlights the need for state or national level intervention to encourage power-sharing institutions where local initiatives have not been attempted. The alternative – the potential for heightened conflict and violence as the case of Shendam highlights – leaves much to be desired.

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[442] Ibid., 38.
[443] Ibid., 39-41.

CONCLUSION

The case studies thus far emphasize the importance not only of LGAs as sites for political competition at the sub-national level, but also the importance of power-sharing as an institutional arrangement that helps to foster or maintain ethno-tribal *and* inter-religious peace. Despite the politicization of Muslim-Christian religious identity in Nigerian politics and the increasing frequency of inter-religious violence since the 1980s, not all religiously pluralistic LGAs are prone to inter-religious communal violence. The same can be said of the "indigenous versus settlers" disputes: indigenous and non-indigenous ethno-religious groups manage to live together peacefully in a number of LGAs as this and the preceding chapter highlight. Through a series of paired comparison case studies and original data gathered on communal violence and power-sharing, I find that LGAs with power-sharing arrangements are better at defusing Muslim-Christian tensions and averting spillover violence.

The strategic incentives or the political calculations that shape whether or not elites find a power-sharing institution feasible will vary depending on the local political context and socio-political and religious changes experienced in a particular LGA over time. I find that, although colonialism significantly shaped group hierarchies and power dynamics, the post-colonial political, social, and religious changes in the various LGAs provide more insight into the likelihood of elites adopting a power-sharing institution. No one colonial pattern of colonial ethno-tribal relations determined which ethno-tribal groups would manage to get along in the post-colonial period. Instead, the LGAs where political events and changes exacerbated colonial-era divisions over time – lack of assimilation and integration – are more prone to ethno-tribal cleavages and possess the

heightened potential to take on the mantle of a volatile religious conflict. I draw out this

argument further in the following chapter in which I conclude the case study comparisons

with the analysis of two Kaduna state LGAs.

CHAPTER 9

Power-sharing Case Study Findings:

Chikun and Zangon-Kataf

The previous two chapters presented analysis of case studies in Plateau state, a Christian majority state, in which the likelihood of inter-religious violence is best explained not by the particular balance of Muslims or Christians or the particular ethno-tribal groups involved, but, rather the presence of an informal power-sharing institution between the major ethno-tribal groups in the LGA. The final paired comparison I explore is that of Chikun LGA and Zangon-Kataf LGA in Kaduna state, a Muslim majority state neighboring Plateau state (See Figure 9.1 below). In Zangon-Kataf, inter-religious violence between the local Kataf Christians and the "settler" Hausa Muslims has been intermittent since the end of the 1980s. In contrast, Chikun local government in the west-central part of Kaduna state remains relatively calm, despite major Muslim-Christian violence occurring not only in Zangon-Kataf LGA but also in other areas of Kaduna state since the 1980s. Despite its ethno-tribal mix, urban location, and proximity to volatile LGAs, Chikun LGA avoids the endemic inter-religious violence prevalent elsewhere. Zangon-Kataf, in contrast, has not been so fortunate. The strategic incentives for power-sharing in Chikun and their absence in the case of Zangon-Kataf can be traced to the post-colonial changes and politics particular to each of the LGAs.

Figure 9.1 Kaduna state 23 LGAs, (case study sites indicated), map
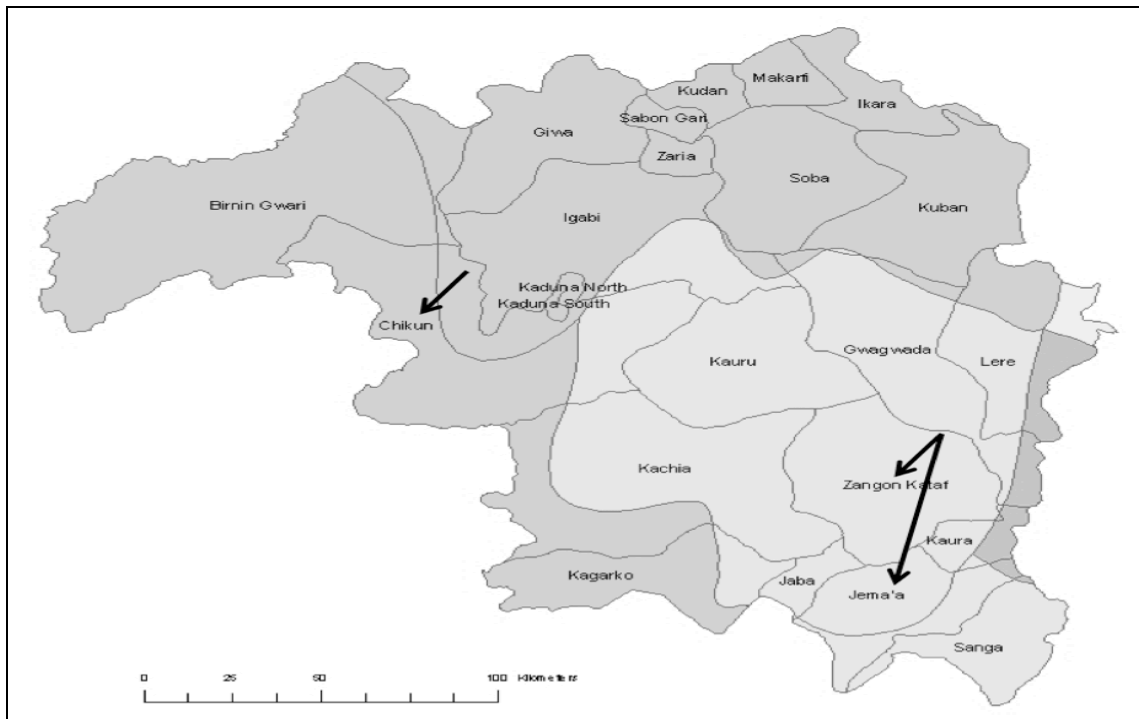
KADUNA STATE: BACKGROUND

Unlike Plateau state, Kaduna is a Muslim majority state, and it is one of the most populated of the northern states with an estimated six million inhabitants.[444] Historically, the ethno-tribal groups of southern Kaduna were among the less assimilated and politically integrated in the empire of the Sokoto Caliphate and under the subsequent colonial system of Indirect Rule. In the southern area of Kaduna state (known as Southern Zaria in colonial times), the largely non-Muslim population resisted both pre-colonial and colonial imposition of Hausa-Fulani leadership through the emirate system, maintaining their adherence to their African Traditional Religion and chiefs. This part of

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[444] See Appendix I.

Kaduna, consequently, is where Christianity made greater inroads in its rapid post-colonial expansion. Despite the agitation of the local ethno-tribal groups to maintain their own forms of local rule and religion, the British quelled resistance to Hausa-Fulani rule and intermittent conflicts between ethno-tribal groups in the then-known Zaria Province, since the British needed the Hausa-Fulani to serve as the political arm of the colonial system. "The British looked up to the Fulani and the Hausa to provide political and administrative control of the area," as the British "continued to doubt the ability of the non-Muslim groups to manage their own affairs," notes Turaki.[445]

Hence, as in other parts of the north, the non-Muslim groups in Southern Zaria who actively resisted Hausa-Fulani rule reticently came under the Zaria and Jema'a emirates due to the threat of colonial force. Towards the end of the colonial period, however, local elites began to assert demands for self-rule through nascent forms of political organization – such as in the movement for a Middle Belt Zone – that could be independent of the northern region and Hausa-Fulani Muslim political elite. In the post-colonial period when the north was opened to Christian evangelization and mission efforts, the non-Muslim groups that had rejected Islam responded differently to Christianity. Indeed, Christianity became the predominant ethno-religious identity among the non-Muslim groups, accounting today for approximately 35 percent of Kaduna's population.[446] This historical context helps to explain the ethno-tribal and ethno-religious pluralism of Kaduna state today.

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[445] Yusufu Turaki, *The British Colonial Legacy In Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria* (Dr. Yusuf Turaki, 1993), 98, 98-106.
[446] Todd Johnson, ed., *World Christian Database*, ed. Todd Johnson (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007) (accessed June 2011).

As in Plateau state, not all of the ethnically pluralistic areas of Kaduna state have been prone to the communal inter-religious violence that has characterized some LGAs in recent decades. Chikun LGA, for example, is located near the epicenter of some of the major sites of Muslim-Christian clashes, including the recurring bouts of inter-religious violence in the Kaduna metropolis and state capital (formed of Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs). These clashes often spillover from communal clashes in the southern part of the state in LGAs such as Zangon-Kataf, Zaria, and Jema'a. As in Plateau state, cities and towns are increasingly divided along ethno-religious lines as a result of the recurrent violence; once integrated neighborhoods divide like oil and water with Muslims primarily congregating in certain neighborhoods and Christians in others. As one report notes concerning the state capital,

> In Kaduna city, particularly, these conflicts have redrawn the ethno-religious demography. A climate of fear has forced Muslims, mostly the Hausa-Fulani who resided in Narayi, Sabon-Tasha, Barnawa, Ungwar Pama, Ungwar Romi and other Christian-dominated areas to move to the predominantly Muslim Tudun-Wada area. Similarly, Christians in Muslim-dominated areas, including up to 10,000 Igbo entrepreneurs, have largely moved to the southern part of the city, which they dubbed "New Jerusalem". Many who fled the state during the Sharia crisis have returned, but they are also massed in the southern parts of the city. Others would like to return to where they lived before 2000 but sold their properties. Ten years after the Sharia riots, the segregated settlement remains largely unchanged.[447]

Yet, despite the fact that Chikun LGA merges directly with the southern part of Kaduna metropolis, no major crises have emanated from Chikun local government and it has been less prone to spillover violence – a point of pride that a number of local government

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[447] International Crisis Group, "Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict," December 20, 2010, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/880F82BDF4CF7582C12577FF0050EB69-Full_report.pdf (accessed June 14, 2011), 35.

officials and community leaders emphasized during field research in Chikun. Why is it that this pluralistic LGA remains relatively peaceful compared to neighboring Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs or Zango-Kataf and Jema'a to the south? Once again, the most prominent finding from field research and data analysis is that the informal power-sharing institution negotiated among the leaders of the ethno-tribal groups in Chikun has been pivotal in maintaining peace.

- CHIKUN LGA: A CASE OF POWER-SHARING -

Created in 1987, Chikun LGA is the fourth most populated of the 23 LGAs in Kaduna state.[448] Located in the northwest part of the state, Chikun merges with the thriving Kaduna city metropolis – one of the largest cities in Nigeria with around 1.3 million inhabitants.[449] As residents of Chikun and a local traditional ruler note, the local government has so many different tribes that it is a "mini Kaduna state." There are four major local ethno-tribal groups, however: the Gbagyi, Hausa, Kabilu, and the Igbos, as well as other non-indigenous. The Gbagyi form the majority followed by the Hausa who are also considered indigenous. Like Bassa LGA, it is surprising that Chikun's very ethnically and religiously mixed population remains relatively peaceful. Refugees escaping conflicts in southern Kaduna state are known to re-settle in Chikun, and Chikun merges with Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs, which make up the Kaduna metropolis and are two hotspots of Muslim-Christian violence since the 1980s. Why is it

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[448] See Appendix I.
[449] Ibid. Note that Kaduna metropolis is constituted by Kaduna North, Kaduna South, and segments of Chikun and Igabi LGAs.

that the inter-religious violence does not follow the refugees to Chikun or flare up between members of its various ethno-tribal and Muslim-Christian groups? Politicians, in particular, could exploit the ethno-religious dynamics of the violence for political ends, but this dynamic is largely absent.

Chikun is relevant for analysis in a few respects. First, like Jos, Chikun is part of a major metropolis that is also the state capital, but it manages to maintain a semblance of peace in a context in which threats to that peace are rife. Simply put, Chikun and a number of other cases dispel the notion that it is the major metropolises that are prone to endemic violence. Second, like Bassa, Chikun has a front row seat to any conflagrations in the state capital, it is a recipient of refugees from other inter-religious clashes in the south, and yet somehow tensions are kept largely in check among the local population. Third, the case of Chikun allows us to look at political relationships among various ethno-tribal groups in which the Hausa *are* considered one of the indigenous groups. Finally, also like Jos North, Chikun is a relatively young LGA, highlighting that conflict is not determined by the period in which the LGA was formed. How is it that Chikun LGA, considering its location, history, and population dynamics is able to avert major inter-religious violence?

Chikun Power-Sharing

As my field research revealed, power-sharing is an integral part of the communal peace in Chikun LGA. Many if not all of the subjects from Chikun that I interviewed arrived at the same observation when probed about the underling factors sustaining peace in Chikun – the power-sharing arrangement among the major ethno-tribal groups in the local government is key to their peace. Indeed, my guide, a long-time political figure in

Chikun and Kaduna state politics, appeared to grow weary with my research method of asking subjects the same questions and getting the same responses, because as he noted "See, they're going to keep telling you the same thing I did – power-sharing." The political arrangement to which they were all referring is the allocation of the executive local government council seats to the Gbagyi, the Hausa, and the Kabilu. As a former chairman of Chikun explained, if the Gbagyi is the Chairman, then the Hausa will represent the Deputy-Chairman position, and the Kabilu the Secretary. The difference between this power-sharing arrangement and the one in Bassa LGA is that the three seats rotate between the ethno-tribal groups in Bassa while in Chikun the agreement is that the Gbagyi always represent the chairmanship since they constitute a majority of the LGA population, followed by the Hausa and the Kabilu.

The structure of the power-sharing agreement also appears to incorporate a zoning principle. That is, the various wards or districts within Chikun will each have the opportunity to represent the Chairmanship. For example, the Gbagyi representative would come from a different ward than was represented in the last election. Or, as appears to be the case in Chikun, all three top council leaders may not come from the same ward. In this sense, the zoning arrangement also helps to quell claims of unfair play or inequality in representation that can emerge if a leader favors his or her own administrative ward and that ward is represented in multiple elections.

In a gathering of about 30 local leaders – representative youth leaders, councilors, activists, and other local officials – respondents described the power-sharing arrangement as central to peaceful relationships among the Muslim and Christian ethno-tribal groups in the local government. As one local community leader explained,

Sometimes crises arise where there is no fair play… [I]n the local government, if the chairman is from this area, then the deputy and secretary [are] from the other area. Then they spread the positions in such a situation [so that] everybody is being carried along. And when people are being carried along, there will be nothing like suspicion or crisis. So in Chikun…the structure has been around and everyone has been carried along, even though not everybody has been satisfied at the same time. But it has been like this for over 10 years, and I think we are okay. We are okay. Things are going on well, politically we are moving forward.[450]

The administrative chairman of one of the local development areas went on to explain the arrangement as follows:

Besides the zoning arrangement she just mentioned – you see in Chikun local government what has been helping us is our political zoning – [and] despite the fact we have the Gbagyi, we have the Hausa, the Kabilu, the Kateb. If you count them maybe you have 100 tribes. But we zone these tribes into just three groups. Which are the groups? We have the Gbagyi, The Hausa-Fulani, and we have the Kabilu as three. So in any zoning arrangement for positions, maybe the Gbagyi we'll say, "Okay, he's the son of the soil so he's taking the Chairmanship." You cannot go to Zango or Jos and contest for chairmanship there. So we understand with him and say, "Okay, first born of the family, take that spot," and then we the Kabilu and the Hausa-Fulani will now come and sit down in our kitchen cabinet and decide who take number two. That is the Vice-Chairman[ship]. We can either give the spot to the Hausa-Fulani – perhaps they are more in number – or whatever arrangement…we can give them that. And then we say, "Okay…now, the Kabilu, now we…take the Secretariate," so that we do all the right thing and include all... So that is the arrangement that has been helping us include. The party structure - it is the same thing. If the Gbagyi say they are taking the executive seat, okay, we say, "Hausa-Fulani you take the chairmanship of a party." …So that everyone will feel a sense of belonging, and that has really helped us to stop lies, our crisis politically, for example.[451]

In this form, power-sharing appears to infuse all of local government administration in Chikun. It extends to which groups represent the top three council positions, which zones are represented when, and how political parties select their leadership. When it comes to electing councilors from the various wards, one leader explained that if the Hausa

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[450] Interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State (November 9, 2011).
[451] Ibid.

dominate a particular ward, then the ward will likely be led by a Hausa man. He noted, however, that even in these wards they may still elect a Christian councilor; it is up to them, but the leaders advise locals to also try to share leadership at the councillorship level in more mixed wards.[452]

The pattern does not stop there. While the issue of demands for the creation of new wards, LGAs, and states to meet groups' desires for autonomy and self-representation has plagued Nigerian politics since independence, Chikun's ward creation is instructive. One way the LGA (and others as well) seeks to provide greater representation and autonomy to smaller ethno-tribal minorities so they can meet their local development goals is by establishing "local development areas" *within* the LGA. The idea is that local groups concentrated in a particular area of the LGA – whether or not they are members of the majority ethno-tribal bloc – will have a say in the development projects and allocation of funds in their neighborhoods.

In terms of traditional leaders, unlike parts of southern Kaduna, each of the ethno-tribal groups has their own chief who serves as a district or ward head within the LGA, which the Paramount Chief (the Sagbagyi) presides over. There may be other small tribes within a ward, and these groups will also have their own chief who is under their local district head. In this sense, small ethno-tribal groups still maintain their traditional titles and have a voice in local affairs.

This discussion of power-sharing institutional dynamics does not mean that communities in the LGA are unaffected by the inter-religious clashes occurring nearby or in other states. In reality, local leaders have had to act quickly a number of times to quell

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[452] Interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun Local Government Secretariate, Kaduna State (November 10, 2011).

tensions that have threatened the peace of Chikun LGA following major violence in other areas. Furthermore, Muslims and Christians have felt pressure to uproot their families and segregate out of fear for their future safety living in pluralistic communities. Like Bassa and Kanam LGAs, tensions and the impetus for Muslim and Christian youth to mobilize are not entirely absent in an area of Nigeria characterized by heightened sensitivity to divisive religious rhetoric and Muslim-Christian clashes. Nonetheless, Chikun highlights how a system of local power-sharing reinforces relative peace, enabling ethno-tribal and religious leaders to better respond to and nip potential crises in the bud before they erupt. Unlike Jos and neighboring Kaduna North and Kaduna South, integrated Christian and Muslim communities can still be found in Chikun LGA where they interact with one another on a peaceful, regular basis. Consequently, it is the monopolization of local government leadership and decision-making that community leaders in Chikun fear would divide the local government, jeopardize understanding, and breed ethno-tribal or inter-religious violence.

Origin of Power-Sharing

Despite the pluralistic composition of Chikun LGA – Christian Gbagyi, Muslim Hausa-Fulani, along with other small Muslim and Christian ethno-tribal groups – the local leaders forged an informal power-sharing arrangement. What conditions were in place to facilitate agreement among the ethno-tribal leadership? What explains the origin of the institution? The strategic factors relevant in the formation of power-sharing in Chikun LGA can be traced to the settlement and migration pattern of the area, its geographic convergence to Kaduna metropolis, and expected demographic changes.

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Despite the fact that members of the Kabilu non-indigenous mix are not considered "sons of the soil" in the LGA, they too form part of the power-sharing arrangement. According to a former chairman and recent member of the state legislature, power-sharing was a strategic reaction to the dynamics of the settlement of the LGA and its prospects for growth due to convergence with Kaduna city. First, historically speaking, the Hausa-Fulani are considered indigenous to the area, necessitating their inclusion in any power-sharing arrangement. Hence, for the indigenous Christian Gbagyi population, the majority in the LGA, a power-sharing institution was the strategic response necessary to guarantee their own political influence in local governance while recognizing the roots and, thereby, political rights of the Hausa population to also have a say in local politics.

Second, power-sharing was also a strategic option in light of the geographic position of Chikun. Local leaders explain that the Gbagyi agreed to the power-sharing institution because they saw that, although they were in the majority, different tribes would migrate to the LGA for trade and business since it is close to the state capital metropolis. Hence, their aim with a power-sharing arrangement was to ensure that their role in local representation would not be compromised by population changes.[453] In this sense, the particular historical and geographical context of the LGA rendered power-sharing a strategic approach for ethno-tribal groups to carve out their niche of power. By extension, as religio-political disputes have intensified since the 1980s, the power-sharing institution – incorporating both Muslim and Christian ethno-religious groups – helps to maintain inter-religious peace and cooperation.

[453] Interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State (November 9, 2011).

The Peace

Conversations with various local leaders highlighted a number of ways in which the power-sharing institution in Chikun enables local government officials, community activists and youth leaders, and Muslim and Christian religious leaders to work more effectively to protect the peace. In contrast to Jos and other LGAs, it is not an anomaly for Muslim and Christian religious leaders to coordinate peacebuilding activities. For example, the Christian CAN and Muslim JNI members interviewed showed a great deal of camaraderie and knew each other well. Remarking on the 2000 crisis in Kaduna, one JNI figure pointed to the good leadership present in the local government, enabling religious leaders from the local wards to form a joint committee of five Muslim and five Christian religious leaders to work together to bring quick resolution to any inter-religious crises that might suddenly spring up. Working with traditional rulers who know their youth and area well, the local government leadership is also able to better identify troublemakers. Additionally, zonal meetings occur in which the 37 Christian CAN representatives in the LGA meet with Muslim leaders in order to resolve any problems that arise.[454]

As this and the other case studies demonstrate, it is not a history of civic integration or association that provides the basis for peace and, by extension, power-sharing in Chikun. As Jos North highlights, integration among the local populations is not a guarantor of sustainable peace. Rather, the particular political, demographic, and geographic context of the local government provided the incentives for power-sharing,

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[454] JNI and CAN representatives, interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State (November 10, 2011).

which laid the foundation for peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and civic engagement. In other words, the power-sharing model created a representative foundation for each of the ethno-tribal groups, enabling local leaders – whether Muslim or Christian – to form alliances with one another to combat inter-religious tensions and thwart the potential for violence. Where power-sharing institutions are not in place, politics and disputes are more likely to be interpreted through a Muslim-versus-Christian lens, rendering broad-based inter-religious cooperation and understanding far more difficult to achieve.

Threats to Power-Sharing

While the power-sharing arrangement between ethnic groups in Chikun LGA helps to provide a foundation for cooperative inter-religious relationships, it is not impervious to chinks in its armor. For example, with the population growth of the Kabilu over the last few years, they have clamored for adjustment to the power-sharing arrangement. Having overtaken the Hausa-Fulani community in demographic terms, the Kubilu are advocating for an "upgrade" in which they would also be able to preside in the local government council as Deputy Chairmen rather than only as Secretaries, the third position in the hierarchy. This situation is currently producing some tension between the Kabilu and the indigenous Hausa-Fulani community. The "formula may reach a stage where it can't work," notes one insider."[455]

The Gbagyi population and leadership might also face some pressure. With the increase in the Kabilu population, as well as an increase in the Hausa population, the Kabilu and the Hausa-Fulani elite may be tempted to form an alliance to demand change in the power-sharing arrangement. This, a former chairman notes, is the potential

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[455] Interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State (November 9, 2011).

problem they face. In the meantime, however, there are other factors that go into the strategic calculations. The violence in the southern part of the state, for example, prevents an alliance between the Hausa-Fulani and the Kabilu; they are not on particularly good terms due to the Kafanchan violence. Much of the growth in the Kabilu population in Chikun LGA is due to the refugees arriving from the areas where communal violence has occurred between members of their identity groups and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims in the southern zone.

Nonetheless, in a forum discussion with local community leaders, this very question of how the power-sharing arrangement would survive changes in the composition of the local government was a topic of discussion. "The question I want to ask," one organizer initiated, "with this proper arrangement which has been in existence for years and with the present influx of people, the Kabilus,…do you think this arrangement can still hold?" One local political figure, referring to the knowledge accumulated as changes have come to the LGA, argued,

> *Yes, this arrangement can still hold. There is nothing that is going to change the arrangement. Only an understanding [will work]. When we sit down and we understand ourselves – because we know that society is getting more and more complex…as they come in, so always we are growing in our knowledge. When we sit down and discuss, we can solve our problems by ourselves.[456]*

Another respondent continued:

> *Let me just add. I think the recent development, the political scenario, has given us better channel for addressing such a problem when it arises in the future. For instance, this area is dominated by Kabilu, the [] development area, so the leadership of Chikun will always insist that the leader of this area should be Kabilu. So you see the community has within itself general adjustments that will fit the dynamics that may occur later. So I don't see anything affecting it per se.[457]*

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[456] Interview by Laura Thaut, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State (November 9, 2011).
[457] Ibid.

So too another community member equated the power-sharing arrangement with the

Biblical demand to "Give to Ceaser what is Ceaser's," arguing in a lengthy speech,

> *You see, any community that does not develop the issue of give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, then in that community there's that tendency of having crisis, and that is what is happening in Jos. Monopoly. You want to monopolize everything. Whether it is your own or not your own or it is your own* [expressions of agreement around the room]. *So that is the problem. And we are trying to see here in our own local government how we can continue to maintain that platform of give to Caesar what is Caesar's. Even if it is done wrongly, let us try to uphold this virtue because that is the only thing that will help us live in peace… Even if the Kabilu's are so many here, and within the Kabuilu's there is the idea that there is so many, okay, give them. Give them the head, and others will follow. That is why during our own time, when the issue of this development came, we said, give the Hausa their own development area. Give the Kabilu their own development area. Give the [Gbagyi] their own development area so we can live peacefully with one another* [further expressions of agreement around the room]. *Let everyone now control his own development area. If there are problem with the youths in the local government area… Okay, go to your administrator and say there is a problem here. He will go and see what, find out what is the problem. They will now sit down and see what we can do. When it comes to the local government as a whole where the chairman is there and he has his…councilors, these councilors come from all these areas [wards]… everybody will now table his own problem based on a presentation to the chairman, then we now decide how do we share these allocation, what will go to the Hausa people, what will go to the Kabilu people, what will go to the [Gbagyi] people… so we share these based on the allocation so that everybody will now have something to tell his people, "I'm representing you, this is what I have brought for you. And that is how we have been moving thus far." But I'm not saying there are no problems or certain issues that will crop up and may give us the opportunity to think on how to go about it. The problem here is that the moment there is crisis in Zaria or there is crisis in Kafanchan, the problem is the Chikun local government is the melting point, because that is where we get the wahalla [trouble] because every tribe is here. And every time there is this problem, the vengeance is taken up from here. So that is one thing we have been having problems here now. But we thank God that after first crisis – even because of this political crisis that came this time around – I don't think we'll be having any problem, we'll be living peacefully with one another, and we'll continue to think on ways to solve any problems that may come, because we are getting more people day by day. We don't even know where they come from. Day by day Chikun local government is getting visitors day by day. People are… we don't even know where its coming form, what was he*

doing, what is his nature, what has been his trade. Even from Jos people are coming from Jos… So that is that.[458]

In this sense, the rotational system and organization of development areas and wards provides the flexibility to adjust to societal changes in the ethnic composition of the LGA. Furthermore, the power-sharing arrangement has led to institutional outgrowths that help community leaders manage problems in their areas and work to prevent identity-based conflict.

Whether the optimism of some of the leaders in the local government will prove warranted remains to be seen. While the power-sharing formula has worked well in the past, changes in the LGA may require more flexibility in the power-sharing arrangement, something the informal nature of the institution could allow. Meanwhile, however, the institution is self-enforcing through the representational gains and assurances it provides to local ethno-tribal groups in the local government council as well as through the organization of development areas and in the autonomy of smaller ethno-tribal groups to appoint their tribal chiefs. All of these factors have thus far reinforced the power-sharing institution in the face of potential strife, providing political, tribal, and religious leaders a foundation upon which to promote and protect peace in Chikun LGA.

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[458] Ibid.

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- ZANGO-KATAF LGA: A CASE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE -

In contrast to Chikun, crises in Zangon-Kataf have occurred intermittently over the last three decades. When trouble does break out between the Christian Kataf (or Aytap) and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani the violence is usually large in scale and often spreads to other LGAs in Kaduna state. Zangon-Kataf is a Christian majority LGA located in southern Kaduna state, and, according to the 2006 census, is home to a population of 318,991.[459] The exact ratio of Christians to Muslims in the LGA is difficult to estimate, however, since this information is excluded from the census. In Zango town, the locus of much of the conflict between the Kataf and Hausa-Fulani in the LGA (and where the Hausa population had settled in greater number), the violence has also affected the population dynamics. Many locals fled the area, and neighborhoods segregated along Muslim-Christian and ethno-tribal lines in response to the clashes.[460]

As with other areas of the Middle Belt on the fringes of the Hausa-Fulani empire and during British colonial rule, the subjugation of local ethno-tribal groups to the Hausa-Fulani was not welcomed. The colonial elite incorporated the Zangon-Kataf communities, as well as the neighboring Jema'a non-Muslims, into the colonial-backed Zaria and Jema'a Muslim emirates despite the ethno-tribal groups' opposition to the imposition of Hausa-Fulani control and their effort to maintain their own traditional rule and to follow their indigenous forms of African Traditional Religion.[461] As Osinubi and

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[459] See Appendix I. .
[460] Olatunji Ololade, "'You do not own this land'," *The Nation*, October 29, 2011, http://www.thenationonlineng.net/2011/index.php/mobile/columnist/friday/olatunji-ololade/24452-you-do-not-own-this-land.html (accessed February 7, 2013).
[461] Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 214.

Osinubi summarize, "the history of Southern Kaduna is essentially a history of resistance and struggle by the various ethnic groups to the emirate system, which was imposed on the area by the British colonial indirect rule system."[462] Cultural assimilation and political integration, needless to say, never took root between the local ethno-tribal groups and the Hausa-Fulani in Zangon-Kataf and Jema'a.

Most importantly, the post-colonial changes further exacerbated the ethno-tribal and religious divisions. Unlike areas of Plateau state, rights of self-representation remained limited in the post-colonial period. In other words, the organization of political power changed little following independence, as the Kataf were "lumped together with the rest of Zaria province and subjected to the overlordship of the emir, who appointed village heads to govern them."[463] The religious contours of the area changed considerably, however. While rejecting Islam, the non-Muslims of southern Zaria were also affected by the rapid expansion of Christianity. The Kataf largely converted to Christianity, which only furthered emphasized the identity cleavage.[464]

Yet, as with other LGAs on the fringes of Hausa-Fulani rule during the colonial period, communal violence in the 1980s and in subsequent years was not inevitable. Rather, the lack of significant reform in local governance, the religious change with the expansion of Christianity among the non-Muslims, and the organization of local elite to demand reforms and self-governance from the Muslim emirs all combined to create a volatile situation in Zangon-Kataf where power-sharing was not part of the picture. The

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[462] Tokunbo Simbowale Osinubi and Oladipupo Sunday Osinubi, "Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Africa: The Nigerian Experience," *Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 2 (2006): 9.
[463] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 215.
[464] Ibid.

acrimonious politics of religion within the nation during the 1970s and 1980s added to the potential for religion to serve as the narrative of conflict and basis for mobilization over local grievances.

The Violence in Zangon-Kataf

Driving through Zangon-Kataf, the evidence of communal violence still marks the LGA. In the center of Zango town, buildings are still scarred black by fire or sit as idle empty shells, grasses growing up and around their crumbling forms. More recently in 2011, tensions in Zangon-Kataf were heightened by an attack on a Catholic church near Zonkwa city, killing two women worshipers and injuring 11 during a night vigil. Travelers were instructed not to take the route through Southern Kaduna for danger of stumbling into reprisal attacks or riots. Meanwhile, tensions rose in Kaduna city and rioting soon started in Kafanchan, a hot spot for Muslim Christian violence in Jema'a LGA, in reaction to another killing even though it was unclear whether the two were connected.

Zangon-Kataf has been the site of major inter-religious and ethno-tribal violence. Falola describes the 1992 clash between Hausa Muslims and Kataf Christians in the LGA as "so bitter and so destructive that the 1987 Zaria crisis paled in comparison."[465] One report notes that there were open revolts in 1946, 1966, 1971, and 1984 as well.[466] Perhaps the most well-known, however are the two major clashes that occurred in 1992 – one in February in which about 60 people were killed and one in May in which at least 400 were killed. Needless to say, the details of the forms of violence employed are gory

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[465] Ibid.; Ololade 2011.
[466] Athony Marock Kazah, "Understanding the Kaduna Crisis (2)," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, June 30, 1992).

and harrowing. The violence in February followed a contested decision by the new local government leadership to move the Zango marketplace from a Muslim part of town to a new marketplace created in a Christian part of town for which the Kataf advocated.[467] The Hausa saw this as an attempt by the Kataf to deprive them of their economic livelihoods, but the Kataf claimed that the new area was more "neutral" where they would then be able to sell pork and alcohol, which was prohibited in the former location. While the dispute goes deeper than the location of a marketplace, violence ensued in May 1992 following the authorization of the contested move. In combination with an incident on some farmland in the LGA – both sides claiming to be the victims – Hausa and Kataf people took to the streets in bloody clashes that quickly spread to other towns in Kaduna. Summarizing the outcome of the three days of fighting after the police finally intervened, Falola notes,

> Over four hundred corpses littered the streets, and most of the houses were burned to the ground. Many of the dead has been killed by massive dagger and machete wounds; some were shot through with poisoned arrows and bows. In a few cases, people had been shot with guns, and others had been burned in their cars or homes. All the major churches and mosques were destroyed. Many were injured, many had fled, and many more were to die later in hospitals or at home from their injuries.[468]

As discussed in the next section, this Zango violence reverberated around Kaduna and other northern states.

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[467] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 213. See also Je'adayibe Dogara Gwamna, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria* (Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2010), 80; Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood 1980-2002* (Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003), 56-63.
[468] Ibid., Falola, 217. See also Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan, "The Role of Youth in Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflicts: The Kaduna/Kano Case Study," in *Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, ed. Ernest E. Uwazie, Isaac O. Albert and Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999), 105.

Zango town is not the only area of Zangon-Kataf marred by inter-religious violence in recent years. Zonkwa, the headquarters of the LGA, was one of the worst hit areas in the April 2011 post-election violence. Although the violence was a reaction to the presidential election results, it took the form of a Muslim-Christian conflict. The riots and bloodshed began with the announcement of the win of Christian candidate Goodluck Jonathan over Muslim candidate Muhammadu Buhari, easily falling into the narrative of a Muslim-Christian conflict and playing out in the mobilization of the attacks. Reports of hundreds killed and thousands displaced in Zangon-Kataf LGA began circulating along with other cases of Muslim-Christian/political violence in the north.[469] According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), more than 800 were killed in 12 northern states during three days of rioting, and HRW cites CAN's figure of more than 350 churches destroyed in the riots. In Zonkwa in particular, HRW found that Muslims were the primary victims, noting,

> Men from the predominately-Christian Bajju ethnic group in the town of Zonkwa burned six of the town's mosques, as well as homes, shops, and vehicles of Muslim residents. Witnesses said the violence began late in the afternoon of April 18 and continued throughout the night. By mid-morning on the following day, the Bajju men had killed or displaced nearly all of the town's Hausa-Fulani residents…311 Muslims, nearly all of them men, were buried in a mass grave in Zonkwa later that week, while the remains of 24 others, many of their corpses charred beyond recognition, were buried in one of the town's wells. Christian leaders in Zonkwa told Human Rights Watch that 10 Christians had also been killed in the town and surrounding communities. No churches were destroyed.[470]

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[469] BBC News, *Nigerian gunmen kill churchgoers in Zonkwa, Kaduna*, November 4, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15589201 (accessed February 7, 2013).
[470] Human Rights Watch, *Nigeria Post-Election Violence Killed 800*, May 17, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800 (accessed February 7, 2013).

In a report on family reunification efforts by the National Emergency Management Agency, the Nigerian *Guardian* newspaper noted that an estimated 75,000 people were displaced by the Kaduna state violence overall.[471]

Following the post-election violence, Zonkwa was again the scene of trouble after a gunman attacked a church in the town on November 3, 2011, killing two and injuring 14 people. Travelers were instructed not to drive through the southern part of Kaduna due to the uncertainty about potential retaliation. The BBC report notes that youth attacked a mosque in revenge and that "[f]ollowing the attack on the church, the state governor was forced to abandon his attempt to visit the town after Christian youths blocked the roads with burning tyres.[472]

Whether or not the initial Hausa-Fulani Muslim and Kataf Christian violence in Zangon-Kataf LGA fed upon a divisive religious narrative, the subsequent violence clearly became interpreted in this light. In reaction to the massive killings in Zangon-Kataf in 1992, Muslims mobilized in retaliation in Kaduna, Zaria, Zonkwa, and Kagoro to name a few places. In Kaduna, the Hausa, "believing that the Kataf had killed their people, launched a massive attack on Kaduna residents of southern Zarian origins."[473] Religious preachers in Kaduna city and Zaria invoked a religious jihad or, along with rioters, attacked those who failed to "identify their religion and ethnicity by reciting versus of the Qur'an or by speaking Hausa with an identifiable accent."[474] Churches filled with worshipers also became easy targets for retaliation. The Christian population too

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[471] Oghogho Obayuwana and Musa Njadvara, "NEMA reunites 20,000 Kaduna violence victims with families" (Lagos: The Guardian, May 2, 2011), 7.
[472] Ibid., *Guardian*, "Nigerian gunmen kill churchgoers in Zonkwa, Kaduna."
[473] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*), 218.
[474] Ibid., 218-219.

fought back in self-defense, but the overall reaction was so intense that the violence in

Kaduna reportedly killed more than the initial Zangon-Kataf violence, resulting in more

than 1000 deaths, many injured, extensive property damage (including churches and

mosques), and thousands became refugees over-night.

Ethno-religious identity was not merely a simple targeting device during the

clashes. Rather, the religious dimension of the conflict between the Kataf and the Hausa-

Fulani is rooted in the historical relationship between power and religion in this region of

Kaduna and the post-colonial religious change and power shift that occurred. Both

Zangon-Kataf and Jema'a were areas in the former southern Zaria region that were

strongly resistant to Hausa-Fulani Muslim rule. Indeed, when the British chose the

Hausa-Fulani as indirect rulers, it was the British colonial forces that imposed a cessation

to the conflict between the Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the southern Zaria non-Muslim

population. Subsequently, in the post-colonial period, the local ethno-tribal groups of

southern Zaria expected a new politics of autonomy and self-representation. Christianity,

with the limited missionary work during the colonial period and with its rapid growth by

the 1980s, was the dominant religious identity among the local/non-Muslim populations

in the southern part of Kaduna state, serving as a unifying and mobilizing identity across

ethno-tribal cleavages. As Falola notes concerning Zangon-Kataf,

> Missionary activities spread rapidly during the colonial period. The Kataf, having
> rejected Islam, took to Christianity en masse. Two religions thus became well-
> established in the areas: Islam among the Hausa, and Christianity among the
> Kataf. Religion combined with ethnicity to polarize the town."[475]

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[475] Ibid., 215.

The ascriptive power of religious identity in these cases of violence highlights the importance of religious change and the politicization of ethno-religious identity in the post-colonial period. Ethno-tribal violence in Nigerian religio-political life can morph into a religious dimension that allows violence between members of Muslim and Christian religious communities to spread like wildfire to areas where the ethno-tribal groups have no connection to the original incident.

The violence in other communities – such as Kafanchan in neighboring Jema'a LGA – has also taken a "religious turn." In the September 1996 violence, the clash between Muslims and Christians was due to the abduction of a Christian preacher, Mr. Monday Yakonat for apparently blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed during a sermon. While he was later released, the abduction nonetheless instigated violence between the ethno-religious communities that then spread to Kaduna city where Shi'ite Muslims were protesting the detention of their leader El-Zak Zaky.[476]

The May 1999 violence in Kaduna state also highlights the ascriptive power of Muslim-Christian religious identity. While the 1999 violence in Kafanchan resulted in the deaths of perhaps a dozen people, the violence quickly spread to other towns and took on greater proportions. Christians were targeted in retaliation in places such as Kaduna, Zaria, Samaru, Wusasa, Kankia, Malufanshi, Katsina, and Funtua in Kaduna state.[477] Rioters burned more than 100 churches, and the events convinced Christians that violence was a valid form of self-defense. As Falola notes, "they now began to speak of the law of Moses – an eye for an eye," since the "rioters sent a loud and clear message to

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[476] Saxone Akhaine and Bayo Ohu, "Kaduna raises panel over riot," *The Guardian* (Lagos: The Guardian, October 12, 1996), (page unclear).
[477] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 183.

Christians: northerners could not openly profess Christianity and escape unharmed," so "they would strengthen their faith, seeking stronger ways to confront the Muslims the next time."[478] Furthermore, CAN asserted that the violence was a targeting of Christian faith, and "Christian leaders began to call for a great Christian revival to surmount what they called the devil represented by Islam."[479] In other words, these and other cases highlight the symbolic significance that religion has assumed in local disputes over representation and rights, seemingly dwarfing the original underlying political causes of the disputes.

The Absence of Power-Sharing

One of the policies most upsetting to the Kataf population during colonial rule was the subjugation of their population to the Emir of Zaria. Instead of being ruled by their own autonomous chiefdom like some of the other non-Muslim areas, the Emir of Zaria controlled the administration of the region and appointed the ruling chiefs. A HRW report notes that "Under British rule Zangon-Kataf was placed under the control of the Zaria Emirate, whose Hausa administrators treated the ethnic Atyap [Kataf] population with contempt and brutality throughout much of the colonial period."[480]

Nigerian independence from Colonial rule did not, however, usher in the administrative change the indigenous Kataf people hoped for. As Falola notes, "The Kataf regarded the Islamic emirate, established in the nineteenth century, as an enemy,

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[478] Ibid., 185.
[479] Ibid., 186.
[480] Human Rights Watch, "They Do Not Own This Place: Government Discrimination Against 'Non-Indigenous' in Nigeria," *Human Rights Watch*, April 26, 2006, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/04/25/they-do-not-own-place-0 (accessed April 8, 2012), 51.

along with the pro-emirate colonial and postindependence governments."[481] Despite some reforms in the 1960s and 1970s allowing some groups to "appoint their own people as village and district heads," the appointments had to be endorsed by the emir; although Kataf Christians were appointed, the Katafs rejected the legitimacy of those appointments since, "[i]n the Kataf view, the emir approved only the appointment of puppets."[482] Reminiscent of the conflict between the local ethno-tribal groups and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims of Jos, Falolo describes the fundamental misunderstanding between the ethno-tribal groups, noting,

> The Kataf believed that the Hausa minority marginalized them at all times, abusing their power to take land, dominate resources, and exploit the Kataf as slaves…The Kataf blamed the crisis on the emir for denying them the right to appoint their own chief, a right their neighbors were given. The emir, the Kataf alleged, usually resolved chieftaincy and land disputes in favor of the Hausa.[483]

According to HRW, the claim of the Kataf is premised on the following perspective:

> The Atyap have struggled, successfully, for a greater degree of local autonomy since independence but have never forgotten the historical wrongs their community suffered under Emirate rule. As is increasingly true throughout Nigeria, having been able to secure recognition as the true indigenes of their community, many Atyap feel it only appropriate that all the benefits flowing to their local government should go to them alone. Atyap rejection of their Hausa neighbors' claims to indigene status is also fueled by a belief that the Hausa have an inherent predilection for the domination of others and seek indigene status only in order to subjugate and marginalize the Atyap. That belief, common in political discourse throughout southern Nigeria and the Middle Belt, is fueled by the intemperate rhetoric of political and community leaders throughout southern Kaduna.[484]

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[481] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 214
[482] Ibid., 215.
[483] Ibid., 214.
[484] Human Rights Watch, "They Do Not Own This Place," 51-2.

In contrast, the Hausa-Fulani of Zango-Kataf claim that, although they have resided in the area for at least 200 years, the Kataf have marginalized them. From this perspective,

> The Hausa saw the Kataf as uncivilized, constantly complaining 'pagans.' They believed that the facts of history and conquest gave them both control of the land, saying the Hausa could not be called outsiders, since their ancestors had been living thief for hundreds of years. The Hausa viewed the Kataf as hostile, accusing them of bow-and-arrow attacks on innocent Hausa farmers.[485]

The question of who settled the area first is a constant refrain between the ethno-tribal groups. "The Atyap and the Hausa have long been embroiled in a bitter and seemingly interminable debate about which group settled the area first," notes HRW, "a disagreement that has proven impossible to resolve empirically because both groups have inhabited the area since at least the mid-18th century and possibly as far back as 1650."[486]

Throughout Nigeria in the 1970s, however, the strengthening of local government representation through decentralization led to the shift of local power away from the emir to the local government councils. As Mamdani notes, up until the period of local government reforms, governance was chief-in-council instead of chief-and-council, which means that the chiefs or traditional authorities could make the decisions whether or not the local governing council agreed with the decisions or not.[487] Hence, the local ethno-tribal groups viewed the local government reforms of the 1970s and 1980s as an opportunity to achieve broader say in local representation.

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[485] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 214.
[486] Human Rights Watch, "They Do Not Own This Place," 50.
[487] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subjects* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 104-5.

With these reforms and in the new local government of Zangon-Kataf (after it

broke off from Kachia as a newly designated LGA), the Kataf majority dominated the

LGA. The emirship, however, was less willing to yield its religio-political role in the

appointment of local chiefs. Indeed, the persistence of this form of governance into the

post-colonial period created political conditions untenable for power-sharing. The first

step, in the Kataf view, was simply to have *some* say in the appointment of local leaders

and in the allocation of land, particularly land dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, in an

environment of increasing land pressures and despite Hausa-Fulani arguments about

indigeneity. In this context, a relaxation in representation among the various ethno-tribal

groups was not forthcoming. As Kalu notes, "when Nigeria secured her independence in

1960 and the exit of the British, the prevailing colonial institutions still held sway as the

dominant orthodoxy."[488] A paper presented by Abdul Raufu Mustapha at a United

Nations Working Group on Minorities explained the deadlock following local

government reforms as follows:

> However, in their [the Kataf] view, this development did not address their
> problem as the elected local government chairmen were incorporated into the
> Zaria Emirate Council as subordinates of the Emir. Furthermore, all District and
> Village Heads, though employees of, and paid by, the local government,
> continued to be appointed by, and reported directly to, the Emir of Zaria. Though
> Kataf men were now both Local Government Chairman and District Head, Kataf
> disaffection continued to simmer, fuelled by what they regard as their continued
> subordination to Zaria, and the alleged nepotistic appointment of the minority, but
> now `allegedly indigenous', Hausa/Fulani elements from the southern Kaduna
> area to political and other offices in the State and Federal governments as
> `representatives' of the people of the area.[489]

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[488] Kalu N. Kalu, *State Power, Autarchy, and Political Conquest in Nigerian Federalism* (Lanham:
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 77-79
[489] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, *Ethnic Minority Groups in Nigeria - Current Situation and Major Problems*,
December 5, 2010, http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20101205024305zg/sections/general-articles/ethnic-
minority-groups-in-nigeria-current-situation-and-major-problems-by-abdul-raufu-mustapha/ (accessed
February 8, 2013).

In it is within this context that the 1992 violence flared up.

> In the 1990s, fresh struggles emerged over control of the new local government and market and over questions about allegiance to the emir of Zaria. The Kataf felt that they and not the emir, should appoint the head of their local government. Kataf nationalists said there would be no peace until the power of the emirate was completely removed from their town and the Kataf were given charge over their own community.[490]

Under these conditions, the expansion of self-representation through local government reforms was not fully implemented or respected in the view of the Kataf. The politics of indirect rule was slow to change in Zangon-Kataf and the southern zone of Kaduna state. In response to the 1992 violence, a spokesperson for the Kataf people appealed on behalf of the indigenous for the federal government to "abolish all relics of colonialism 'by restoring to the people of southern Kaduna State, the freedom they lost when the British colonial masters extended the rule of Zaria Emirate to them."[491] Hence, the impasse between the Kataf and the Hausa-Fulani, drawing on the acrid politics of identity in Nigeria and the narrative of colonial history, led to and created the conditions for inter-religious communal violence rather than a power-sharing model.

The story is similar for Kafanchan, the headquarters of neighboring Jema'a emirate. Protest against the Jema'a emirate system and demands for its dissolution continued in the post-independence period among the indigenous Christian population. While their demands for autonomy achieved little, the death of the 10th emir in 1998 presented an opportunity for change, particularly in the representation of indigenous

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[490] Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 216.
[491] Kunle Sanyaolu, "Katafs blame crisis on govt indiference," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, June 13, 1992), 1, 3.

groups in the chieftancy system. One of the demands submitted by the indigenous was that the "change should be far-reaching enough to include representatives of our various communities in the council of kingmakers and expand the ruling houses to include us."[492] When their demands for self-determination went unheeded and it appeared a new emir would be installed, indigenous members of the local government council continued to work for a solution with representatives of the ruling emirate. Elders reached a new agreement that an indigenous chiefdom should be installed on the same day as the new emir. Yet, when the day came, the installation of the new chiefdom ceremony was not announced with that of the new emir, leading the local ethno-tribal population to conclude that the agreement would not be respected. Rioters then mobilized, blocking the ceremony from occurring in Kafanchan. Violence soon broke out, evolving into a Muslim-Christian conflict that would send shockwaves throughout the north.[493]

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Since the 1992 violence, some changes have taken place in the communities of Zangon-Kataf. Egwu notes that the "recent [1996] creation of independent chiefdoms in Southern Kaduna for the Kataf, Bajju and other minorities in Zangon-Kataf who were previously administered under Zaria emirate provides a good starting point in addressing the grievances of ethnic minorities."[494] He goes on to observe, "Although it is far from

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[492] Sunny Idunwo, "The Burden of Kafanchan History," *The Guardian* (Lagos: Nigeria, June 5, 1999), 6-7.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Samuel Egwu, *Structural Adjustment, Agrarian Change and Rural Ethnicity in Nigeria*, Research Report no. 103, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (Motala Grafiska, 1998), 115; *See* also Mustapha, 2010.

providing an enduring solution to the problem, it has considerably whittled down tension in the area" or "calmed nerves."[495]

While relations are more peaceful, the disputes over land and representation that culminated in the 1992 violence and demonization of ethno-tribal and religious groups does not auger well for a grassroots-led power-sharing arrangement. Hausa displaced by the 1990 violence complain that their land has not been returned to them despite their appeal to the local government. In interviews with Hausa leaders in Zangon-Kataf, HRW was told, "If we want anything we have to go through the local government…But those people, they hate us and will do nothing for us."[496] HRW goes on to note that

> Several other individuals confirmed this impression, alleging that they were denied the right to compete for jobs and other opportunities made available through the local government administration. One man complained that "[t]hey will call all of the people from the LGA for interviews, saying that they want to recruit one person [for a job]. When we send our boys there the LGA sends them home." Members of the community also complained that despite repeated government promises, much of the land that had been seized from them by their Atyap neighbors after the 1992 violence had yet to be returned.[497]

Thus, the violence in 1992 heightened misgivings on both sides and further entrenched stereotypes and a politics of exclusion among the majority Kataf and the minority of Hausa who returned to the Zangon-Kataf after the 1990s violence. The LGA continues to be known as one of the more volatile in terms of ethno-tribal and Muslim-Christian relations. Conflict was not a foregone conclusion, however, even with its colonial legacy. Rather, the stranglehold of colonial-era forms of political power particular to this area of Kaduna state, as well as the disappointed expectations of the 1970s reforms, exacerbated

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[495] Ibid., Egwu 115.
[496] Human Rights Watch, "They Do Not Own This Place."
[497] Ibid., 52.

identity cleavages in Zangon-Kataf and thereby created little incentive or opening for a power-sharing alternative.

CONCLUSION

The cases of Chikun LGA and Zango-Kataf LGA demonstrate the significance of power-sharing or inclusive representation for promoting inter-religious and ethno-tribal peace. The collaboration and coordination among local leaders – including Muslim and Christian religious leaders – in Chikun has been essential for the maintenance of peace when major inter-religious violence threatens to spillover into the local government. The case of Chikun also demonstrates that the story of Muslim-Christian violence in northern Nigeria is not simply a product of colonial history or reducible to indigenous versus non-indigenous intractable conflict. The Hausa-Fulani along with non-indigenous Kabilu are two of the three parties to the power-sharing institution. While power-sharing in Chikun, Bassa, and Kanam may not be impervious to tensions and challenges to its durability, the institution has survived among the broiling communal conflicts of the north thus far, appearing to reinforce itself over time.

The same cannot be said for Zangon-Kataf and a number of other LGAs in the pluralistic communities of the north where, absent power-sharing, local disputes have transformed into repetitive and unpredictable inter-religious violence that quickly travels to other LGAs. The impact of post-colonial reforms, the spread of Christianity, patterns of migration, land pressures, outside political interventions, and the nature of competing institutions are among a number of factors that played out differently in communities of the north. The political incentives or disincentives for leaders to adopt a power-sharing

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arrangement at the time of local government decentralization or creation, therefore, varied depending on the post-colonial changes and local politics of the LGA in question. Thus, unlike other LGAs, power-sharing held little strategic logic for the Kataf or Hausa-Fulani in Zangon-Kataf LGA. Among other factors and in contrast to other LGAs included in these case studies, the precedent of indirect rule established by the British did not change significantly in the post-independence period, and local government reforms did not alter the equation enough to prevent new pressures and local disputes from spiraling into inter-religious violence.

In the following and final chapter, I conclude with reflections on the broader insights or contributions of this study to the understanding of ethnic conflict. I argue that this study of the role of religion in the communal violence of northern Nigeria and of the capacity of informal local power-sharing institutions to promote peace revises some of the fundamental assumptions made by the ethnic conflict literature in regard to the nature of ethnic conflict and institutions of democracy and representation.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

"The resolution of civil conflict is among the most pressing issues facing the world today. Civil conflicts account for the vast majority of armed struggles in the contemporary world and the vast majority of casualties from war"[498]

THE RIDDLE

The crisis of communal and religious violence in northern Nigeria since the 1980s is one of the biggest challenges facing Nigerian local and national leaders today. Unfortunately, however, the micro-dynamics of the violence and causal conditions are blurred in the media and in the cyclical discourse about who or what deserves the blame for the violence and how it can be resolved. The international media tends to fall into a standard refrain, seemingly propelled by a materialist bent in academic studies of ethnic conflict, that the violence is rooted in economic (land) disputes, whatever its religious dimensions. Other locals and scholars emphasize the failure of the Nigerian state and the crisis of weak leadership. Digging deeper into the actors involved, other theories highlight the importance of political entrepreneurs who see an opening and employ sentiments of religion to galvanize the population for their own political ends. There is certainly no end to the blame local Nigerians place on local leadership, and the conspiracy theories abound (some assuredly true) about politicians who pay poor, desperate youth to stir up trouble. Other scholars and students of colonial history, particularly of the Marxist persuasion, place the blame on the colonial experience – its reification of identities,

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[498] Scott Gates and Kaare Strom, *Power-Sharing, Agency and Civil Conflict* (Oslo: PRIO, 2007), 11.

establishing boundaries and hierarchies between groups that never existed before and thereby dooming post-colonial politics to instability and ethnic conflict. These are debates that take place among local and national government figures, NGO activists, religious leaders, and traditional leaders and that reflect debates about the causes of ethnic conflict in the academic scholarship as well.

And then there is religion. Again, locals have their own opinions about the Muslim-Christian dimension that has come to characterize much of the communal violence in the north. To some, it is all about religion – a cosmic conflict between true religion and wrong religion, between good and evil, one religion seeking to uproot the other – in which the narrative of fighting and defending oneself has far greater stakes for adherents. Which religion goes along with the "good" and "evil" designation naturally depends on what side of the religious spectrum one is on. To others, it has nothing to do with religion. Religion is merely a façade over exploitative economic and political interests, or the conflicts are primarily attributed to ethno-tribal indigenous-versus-settler contests.

All of these arguments and theories no doubt possess some traction. Disputes over land and resources, particularly with increased land pressures, are a problem and can lead to communal violence. As my data on communal violence from 1979-2011 show, however, cases reported as involving Muslims and Christians tend to be characterized by very different precipitating events and reported causes than ethno-tribal violence rooted in economic disputes, and they tend to take place in different locations. The two should not be conflated, otherwise the variation in and patterns of communal violence, as well as the possibilities for its resolution, will be misunderstood. As for the weakness of the

Nigerian state, certainly the rampant corruption, inability to provide basic necessities to its population, the civil war from 1967-1970, and the succession of repressive government did the population no favors and has not promoted conditions for prosperity and security in Nigeria. Local elite – including politicians who marginalize one section of the community, employ divisive religious language, interfere in electoral outcomes, hire youth to do their dirty work, and rig the voting system – are a menace to stability in local politics and communal peace.

Yet, the weaknesses of the Nigerian state and local leadership are also not a sufficient condition for inter-religious or ethno-tribal communal violence. While these weaknesses characterize national and local political institutions on a broad scale, communal violence does not occur across all LGAs at the sub-national level. Similarly, a focus on political entrepreneurs as the causal force behind identity-based violence has limits. Such actors cannot mobilize ethnic violence at their whim. It would do little good to attempt to mobilize groups along ethno-tribal or religious cleavages if other social, political, and historical conditions are not present that render those cleavages salient in the first place. Finally, while indirect rule and the divide-and-conquer politics of colonial powers did indeed create or enhance ethnic divisions and leave behind a legacy of instability in many countries, the colonial legacy did not preordain ethnic violence within states. As my case studies show, areas of Nigeria characterized by a similar colonial history and pattern of assimilation and integration are not equally prone to inter-religious violence.

This brings us to the significance of religious identity and religious change in the Muslim-Christian violence of communities in northern Nigeria. Those who argue that

religion has nothing to do with the violence do not appreciate its centrality and likely have not spent much time in the field. Religion has become a powerful ascriptive identity, framing device, and symbolic mobilizer of communal violence since the 1970s. Religion should be taken seriously. At the same time, the roots of the conflict are deeper. Digging into the local politics of ethno-tribal and inter-religious violence or peace in various communities, one discovers that the politics of representation and rights is indeed the condition that, left untreated, has created the space for religious identity politics and conflict to flourish into recurrent violence. The religious narrative and framing of the conflict, therefore, should be taken very seriously while at the same time considering the deeper dimensions or the underlying conditions in solution-generation.

This analysis should not imply that religion and, by association, religious adherents are inherently conflict prone. Those who ascribe to this philosophy have not thought through the matter or history very carefully.[499] Inter-religious clashes, even with the rapid growth of new forms of Christianity and radicalized Islam, are not inevitable. Despite the prevalence of cases of inter-religious violence since the 1980s, Nigeria presents an easy foil. If religious pluralism is as divisive as some assume, why is it that only some communities with Muslims and Christians experience inter-religious violence and not all? Why is it that some of the very same communities characterized by inter-religious violence today were *at one point* peaceful and integrated communities in which no thought was given to Muslims and Christians being in close friendship and sharing in one another's lives? As with other forms of identity, religious pluralism is not a sufficient

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[499] See William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

condition for ethnic conflict. This is why the more important and driving question that I have sought to answer is *under what conditions* does religious identity become the fault line of communal violence? How is religious identity different from other forms of identity in its mobilizing properties and potential?

Before testing my power-sharing theory in the course of fieldwork, I first had to construct a picture of the actual scope of the violence and its variation by building an original dataset of communal violence for northern Nigeria. I then began to dig deeper into the power-sharing or consociationalism literature and found myself befuddled by its high hopes (unmet) in solving ethnic conflict when it seemed to have very little applicability to the reality and puzzle of communal violence in northern Nigeria. As it quickly became clear from living in Jos, local politics mattered in a host of ways – in shaping who has access to education, employment, land, and representation. The question, however, was *how* exactly politics matters and shapes the propensity for inter-religious violence. A power-sharing arrangement instituted at the national level in no way could accommodate all of the diverse ethnic interests and parties (250 or more ethno-tribal groups in Nigeria) and the concerns specific to local communities. This led me to pursue the theory that perhaps patterns of representation at the sub-national level – whether or not LGAs have a form of power-sharing – would shed light on why some pluralistic LGAs manage to maintain relative ethno-tribal and inter-religious peace while their neighbors flounder in the swells of communal violence.

Qualitative investigation and data gathered on election and appointment results over time in Plateau state and Kaduna state bore out this theory. The data and case studies show that LGAs in which local ethno-tribal leaders negotiated an informal power-sharing

arrangement at the time of local government reforms in the 1970s or upon creation of the

LGA have been far less prone to inter-religious violence. The rotation of the executive

seats of the local government council from one administration to the next helps to defuse

claims of inequality in representation, promoting more cooperative and collaborative

relationships among the ethno-tribal and Muslim/Christian communities. While informal

power-sharing institutions established in the 1970s preceded the major politicization of

religion in Nigerian national and local politics, power-sharing had the unintended but

beneficial consequence of helping to quell subsequent religious tensions, since ethno-

tribal and religious identities tend to overlap.

The broader implications of these findings I explore in the remainder of this

chapter. First, I summarize my findings and the revisions I make to power-sharing theory.

Second, I examine the generalizability of the findings, briefly discussing the Indonesian

case and suggesting further avenues for research. The remainder of the chapter then

addresses the implications of this study for the understanding of the religious/symbolic

dimensions of ethnic conflict, for strategies of peacebuilding in conflict-prone

communities, and for the study of ethnic conflict in general.

THE POWER-SHARING REVISION

Despite the emphasis on an inclusive politics of representation as a solution to ethnic

conflict and a guarantor of a stable peace following civil war, studies of

consociationalism or power-sharing in a number of countries do not bear out Lijphart's

initial findings and contentions, as I discussed in Chapter 2. My research posits, however,

that Lijphart's theory of power-sharing is not defunct. Rather, with some revision in the

level and assumptions of the analysis, power-sharing can be an effective tool of conflict prevention.

The first revision my research suggests is that power-sharing is more effective at the local communal level rather than the national level. As noted above, ethno-tribal politics in Nigeria is largely local, although the disputes can play out on the national stage between leaders of the major ethno-tribal blocs as well. The key difference is that the communal-level disputes over access to rights, resources, and local representation cannot be solved by a national power-sharing arrangement. With over 250 ethnic groups and grievances that vary considerably from community to community at the sub-national level, a few representatives of a very few of these ethno-tribal groups who share executive or legislative authority or veto power at the national level will hardly address the concerns of local, diverse constituents. National politics and policies certainly affect the lives of individual Nigerians throughout the country, but national-level power-sharing lacks the capacity to solve local conflicts specific to the ethno-tribal groups involved.

The second revision is that the benefits of power-sharing are easier to recognize and sustain at the local level. Part of the difficulty of formal national power-sharing arrangements is that the incentives to abide by the arrangement are ambiguous, punishment for defection is difficult to enforce, and the lines of accountability to constituents are unclear.[500] At the same time, a key incentive for power-sharing, achievable at the local level, is the potential for greater representation and influence for even minority ethno-tribal groups. If electoral politics is a free-for-all, depending on how

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[500] See Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, eds., *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006).

electoral alliances pan out, major ethno-tribal groups in an LGA might not otherwise

have the political clout to ensure significant representation. In this context, a politics of

identity can more easily thrive and divide communities. In contrast, where the Chairman

and the Vice-Chairman of a local government council run on the same ticket and are not

allowed to be from the same ward or ethno-tribal group, campaign rhetoric that

emphasizes ethnic divisions to mobilize constituents is less likely to find a hearing. To be

elected, the leaders have an incentive to maintain a united front.

The leaders of the major ethno-tribal groups in an LGA also have incentive to

abide by the arrangement, as the minority groups may otherwise side with one powerful

bloc over another in order to tip the electoral balance and gain a modicum of

representation. In this scenario, the major ethno-tribal blocs risk being pushed out of

contention for any significant leadership seat, which could cause tensions and identity

politics to flare. In contrast, a power-sharing institution can more effectively represent the

interests of the major ethno-tribal blocs by giving each a share or a turn in the leadership

of the local government council, while the tiniest minorities in the local government still

have a chance of controlling legislative seats through councillorship positions that are

determined at the ward-level. The establishment of local development areas can also

channel development funds and appease minorities dominant in a particular ward. One

should also not overlook the historical incentives for leaders to form power-sharing

institutions in order to re-write the colonial pattern of domination and politics. In other

words, Horowitz is right in emphasizing the importance of the incentive structure:

> When electorates are alert to ethnic issues, as they typically are, exhortations to
> leaders to compromise are likely to be futile in the absence of rewards for
> compromise. Attention needs to be devoted, therefore, to maximizing incentives

for accommodative behaviour. For elected politicians, those incentives are likely to be found in the electoral system…. Where electoral rewards are present, they can provide the motivation ethnic leaders otherwise lack, they can operate even in the presence of ethnocentrism, and they can offset electoral losses that leaders anticipate as a result of making concessions to other groups. Where these rewards are present, they typically operate by means of vote-pooling arrangements: the exchange of votes by ethnically-based parties that, because of the electoral system, are marginally dependent for victory on the votes of groups other than their own and that, to secure those votes, must behave moderately on the issues in conflict. … Where vote pooling takes place, as it did in Lebanon and Malaysia, it promotes pre-electoral coalitions, coalitions that need to comprise in order to attract voters across group lines…[501]

In contrast to power-sharing at the national level, these incentives and the actual benefits – in terms of resources doled out and investment in development – will actually be felt and observed at the LGA level. Also, leaders who fail to come through in their promises do not jeopardize the power-sharing arrangement; rather, they jeopardize their individual legitimacy, as a different member of their ethno-tribal group can contest the leadership position in the next election.

Of course, if the electoral incentives were obvious, one would expect to find power-sharing in all pluralistic communities of northern Nigeria. In this sense, it is not merely the electoral incentives that go into the equation. Patterns of ethno-tribal group relationships – whether or not the electoral incentives are worth considering – are shaped by a range of social, political, and religious realities that will vary from community to community and are affected by changes over time. As evident from the various case studies, post-colonial communal relationships and incentives to seek cooperation or compromise are shaped by everything from patterns of migration and religious changes

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[501] Donald Horowitz, "Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Processes," in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*, ed. Andrew Reynolds, 15-36 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 23.

over time to exogenous political interventions and entrenchment of colonial-era exclusions. Hence, the investigation into the particular factors in any one LGA that prompt power-sharing will yield a slightly different story, but the principle insight remains: communities with power-sharing are less likely to experience communal inter-religious or ethno-tribal violence.

One potential policy recommendation to take away from these findings is that a national government intent on promoting peace and stability could advance that cause by finding ways to encourage power-sharing in its third tier of the federal government, the local government level. While national figures and international policy practitioners have promoted and imposed national power-sharing institution at the national level with questionable success, the same has not been tried at the local level where the evidence suggests the effort could produce more sustainable results. The role of the national government may not necessarily be to impose a power-sharing solution so much as to promote the local democratic changes that help to lessen the underlying political tensions between ethno-tribal groups. In Zangon-Kataf, for example, the lack of true democratic reform in the colonial-era power-structure exacerbated the relationship between the Kataf and the Hausa-Fulani, rendering violent conflict a more likely outcome. Had the democratic and decentralizing reforms in the independence period been respected or enforced in Zangon-Kataf as they had elsewhere, one could easily imagine a more harmonious local politics or even a power-sharing dynamic. Whether a power-sharing institution can be negotiated in pluralistic communities already frayed by communal violence, this question remains outstanding, but the alternative of doing nothing and allowing the symbolic conflicts of religion to fester is hardly an attractive alternative. In

this next section, I discuss the generalizability of these findings and the avenues for further research.

THE GENERALIZABILITY

Nigeria is not the only country beset by communal violence, nor is inter-religious violence the only type of civil violence that can threaten the security of communities and the state. Some intra-state violence takes the form of secessionist movements, movements that seek the overthrow of the state and the ethnic group in power, disputes over land and material resources between communities, rebel movements derived from a small segment of the population, or radical Islamic movements – such as the northern Nigerian Boko Haram group – that claim their cause is a religious battle to usher in an Islamic state. These movements can all vary in size, resources, and support among the population as well. As my communal violence data revealed, some of the northern Nigerian violence derives from a pattern of causal and precipitating events in which religious ideas, symbols, and actors are front and center, while in other cases the clashes are associated with disputes with perceived outside trespassers over issues of land or cattle-grazing rights. As my focus is on *communal* violence, I did not include in the analysis cases in which members of political parties rioted. I also did not include cases in which groups targeted state officials or the police. I do not claim, therefore, that the findings of this study have equal insight for *all* forms or types of intra-state conflict. When considering violence between *communally* defined groups resident within a defined political territory, however, issues of who represents in local political office or who holds the reigns of

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power are ubiquitous, and, in this context, the findings of this study may have broader applicability.

One challenge for generalizability in this project is that the prevalence of local and informal power-sharing institutions in federal states in Africa and elsewhere in the global South is unclear. Most evidence is anecdotal, and the empirical project of documenting and gathering all the necessary data is a considerable undertaking in both time and resources. Indeed, it is unclear how widespread sub-national power-sharing is in Nigeria beyond Plateau and Kaduna. In focusing on these two states, however, I did attempt some effort at "randomness" in that I did not select to explore these two states in in-depth case studies *because* they contain examples of LGA power-sharing. Rather, I focused on these two states because of the variation in communal violence they exhibit. Based on the findings in only these two states, then, it is possible to infer that power-sharing is not an uncommon phenomenon in Nigeria. At a minimum, this research further highlights that – whether or not communities in many other countries have identical forms of power-sharing – local politics matters not only for stability within pluralistic communities but also for the stability of the national political system as a whole. The other forms of locally conceived institutional arrangements that help to manage ethnic relations in ethnically pluralistic countries, such as pacts, is open for further research. Like Jamie Davidson's work on ethnic conflict in Indonesia, I join the growing literature and other scholars "who are reexamining group strife in subnational contexts" and who, "by moving below the national…[have] shown that these [national] institutions, no matter

how influential, fail to account for the incontrovertible variation of collective violence within states."[502]

The Case of Indonesia and the Rise of Ethnic Conflict

Indonesian politics and the civil conflict that has plagued the country at various times since the colonial period highlight the broader application of this study and the potential for further research. Like Nigeria, colonialism and the use of indirect rule integrally shaped the politics of identity in Indonesia and the politicization of ethnic cleavages.[503] In the post-colonial period, ethnic identities that were otherwise dormant became the basis for communal violence, as well as violence both exacerbated by and targeted against the state. Bertrand notes that, "between 1997 and 2002, at least 10,000 people were killed in ethnic violence throughout the archipelago."[504]

A range of factors shaped the conditions conducive for the emergence of violence – violence that was propelled by Muslim and Christian identities and ethno-tribal Dayak, Malay, and Madurese identities. These factors included: institutional changes, shifts in national political regimes, a weakened state, the emergence of identity-based national politics, missionary movements and religious change, major migrations and re-location of

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[502] Jamie S. Davidson, *From Rebellion to Riots: Collective Violence on Indonesian Borneo* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 16.

[503] Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 32.

[504] Ibid., 1. Bertrand (2004, 1) notes that "in 1996-97 and 2001, two waves of violent clashes between the Dayaks and Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan led to the deaths of at least 1,000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Madurese. In Maluku, at least 5,000 people were killed in a war between Christians and Muslims that began in January 1999 and escalated during the following three years. In East Timor, approximately 1,000 people were killed and 200,000 displaced in violence against the civilian population, following a referendum in August 1999. In Aceh, a renewal of conflict between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian armed forces began in 1999 and intensified in the following years. At least 1,800 people were killed in 2000-01. In Irian Jaya (Papua), the emergence of a civilian movement for independence during 1999 and 2000 led to several people dead in clashes with the Indonesian armed forces."

ethnic groups, and deep economic changes.[505] The Nigerian case and the Indonesian

share a vast number of similarities, and it is the effects of the changes over time in

particular communities that help to explain the variation in communal violence – why it

flared up at certain times and in certain places. Most important, I argue, is what the

studies of Indonesian ethnic conflict suggest about the significance of institutional

changes or decentralization in the 1990s for local political representation.

As with the decentralization that occurred in the 1970s in Nigeria, the 1990s

Indonesian liberalization suddenly opened up a new political arena for Indonesians to

contest for political representation. Prior to the 1990s, the central government ran a

"homogenous government bureaucracy" based on allegiance to its directives enforced

through the imposition of loyal civil servants and military officials.[506] "Such bureaucratic

and administrative structures," notes Bertrand, "eliminated institutional differences in

various regions and were intended to reduce the diversity of the ethnic, cultural, or

religious landscape in favor of the common characteristics of the Indonesian nation."[507]

In other words, the central government significantly circumscribed local democratic

forms of participation and representation. Due to the convergence of a number of factors

in the 1990s, the stability of the system began to show its cracks; secessionist movements

in Aceh, East Timor, and Irain Jaya gained momentum and were crushed by the military,

students mobilized against the Suharto regime, and both intra-religious ethnic conflict

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[505] John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Bertrand 2004; Davidson 2008.
[506] Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict,* 39.
[507] Ibid.

and inter-religious conflicts let to instability, loss of thousands of lives, and massive

displacement of thousands.[508]

As Bertrand highlights, such decentralization can create new opportunity for

democracy to grow, but it may also increase the potential for groups to mobilize on an

ethnic basis:

> Institutional change increased the potential for violence. In addition to the
> uncertainty surrounding the fall of Suharto, rapidly changing institutions opened
> up not only opportunities but also fears of further mobilization. When the Habibie
> government began to implement a law on regional autonomy in 1999, competition
> rose for the positions of district head and provincial governor. Under the new law,
> vast resources were decentralized to the districts and, therefore, became a source
> of intense competition. Dayak political elites, who had been frustrated at the their
> loss of representation and control over resourced, had a strong interest in winning
> many of these posts. They were also in a good position given the numerical
> advantages of the Dayak in Central Kalimantan.[509]

The effects of decentralization in Indonesia and the subsequent clamor of ethno-tribal

groups for new districts calls up the Nigerian experience of a proliferation of new LGAs

to more than 700 before many were dissolved as illegal. Davidson notes, "[o]ne of the

unintended consequences of the decentralization program in Indonesia has been a race to

redistrict administrative units…[a]t the outset of decentralization, the number of districts

in the country stood at 292; by 2003 it had rocketed to over 430."[510] The districts became

a new site of contestation for control over resources and representation. Depending on

how the lines of districts were drawn, one or another ethno-tribal group could gain the

majority and hold greater prospects for control. Groups could also attempt redress for

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[508] Ibid., 43
[509] Ibid., 58.
[510] Ibid., Davidson, *From Rebellion to Riots,* 136; See also Sidel 180-181, 187.

past grievances or perceptions of marginalization through contestation in the new local political arena.

The implications for the stability of communal relationships were devastating. The developments in provinces such as West Kalimantan, Davidson notes, "had particularly deadly consequences" with the new incentives to mobilize, as well as new capacity to do so with the increased ethno-tribal political consciousness and organization that had developed in preceding years.[511] In Pontianak, the site of major ethnic violence starting in 1999, riots over land disputes were the harbinger of later ethnic conflict between the Dayak and Madureses. Yet, Davidson observes that even these disputes over control of land and the "overall aggressiveness of these mobilizations centered over the question of representation in *bupati* [district head] posts."[512] In other words, political reforms and a new institutional arrangement heightened the politics of representation and the political saliency of identity and religion.

Along with the increasing presence and distinctiveness of Christian and Muslim authority at the local level and the overlap in economic and political interests, Sidel observes that the *pogroms* of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Poso in the 1990s and the inter-religious violence of 1998-2001 was affected by the "approaching elections of 1999, decentralization, and the redrawing of administrative boundaries (*pemekaran*)."[513] These events, "create[d] tremendous uncertainty and anxiety along the local borders – and within the local hierarchies – of religious faith, not only among Islamic and Christian ecclesiastical establishments but also among rival Muslim and Protestant networks of

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[511] Ibid. Davidson.
[512] Ibid., 122.
[513] Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, and Jihads*, 155.

local politicians, businessmen, gangsters, civil servants, and (active and retired) military and police officers."[514] The symbolic politics of indigeneity and Muslim/Christian identity, as in Nigeria, became the basis for political organization and for claims of marginalization and inequality in many communities.

While references to power-sharing in local communal politics is sparse in this literature, there is indication that, at least in a few cases, it has been central to the negotiation of group representation and peace in some Indonesian communities. In one instance in 1999, brief rioting and heightened tensions between the Dayak and the Malays occurred in response to a perceived liberty taken with the power-sharing agreement in place (although Madurese were ultimately the primary targets in later violence). Davidson recounts the events as follows:

> In October 1999 rancor over the selection of provincial representatives (*utusan daerah*) to the national People's Consultative Council (MPR) sparked a limited clash that both highlighted Malay-Dayak tensions and portended the October 2000 riots. There was understanding that the DPRD [Provincial/District/City People's Representative Council] members would elect two Malays, two Dayaks, and one Chinese to reflect the province's ethnic composition (and political balance). The selection of Zainuddin Isman, a PPP activist and former *Kompas*

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[514] Ibid. See also 161, 188. Noting the relationship between decentralization and the processes of religious change in Maluku, Sidel (2006, 172-174) observes: "Yet in perhaps somewhat less obvious ways, the shift to an open, competitive, and decentralized system of organizing power in Indonesia was also accompanied by heightened uncertainty and anxiety as to religious identities and structures of authority *within* the Muslim and Christian communities. Anthropological writings on the villages of Ambon, after all, stressed the persistence well into the Suharto era of religious beliefs and practices that transcended the Muslim-Protestant divide, patterns of enduring alliance (*pela*) and mutual assistance between villages of different official faiths, and understandings of local property and authority relations based on suprareligious customary law (*adat*) and aristocratic lineage. Ethnographic work on other parts of Maluku likewise revealed a broad spectrum of diversity and change in the religious beliefs and practices of those registered as Muslims and Christians in the province, with 'conversion' a recent and ongoing process for many official believers, even well into the 1990s. Patterns of migration to and within Maluku – especially by (Muslim) Butonese from Sulawesi – were cited by observers in the same period as increasing the diversity of religious practices and heightening the 'ethnicizing' tensions between both Christian and Muslim 'natives,' on the one hand, and immigrant 'outsiders,' on the other, over economic resources, property relations, village elections, and other issues. Against this backdrop, the dominant structures of power associated with Protestantism and Islam in Maluku, much like their counterparts in Poso, were haunted by rising doubts and fears as to their authority, identity, and coherence."

correspondent, complicated matters, however. Dayaks rejected Isman, for, although he claims Dayak ancestry, he is a Muslim and thus considered "Malay." Therefore, for some the tally was three Malays and one Dayak. Angered by such duplicity, dozens of Dayaks tried to storm the DPRD building… The symbolic potency of the fracas far surpassed the actual fighting. Whereas it demonstrated that future Malay-Dayak disturbances remained a possibility, it also indicated that Pontianak's looming "ethnic" clashes would, in fact, mask elite politicking.[515]

While this account moves on to discuss the deadly ethnic violence that flared between ethnic groups in Pontianak the following year, the reference suggests that power-sharing was one *local* form of informal politics employed to maintain peace. Similarly, in another account, Davidson notes that the DPRD sought to balance local leadership by electing both a Malay and a Dayak to the posts of *bupati* and vice *bupati* in Sitang, Ketapang, Kapuas Hulu, and Landak districts in the 2000 and 2001 elections.[516] This is clear evidence of power-sharing in Indonesian local politics. Davidson also makes references to the role of traditional pacts in preventing ethnic conflict in a number of cases.[517]

No mention is made of the effectiveness or success of these agreements over the last decade or their prevalence across Indonesia's many pluralistic communities (before or after periods of ethnic violence), but these cases suggest that power-sharing instituted by leaders at the communal level is not a phenomenon specific to Nigeria. How these power-sharing institutions came into being, the conditions under which elite opted or did not opt for them, and whether or how they have been effective in promoting communal peace is a subject for further investigation. In the case of northern Nigeria, at least, I find

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[515] Davidson, *From Rebellions to Riots*, 153.
[516] Ibid., 150.
[517] Ibid., 146

that local power-sharing institutions have been pivotal in preventing inter-religious

tensions from spiraling into symbolic and deadly Muslim-Christian violence.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS/SYMBOLIC DYNAMIC

Having highlighted many times in this study the importance of the symbolism of religion

and religious belonging in the communal violence in northern Nigeria, here I address its

relationship to instrumentalist arguments. From the data and accounts of inter-religious

violence, I contend that religious identity and the symbolism of religious events can take

on a powerful mobilizing capacity to the extent that manipulation of identity by political

entrepreneurs – often treated as a necessary condition for social group mobilization – is

not a necessary condition for violent mobilization to occur between Muslims and

Christians in many cases. My findings suggest that, while elite politicization of religious

identity may be central in the initial construction of divisive religious narratives, elite

manipulation is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for violence; merely symbolic

religious events are sufficient to spark clashes in northern Nigeria.

It is "context rather than…some intrinsic property of these [descent-based]

attributes," Chandra argues, that shapes the politics of identity.[518] One need not peel back

the layers of a particular identity in order to understand how it becomes a site of political

contestation, according to this argument. Rather, a "descent-based" identity takes on

political meaning in combination with another or other variables that essentially

determine its political parameters. Chandra's work on whether ethnic identity matters

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[518] Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006), 415.

leaves one with a vague sense that ethnicity matters but not really, because identity and

the political form it takes is subject to the instrumental wheeling and dealing of elite or

political entrepreneurs. This is the conclusion reached by Fearon and Laitin as well.[519]

Similarly, in Posner's and Wilkinson's work it is elite manipulation doing the majority of

the work.[520] Group identity is merely some latent category that, when called upon, will

dress itself up in the appropriate political attire, and, when left to rest, will sleep. Absent

elite, all one has is latent identity *sans* politics. Scholars who adopt a rationalist or

instrumentalist view contend that identity is not itself violence prone; rather, identity

becomes a "thing" or site of contention when actors pursuing particular ends mobilize

identity to achieve their goals.[521]

Other scholars are less assertive about the potential "meaninglessness" of

ethnicity. Some argue, for example, that instrumental mobilization of identity by elite

politicians is, as Laitin observes, only one side of the Janus face of culture.[522] Regarding

culture and the construction of preferences, Laitin argues, "Embedded in any religion are

symbols that provide believers with a sense of the 'really real' and, hence, with what

economists call 'preference functions.' Rational action can only be properly understood

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[519] James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 845-877.

[520] Daniel N. Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004), 529-545; Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[521] e.g., Steven Wilkinson, "Which Group Identities Lead to Most Violence? Evidence from India," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro and Tarek Masoud, 271-300 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[522] David D. Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

when preferences are known; culture helps set those preferences."[523] At the same time,

however, Laitin concludes that one must look at the political construction of a group

identity in order to understand how it becomes a site of contestation. Culturalist or

identity-based arguments according to Brubaker and Laitin "can not explain why

violence occurs only at particular times and places, and why, even at such times and

places, only some persons participate in it. Cultural contextualizations of ethnic violence,

however vivid, are not themselves explanations of it."[524] As Gurr and Posner also argue,

identity is a salient category, but the likelihood of mobilization depends on social and

political conditions. That is, while identity cannot be mobilized if it does not hold some

deep-seated significance for actors, identity itself does not explain political mobilization.

Gurr notes,

> Identities formed or re-formed by force and differential treatment not only are likely
> to persist but also often provide the basis for mobilization and action aimed at
> redressing the shared grievances that are the common result of collective
> mistreatment. In short we assume that ethnic identities are enduring social
> constructions that matter to the people who share them. *How much* they matter
> depends on people's social and political circumstances. Ethnic identities are not
> "primordial" but nonetheless based on common values, beliefs, and experiences.
> They are not "instrumental" but usually capable of being invoked by leaders and used
> to sustain social movements that are likely to be more resilient and persistent than
> movements based solely on material or political interests.[525]

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[523] Ted Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2000), 50.
[524] Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 443.
[525] Gurr, *Peoples Versus States*, 4.

According to this rational choice or instrumentalist logic, identity is only a relevant category because actors appeal to (and thereby socially construct) ethnic identity as a relevant category.[526]

While I accept the argument that political elite or political mobilization is critical to the story of explaining how identity becomes a salient political category, I depart from these scholars in two key respects. First, like Laitin, I argue that the emphasis on elite overlooks the importance of change in identity categories – e.g., with a religion's rapid growth or doctrinal shift. It would be a stretch to argue that political manipulation is *the* cause of the rapid growth of Christianity throughout the global South and its subsequent politicization. If not for the religious phenomenon of the 1960s and later – mass conversion and the socio-political consequences of the change itself – it is unclear how elites could have constructed a narrative or rationale for violent Muslim-Christian mobilization. If one accepts the premise that identities are not fixed, then attention to the changes in identity over time is essential to the story of its politicization. It does not mean that these changes are insulated from social, political, or economic events (indeed, religious beliefs and practices are always in conversation with socio-political realities and life experiences), but rather that one should not assume that an identity's inception as a political category is due simply to the imagination of politically self-interested actors. As Varshney notes concerning rational choice theory, the "standard rational-choice accounts assume that ethnicity can be seen instrumentally. They focus primarily on how leaders strategically manipulate ethnicity for the sake of power. This argument has an intuitive

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[526] Brubaker and Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," 437.

appeal because the behavior of many, if not all, political leaders can be cited in

support."[527] However, Varshney goes on to note,

> presented in this form, the instrumental-rational argument about ethnicity runs into serious difficulty…if the masses were only instrumental about ethnic identity, why would ethnicity be the basis for mobilization at all? Why do the leaders decide to mobilize ethnic passions in the first place? Why do they think that ethnicity, not the economic interest of the people, is the route to power? And if economic interests coincide with ethnicity, why choose ethnicity as opposed to economic interests for mobilization?[528]

Hence, scholars should pay careful attention to the importance of how changes in identity

over time impact which identity or identities are politically salient at any one time and

how the attributes associated with the identity itself shape the possibilities for

mobilization.[529] In sum, like Horowitz, "I presume instead that if elites pursue a policy of

deflecting mass antagonisms onto other ethnic groups, such a policy must strike roots in

mass sentiments, apprehensions, and aspirations in order to succeed."[530]

Second, while recognizing the importance of context and elite politicization of

identity, I argue that elite manipulation or political entrepreneurs are not *always*

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[527] Ashutosh Varshney, "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (2005), 88.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Regarding the ethnic and religious violence in Indonesia, Davidson (2008, 176) notes that other economic and political factors may have been more "integral to the violence" than ethnic or religious identities, but he shows how the "framing of the violence dramatically and meaningfully altered the riots' trajectories regardless of their root cause. Here religion or ethnicity was dominant."
[530] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 105. See also Carrie Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004), 120; Varshney 2005; Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Yemen and Jordan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). As Schwedler (2006, 152) asks, in light of the conditions, what are the *boundaries* of justifiable action constructed within an ideological framework? The formation and transformation of ideas evolves in tandem with socio-political events or changes, but not all action is ideologically justified at any particular point in time and certain beliefs may militate against certain types of mobilization. To understand the avenues of action opened up and closed off by religious identity, one must consider the boundaries articulated within the political theology of the group and by its leaders.

necessary to the story. While elite may be key in the story of how religion becomes a politicized category, their active manipulation is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the mobilization of inter-religious violence (if not at time t then at time $t+1$). In other words, as a particular identity assumes greater political significance, it is possible for that identity to take on a symbolic importance that does not require elite manipulation to mobilize or construct the narrative of communal violence.

The large number of cases of "linked" or spillover violence discussed in previous chapters is indicative of the significance of shared religious identity in the mobilization of violence. In an incident of violence against one's co-religionists in Zangon-Kataf, for example, the perception of an affront to members of the religious group as a whole is often sufficient to spark inter-religious violence in other parts of northern Nigeria, especially Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, and Plateau states. Although political manipulation may be cited in a few examples of inter-religious communal violence, it is not a necessary or sufficient condition for violence. As noted in cases already discussed, retributive violence can occur in towns even a couple hundred miles away from the original incident. The mere fact of shared religious identity can provide the mobilizing impetus despite the fact that the spillover location is disassociated from the causes or precipitating events of the original incident and was otherwise experiencing relative peace.

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As the above discussion highlights, elite mobilization of grievances is not a necessary or sufficient cause of communal inter-religious violence, particularly as communal violence and the narrative of us-versus-them becomes a more entrenched social phenomenon. In

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northern Nigeria, symbolic religious events or offenses are now seemingly sufficient to instigate inter-religious conflict without an organized and strategic pre-meditated elite mobilization. In Laitin's argument about religion and strategic molding he argues that a "theory concerning the impact of religious meaning on society must be integrated with a theory concerning strategic molding of religious meaning."[531] While this point may have held true in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s, strategic manipulation of religion is not necessary at all stages. In the Nigerian case, the narrative has taken on a life of its own, as people have adopted the Muslim-versus-Christian lens through which to view the "other." Communal violence, therefore, need not require direct political master mining to transpire and can become self-perpetuating. This is why the violence can takes on "spontaneity" and is seemingly unpredictable. At this stage, strategic molding by political elite is perhaps more of a necessary condition for *undoing* or deconstructing the stereotypes and narratives that perpetuate the conflict.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIES OF PEACEBUILDING

How scholars theorize ethnic identity or understand the particular identity-based dimensions of a conflict also matters for the targeting and effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies. Considering the differences in the reported causes and precipitating events in cases of ethno-religious versus ethno-tribal violence, it suggests that peacebuilding efforts targeted at ending ethnic conflict should not be "one size fits all." Violence stemming from symbolic religious offenses is distinct from ethno-tribal violence fueled by disputes over land boundaries and land rights. Methods of peacebuilding, therefore,

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[531] Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, 28.

are inherently problematic if they assume ethno-religious and ethno-tribal conflicts are essentially the same "ethnic" violence.

Resolution of a land dispute between ethno-tribal groups will invariably involve a different set of conflict resolution strategies than resolution of ethno-religious violence in which a narrative of religious "enemies" fuels and characterizes the battle-lines of the conflict. In cases of ethno-tribal violence, coming to agreement over land boundaries and protection of property designated as belonging to one tribe or another will be key. While inter-religious violence also may involve policy resolutions (e.g., to share political power), peacebuilding also requires combating diffuse, intangible, and easily mobilized vitriolic religious narratives and stereotypes.

In some sense, inter-religious violence is a challenge of conflict resolution on a far larger scale. Communal violence can erupt in response to anything from a religious speech to an international event (such as the Danish Cartoon Crisis or U.S. invasion of Afghanistan). Events with varying degrees of politico-religious-ness can stoke fears of impending violence between religious groups. The distinctiveness of inter-religious violence from other forms of ethnic conflict raises the following questions: Can political resolution of the underlying political issue(s) automatically dissipate the divisive identity narrative? Peace activities cannot hope to solve the riddle of Muslim-Christian violence unless they address the politics of representation. Yet, if the conflict has morphed into a religious dimension, are efforts to reframe the identity narrative and stereotypes the first step? How do peace activists work at reconciling members of religious groups without jeopardizing the political solution, and vice versa? The answers to these questions have important implications for peacebuilding. The art of conflict resolution is very

complicated but very critical to communities throughout northern Nigeria segregated along religious lines and filled with mutual suspicion and distrust. While I do not propose any Holy Grail strategy of conflict resolution, scholars who conflate the various categories of ethnicity in their analysis of communal conflicts do not do practitioners and peace activists any service.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

A final note on how scholars approach the empirical study of ethnic conflict. While the devastation communal violence can reek in loss of life, displacement, and destruction of homes and property can be massive over time, many cases of communal violence fall outside the purview of major studies of ethnic conflict. Yet, these studies draw sweeping conclusions about the incidence and nature of ethnic and religious conflict. The main reason for the exclusion of cases is the grain of the data the large-N data projects are designed to collect. As discussed in Chapter 5, they generally exclude from their data-analysis the "small" scale cases with lower numbers of deaths. While this researcher readily admits the herculean challenge of collecting data on smaller scale incidents of communal violence, scholars should be careful in drawing conclusions about the micro-dynamics of ethnic violence from large-N studies where the criteria of ethnic violence has a death threshold often of hundreds and where the state is one of the primary parties to the conflict. Such methods overlook a whole field of communal violence involving non-state actors in which ultimately thousands of lives are destroyed. These small-scale cases can also propel or morph into the larger scale violence that destabilizes the state and finds its way into international headlines and large-N datasets. Sidel makes a similar

observation about the ramifications of the Poso 1998 violence in Indonesia in which

"only" hundreds were *injured* and places of worship and homes destroyed, noting,

> [T]he rioting also worked to heighten suspicion across the religious divide, to strengthen the boundaries and lines of authority within each religious community, and to sharpen the organization and instruments of violence on both sides. The displacement of hundreds of families whose homes were destroyed and the flight of hundreds more in the face of continuing intimidation and fear of further attacks created hundreds of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mostly within Poso regency, and hardened both the pattern of segregation and the resolve for retribution among the local population.[532]

The violence later in 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004 was broader in scale and intensity. Ultimately, the violence left more than a thousand dead, displaced tens of thousands, and constituted religious identities as the primary division.[533]

It is clear from the hundreds of cases of northern Nigerian communal violence that do not show up in major large-N datasets – datasets that are nonetheless employed in major scholarly studies of ethnic conflict or civil war – that scholars are overlooking an important site of civil conflict, conflict with ramifications that can hardly be described as small. Thus, this study also seeks to encourage attention to the costs and benefits associated with the different methods we employ to study civil conflict.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, I call for a re-evaluation of the applicability and effectiveness of power-sharing in resolving or preventing ethnic violence. The evidence from northern Nigeria clearly shows that power-sharing between Muslims and Christians of various ethno-tribal

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[532] Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, and Jihad*, 162.
[533] Ibid., 162-167.

combinations has been essential to peace and stability in a number of communities. The case studies also highlight how *informal* power-sharing institutions can be a viable form of democratic representation, or, rather, how power-sharing can accommodate a more democratic ideal. Despite their informal construction, the institutional arrangement can develop self-enforcing mechanisms and maintain incentives for ethno-tribal elites to abide by the original understanding, such as we see in Bassa, Kanam, and Chikun LGAs. This does not mean that the power-sharing institutions are not subject to pressures. Exogenous shocks (e.g., inter-religious violence in other communities) or endogenous changes (e.g., demographic shifts) threaten the sustainability of power-sharing institutions or their capacity to maintain inter-religious peace. However, I find that, by and large, the LGAs with power-sharing are better able to avert inter-religious communal violence by providing a foundation and incentives for the religious, political, and traditional leaders to coordinate peacebuilding and negotiate tensions as they arise in response to these exogenous and endogenous changes.

Finally, scholars of ethnic conflict are unlikely to fully appreciate or capture the dynamics of civil conflict within states without looking at how rights and representation are negotiated at the local level. This is not to say that national politics, institutions, and events do not also affect the construction of communal identities and politics, but, rather that these national-level factors are inherently in conversation with the local political contexts. To only consider national-level variables in the unfolding of local communal clashes will render the patterns, variation, and role of local identities and representation in sub-national violence inexplicable. Furthermore, the solutions to the conflicts will remain muddled.

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APPENDIX A. GDP Per Capita for Northern States

Table 2. GDP Per Capita by State (2007), ($US)

| State	GDP per capita
Adamawa	
Bauchi	**166.82**
Benue	1,434.43
Borno	529.52
Gombe	352.35
Jigawa	996.01
Kaduna	**707**
Kano	**683.76**
Katsina	994.28
Kebbi	508.5
Kogi	147.01
Kwara	320.21
Nasarawa	1,226.65
Niger	1,687.79
Plateau	**194.57**
Sokoto	1,488.98
Taraba	141.78
Yobe	261
Zamfara	1,585.21
FCT	10,208.50

Source: (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2010), 138.

APPENDIX B. Poverty Figures for Northern States

Table 3: Real Income Growth, GINI Change, and Poverty Incidence, 1998-2004					
	1998-2004	1998-2004	1998	2004	1998-2004
State	% Growth in Real Income	GINI Absolute Change	Poverty Incidence	Poverty Incidence	Difference
North West	-6.726	0.0256	0.6394	0.6623	0.0229
Jigawa	-49.5846	0.2483	0.6967	0.8695	0.1727
Kaduna	**-1.4002**	**0.1239**	**0.3944**	**0.5219**	**0.1275**
Kano	**8.3016**	**-0.2251**	**0.633**	**0.5243**	**-0.1086**
Katsina	3.3369	0.0896	0.6673	0.6557	-0.0116
Kebbi	-33.5611	0.0333	0.8151	0.8366	0.0215
Sokoto	-9.7414	0.2839	0.6109	0.6652	0.0543
Zamfara	21.6864	0.2595	0.6647	0.5795	-0.0853
North East	2.5	0.16	0.5379	0.5561	0.0182
Adamawa	-57.0007	0.3181	0.4323	0.7838	0.3515
Bauchi	**26.7332**	**0.1262**	**0.3351**	**0.2815**	**-0.0536**
Borno	45.0371	0.284	0.3103	0.3218	0.0115
Gombe	3.006	0.1843	0.5944	0.5987	0.0043
Taraba	-13.6393	0.0701	0.5281	0.5843	0.0562
Yobe	81.236	0.1264	0.7871	0.5778	-0.2093
North Central	-27.2472	0.0932	0.3502	0.5106	0.1604
Benue	-73.2798	0.227	0.0133	0.5733	0.56
Kogi	-42.9619	0.1451	0.4644	0.5686	0.1042
Kwara	1.6092	0.0136	0.2702	0.3886	0.1183
Nasarawa	-38.7319	0.1843	0.2694	0.6142	0.3447
Niger	15.335	0.1193	0.4859	0.4615	-0.0244
Plateau	**-34.2122**	**0.0767**	**0.3069**	**0.4802**	**0.1733**
FCT	-42.1667	0.0626	0.2971	0.5983	0.3013

Source: [Oyekale, Adeoti and Oyekale 2006], 47.

APPENDIX C. Developing World Affiliated Christians, 1990-2025

Figure 2.3 Affiliated Christians as a % of the population in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, 1900-2025
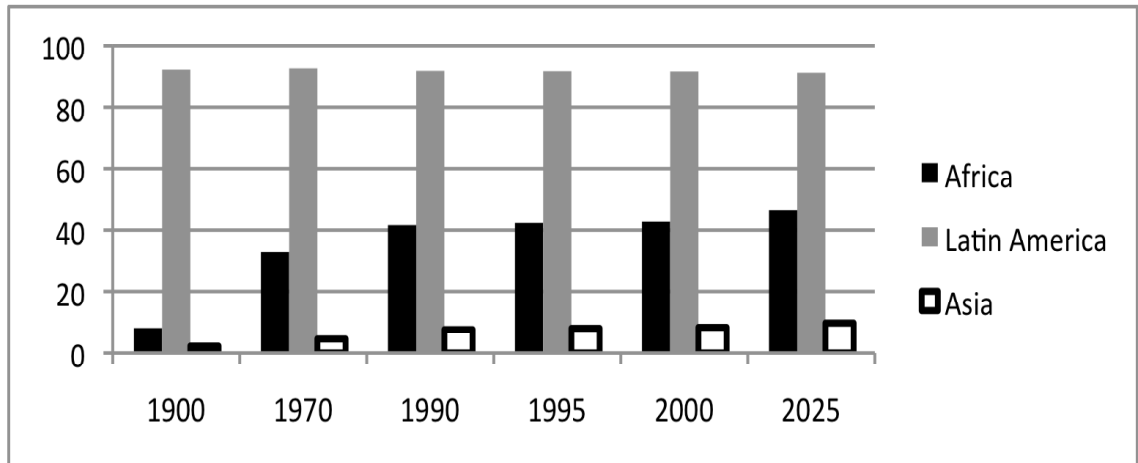
Source: (Barrett, Kurian and Johnson 2001)

APPENDIX D. Christianity in Nigeria, growth over time

Table 2.4 Percentage of growth in Christian adherents by religious blocs over time in Nigeria						
Religious Identity	**1900**	**1970**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2025 (est.)**
Affiliated Christians	0.6	28.9	45.2	45.5	45.7	46.9
Roman Catholic	0.1	7.8	11.6	11.8	12	13.9
Protestants	0.3	8	12.3	12.4	12.6	13.7
Anglicans	0.2	5.9	17	17.7	18	19
Trans-megabloc						
Evangelicals	0.5	9.6	18.5	19.3	20	23
Pentecostals/Charismatic	0.6	7.3	31	31.7	32.2	33.8
Great Commission	1	7	9.7	9.9	10.1	12
Muslims	25.9	43.9	43.9	43.9	43.9	44.9

Source: (Barrett, Kurian and Johnson 2001) Note that the data are from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.

APPENDIX E. Nigeria Affiliated Christians, State/Province

Table 2.5 Population and percentage of affiliated Christians (AC) and evangelized by province, 2010

Province	Population	AC pop	AC%	Evangelized	E%
Benue	5,255,829	3,836,755	73%	4,940,479	94%
Plateau	3,594,885	2,156,931	60%	3,235,396	90%
Kogi	3,628,689	1,814,344	50%	3,338,394	92%
Kwara	2,615,056	1,176,775	45%	2,170,496	83%
Nasarawa	2,063,634	928,635	45%	1,795,362	87%
Abuja	664,925	265,970	40%	578,485	87%
Kaduna	6,903,463	2,416,212	35%	4,832,424	70%
Taraba	2,723,242	816,973	30%	2,396,453	88%
Gombe	2,475,123	742,537	30%	2,103,855	85%
Niger	4,119,070	1,029,768	25%	2,883,349	70%
Adamawa	3,785,223	946,306	25%	3,293,144	87%
Borno	4,649,808	929,962	20%	3,952,337	85%
Bauchi	4,759,624	713,944	15%	4,378,854	92%
Jigawa	5,050,741	505,074	10%	2,272,833	45%
Yobe	2,565,679	256,568	10%	2,180,827	85%
Kebbi	3,676,531	367,653	10%	1,617,673	44%
Kano	10,207,072	816,566	8%	4,992,698	49%
Katsina	6,564,077	459,485	7%	2,822,553	43%
Zamfara	3,647,538	182,377	5%	1,568,441	43%
Sokoto	4,297,824	214,891	5%	1,848,064	43%

Source: (Johnson 2007) Note that the data are from the *World Christian Database*

Table 2.6 Religious Freedom Data, 2000-2007

Province Name	Religious Freedom Index	Governmental Restrictions Index	Governmental Favoritism Index	Social Restrictions Index	Religious Conflict	Religious Violence	Majority Religion	Province Pop
Abia	6.7	4.8	7.4	6.8	5.3	8.7	Xian (80%)	4,278,358
Abuja	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (40%)	664,925
Adamawa	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (65%)	3,785,223
Akwa Ibom	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (75%)	4,881,309
Anambra	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (80%)	4,777,444
Bauchi	8.7	7.8	7.4	7.8	5.3	8.7	Mus (80%)	4,759,624
Bayelsa	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (75%)	2,011,393
Benue	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (73%)	5,255,829
Borno	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (60%)	4,649,808
Cross River	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (72%)	3,135,965
Delta	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (76%)	4,214,738
Ebonyi	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (67%)	1,759,175
Edo	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (79%)	3,534,651
Ekiti	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (60%)	2,772,302
Enugu	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (75%)	3,632,487
Gombe	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (55%)	2,475,123
Imo	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (80%)	4,544,502
Jigawa	8.7	7.8	7.4	8.8	5.3	9.7	Mus (88%)	5,050,741
Kaduna	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (50%)	6,903,463
Kano	8.7	7.8	7.4	8.8	5.3	9.7	Mus (91%)	10,207,072
Katsina	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (91%)	6,564,077
Kebbi	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (88%)	3,676,531
Kogi	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (50%)	3,628,689
Kwara	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (50%)	2,615,056

State						Majority Religion	Population
Lagos	6.7	5.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (70%)	10,658,759
Nasarawa	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (45%)	2,063,634
Niger	8.7	7.8	7.4	6.8	5.3	8.7	Mus (70%)	4,119,070
Ogun	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (60%)	4,104,321
Ondo	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (55%)	4,063,331
Osun	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (59%)	4,198,358
Oyo	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (50%)	6,716,306
Plateau	7.7	5.8	7.4	8.8	5.3	9.7	Xian (60%)	3,594,885
Rivers	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Xian (60%)	5,727,567
Sokoto	7.7	5.8	7.4	7.8	5.3	8.7	Mus (94%)	4,297,824
Taraba	5.7	4.8	7.4	5.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (55%)	2,723,242
Yobe	6.7	5.8	7.4	6.8	4.3	7.7	Mus (87%)	2,565,679
Zamfara	8.7	7.8	7.4	6.8	5.3	8.7	Mus (94%)	3,647,538

APPENDIX G. Communal Violence Dataset: Data-Entering Protocol

Nigeria Ethnic/Religious Violence Database: Data/Coding Protocol

The information that follows is the coding protocol for the project "Nigeria Ethnic/Religious Violence Database." The project covers cases of ethnic and inter-religious violence in the Middle Belt and northern Nigeria since 1979 that are reported in *The Guardian*, an independent daily newspaper in Nigeria published since 1983 selected for its standard of independence, non-bias, and coverage of the Middle Belt and northern Nigerian region. For the four years prior to 1983, the project used two newspapers *The New Nigerian* (northern, Muslim-biased) and *The Nigerian Standard* (southern, Christian-biased) for their coverage of events in the Middle Belt and northern Nigeria and non-government ownership.

While going through each day's press report, the Data Enterer (this author) codes each case of communal ethnic/religious violence that appears. The following is the methodology employed, which is based on and, for the most part, directly transferred from the Protocol employed by Wilkinson (*Votes and Violence…)* and Varshney (*Ethnic Violence & Civic Life…*) for their studies of communal/ethnic violence in India.

BASIC ENTERING GROUNDRULES:

The basic rule is to enter as much information as possible that
   a) will give the information needed to fill in the relevant categories of information in the Dataset,
   b) will allow one to check whether this information is an accurate reflection of the reported facts.

Unnecessary duplication of the facts is not needed: **accurate reflection of the full range of the facts** present in the reports is the goal. For example, in the days following a violent event, the press reports may provide more information regarding the "precipitating events" or death toll. For this reason, the relevant categories in the Dataset should be filled in for every violent event of a communal nature, and any information that is an update will be entered subsequently. The update will also be recorded in the Notes section of the Dataset with the date and page number of the report.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE DEFINITION

Definition of Event: Like Varshney and Wilkinson, this project draws on Olzak's definition of communal riots. While this project is interested, in particular, in lethal violence rather than general riots and destruction, the same approach to the coding is useful for capturing the factors involved in the emergence of lethal communal violence and its intensity. According to Olzak's work on race conflict in the USA, (1992:233-34) we might identify an event as a communal riot if:
         a) there is violence, and

b) two or more communally-identified groups confront each other/members of the other group, at some point during the violence.

Additionally:

    c) In a violent event between organized groups with a communal identification (e.g. Muslim Student Society, Fellowship of Evangelical Students), this should also be treated as case of communal violence. In a violent event between *one* such organized group and some other *unspecified* group, the event *should* be classified as Unclear (i.e., not treated as a definite case of inter-religious or inter-tribal violence).

Further Data-Entry:

    Because this project is interested in cases of violence where religious factors were the "reported cause" or "precipitating event," the project will therefore code cases where the clash only involves one communal group and a specified non-communal group. For example, Muslim violence against the police does not count as communal violence in Varshney and Wilkinson's coding. Nor would police shooting of Muslims if there was no Christian-Muslim violence before or after. In contrast, such events of violent mobilization against the "state" in this project will still be entered in the Dataset, although not analyzed or used in this project's analysis of *communal* violence.

FIELDS & ENTRY PROTOCOL

The method employed for coding the "reported cause(s)" and "precipitating event(s)" is probably the most important. The description of these two fields can be found below, but it is important to note that I followed Varshney and Wilkinson's approach with these two categories. The list of possible options in these two categories is not, however, *identical* to what Varshney and Wilkinson used. Having reviewed a version of their dataset, I was able to get a general idea of the categories these scholars used for precipitating events and reported causes, which, as I gathered, were based on their study or general knowledge of cases of communal violence in India. Since Nigeria presents a different context, I created a list of categories for the two variables that reflects as best as possible the range of likely categories necessary to code the events and relevant to the Nigerian context (See Appendix H). What follows is a list of the fields and the entry protocol used to construct the Dataset.

Date of Source: enter the month, day, and year of the report found in the newspaper. If information is gathered from subsequent days in the newspaper, insert dates of additional days

Page Number(s) of Source Report: Enter the page number(s) on which the article/report was found

- - - Start Date of Event & End Date of Event - - -

Year: Year in which the violent communal clash occurs. If a riot covers two years, enter as follows: "1980, 1981"

Month: Month in which riot takes place. If the event covers two months, enter, for example, "May, June"

Day: The day on which the *event* was reported to have begun. As reports usually come out one or two days after the initial incident, it is important to count back to the original day.

Duration/No. Days: Count from the beginning of the riot to the last day on which violence was reported to have taken place.

> **[Important note:** If there is a lull ("lull" defined as no reported incident of violence) in violence of a day or more separating incidents of violence in the same town (e.g. June 1-7, June 9-12), then enter this as two separate cases.]

- - - Location - - -

State/Province: Enter the present day state as well as enter the name at the time of the event. For example, an event in a state in 1985 may now be within a different state's boundaries due to the increase in the number of state divisions. For example, in 1976 Nigeria had 19 states, in 1987 there were 21 states, in 1991 there were 30 states, and in 1997 there were 36 states. Enter both the prior and present state if different. If uncertain about the name of the state in which a riot occurred make a note of this in the "Coding Questions" section in the Dataset.

Local Government Area (LGA) or District: Enter when given

Town/City: Enter the name as given in the newspaper.

Village: If the event occurred in a village, enter the name as given in the newspaper

- - - Who Involved? - - -

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 etc.: The purpose here is merely to specify the reported religious or ethnic identity of the groups involved and the number of persons (if reported). If the event is reported as a Christian-Muslim clash, then Group 1's religious identity should be entered as "Christian" and Group 2's religious identity should be entered as Muslim. If, in describing the participants/groups involved in the event, the report notes both religious identity and tribal identity, then this should be entered as well (i.e., specify religious identity and tribal identity of groups involved when reported). If only tribal identity is reported, then only enter the tribal identity of the group(s) involved.

If reported, primary perpetrator: If the report notes the identity Group that was the perpetrator or primary instigator in organizing or carrying out the violence, enter the Group. If the report is not clear about who instigated the violence or who was primarily attacking whom (i.e., the report notes that different accounts are given by individuals involved or witnesses, for example), then only enter "Unclear."

If reported, primary victim: If the report notes the identity Group that was the primary target or victim Group, enter the relevant Group. If the report notes the difficulty of distinguishing between perpetrators and victims (e.g. Group members on both sides reported as mobilized in the violence and attacking one another), the only enter "Unclear."

Youth involvement: If youths or university students are noted as being mobilized in the violence, indicate.

Involvement of religious extremist group: If a religious extremist group is involved in the violence, enter the relevant group.

- - - Reported Cause and Precipitating Event - - -

Reported Cause: "Reported Cause" is meant to specify the general cause(s) reported as having led to the emergence of the violent event. (Enter more than one category if applicable.) For example, if the Precipitating Event was the movement of a market to a different area of the city, but the report notes that ethnic group electoral competition for control over a political office was the underlying cause (i.e. movement of the market to the area where a politician's ethnic group is predominant – to shore up votes), then the Reported Cause would be "Ethnic/Pol-Ethnic: election campaign (local, fellow ethnic)," and the Precipitating Event would be "Economic: market location/re-location." The list of Reported Causes is self explanatory and hopefully comprehensive (See Appendx H)**.** **IF** a reported cause does not fit any of the categories on the list, enter "other" and list the cause concisely in no more than five words. One should be consistent as far as possible in the wording used, so that if the same event turns up more than once as a candidate for "other," one can later incorporate it as a new category without having to go back and standardize individual descriptions later.

Local Precipitating Events: Many times this will duplicate the "Reported Cause" category. The key point about the Precipitating Events category is that it gives specific information about what sparked the violent clash. This is not the same as cause. For example, the general cause (think: underlying issue) of the event may be reported as an "Indigenous/Non-indigenous" issue. But the incident that sparked the subsequent violence may have been "Political election results – loss of co-ethnic." This would be the case when, for example, the newspaper reports that members of the Hausa ethnic group who were gathered at a polling station to hear the results of an election begin attacking members of the Berom ethnic group upon finding out that their Hausa political leader lost

in the election. If the local Precipitating Event is the same as the Reported Cause, enter it as such where the categories are identical. For example, if an Economic land dispute is both the reported cause and precipitating event, the entry in both cases will be "Economic interest (land)" and "Economic interest (land)." In a number of cases, the Precipitating Event is broken down further than the Reported Cause to provide greater specificity. When the local precipitating event is different from the reported cause, there is no cause for worry. We just enter the categories that seem most relevant in each case.

- - - **Violence** - - -

Degree of violence: Enter all that apply – injuries, deaths/killings, or property damage. For example, if there were some injuries and property damage in the clash, but no deaths reported at the time of the report, then enter both injuries and property damage. If the report lacks information about injuries, death, or property damage, enter "Unclear."

Number killed, injured, displaced: If the report notes the number of deaths, the number injured, or the number displaced, enter the relevant information. The most accurate numbers available from press report should be noted. In general these numbers will be the last figures quoted, which may be printed a week or even some months after a riot has actually ended (particularly if the figures are reported from the findings of a subsequent event inquiry). In some cases, however, a specific figure will be quoted at the end of five days of rioting (e.g."local officials report 43 killed, 128 injured, 20 arrests") but a week later only general figures will be given (e.g., "In the recent riots in X, an estimated 50 people were killed, and more than 500 injured"). In this case, we should use the higher figures of 50 and 500 and make a note of the lower figures in the "Notes" section. Always enter all "final" figures and the date of the report.

- - - **Targeting** - - -

Description of how groups targeted: Enter "Ethnic ID" if the report notes that the violence seemed to be an ethnic communal conflict (e.g. if the report identifies perpetrators/victims according to their ethnic identity or specifically states that was an *ethnic/tribal* clash - Fulani herders attacking a Berom farmers in a village, for example). In contrast, if the report refers to the religious identity of those involved, (e.g. Christians target Muslim worshipers following prayers at a mosque), note this by entering "Religious ID." If both the ethnicity and religious identity of the groups involved in the event are identified when referring to their participation, (e.g. Hausa Muslim youth attacked Berom Christians following a Sunday church service), then enter both "Ethnic ID" and "Religious ID." If this was a case in which a religious group (Boko Haram) was attacking state officials (police, military etc.) for a reported religious purpose/cause, then enter "State…" If the report lacks detail about the identity of the groups targeting one another, enter "Unclear."

Was there a religious litmus test?: A religious litmus test refers to when members of one group give people a test in order to determine which group they are a part of -

whether they are "one of us" (friend) or "one of them" (target) For example, if Christian youth set up a roadblock in order to target Muslims, they may ask a stopped driver to quote the Lord's Prayer in order verify his/her Christian identity. If completed successfully, the driver is free to go; if not able to quote the Prayer, he is then attacked/killed. Similarly, Muslims may give the litmus test of asking drivers stopped at a roadblock to quote a verse from the Qur'an to verify their Muslim identity/worthiness of continuing unharmed. If there was a religious litmus test, indicate this and then briefly specify what the test was.

Was there an ethnic litmus test?: (Same as above, but regarding ethnic identity instead)

Church or Christian religous sites/symbols targeted during the violence: Indicate if the report notes that a church or other Christian religious site/symbol was destroyed in the violence and no if it does not report this.

Mosque or Muslim religious sites/symbols targeted during the violence: Indicate if the report notes that a mosque or other Muslim religious site/symbol was destroyed in the violence and no if it does not report this.

Homes or personal property targeted by religious ID: Indicate if the report notes that the home or other personal property of a particular ethnic group member was targeted in the violence. For example, if the report states, "Attackers destroyed and looted much property, destroying homes and businesses of Christians in the area."

Homes or personal property targeted by ethnic ID: Indicate if the report notes that the home or other personal property of a particular ethnic group member was targeted in the violence

Homes or personal property targeted by non-indigenous/settler ID: Indicate if the report notes that the home or other personal property of a non-indigenous/setters was targeted in the violence (including "northerners" or "settlers" if referred to by this designation).

- - - Links - - -

Link Made to prior communal violence: If a link is reported in the newspaper to violent events outside the city or to a different violent event elsewhere in the city, indicate. This should also be reflected in the "Reported cause" and "Precipitating cause" sections. The linked event should also be treated as a separate case of communal violence and, therefore, coded separately. If the linked event has already been coded, the details listed in this subsequent press report should still be coded/re-coded to determine whether there is any updated information.

Case reported as revenge: If the report notes that a group mobilized because of or in response to an attack elsewhere (linked event) on members of their same ethnic or

religious group, indicate. Also, if there is a dispute in a city/village between two different group members and violence ensues when the members of one group come to avenge their fellow group member due to a presumed wrong committed against that member, indicate this.

Link to Shari'ah debate implementation: If the report notes that the violent event had something to do with debate over Shari'ah expansion or implementation, indicate.

Link to international event: If a link is reported to an international event (e.g. Danish Cartoon Riots, U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan, etc.), indicate this and briefly specify. This should also be reflected in "Reported Cause" and "Precipitating Cause."

Link to Election: If the report notes that the violent event occurred before, during, or after an election, enter the relevant category and then specify the type of election reported.

- - - Officials - - -

Arrests made/Number of arrests made: If the report notes that arrests were made, indicate this and specify the number if reported

Type of Policing Arrangement: Indicate all police forces used (e.g. in a serious riot we may have "Police, Military, Army").

Intervention of policing forces: The term "police" is the default for local police. Normally the Military only arrives after the outbreak of violence, but if a force was used in an area before the first day of violence, (i.e. not ordered to an area but actually used in an area) enter, specify this.

Reported impact of policing forces: If the report notes the impact of the relevant policing force on the violence, enter the relevant category – "Alleviated," "Intensified," "Unclear"

Notes on action officials took: Briefly specify any action the above officials took (or didn't take) which may have alleviated or intensified the riot.

Officials names/ranks: The names of all the officials named in press accounts as being connected with the event in their official capacities, as well as their ranks.

Officials transferred\suspended: If the report notes that officials were transferred or suspended as a result of their involvement in the event, this should be indicated along with the name and rank of the official(s) suspended.

- - - Description & Questions Space - - -

Notes/Brief description of event: This space is provided for a brief description of the event – in particular, the reported cause and precipitating local event details should be noted here. Notes on riots from press, including information necessary to support codes

Coding questions: If some information in a particular case is ambiguous and it seems that a new category\term should be added to accommodate the issue, or some discussion is required before categorization, indicate this in the "Coding Questions" section. State the question.
TYPE OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE CODING

In contrast to Varshney and Wilkinson, the purpose of this coding project is to distinguish between two *types* of communal violence – inter-religious versus inter-tribal communal violence – from the Reported Causes and Precipitating Events. Hence, a slightly different tack is necessary. To determine whether an event represented a "Definite Case" of being a Hindu-Muslim communal conflict, Varshney and Wilkinson relied on the following criteria:
    1) whether the groups were definitely identified in the report as, for example, Muslims and Hindus, and
    2) whether the precipitating events that led to the violence reflected a *religious* precipitating event.
    3) If the groups involved are unclear from the report, then other criteria come into play to determine whether the case had a "Strong Likelihood" or "Weak Likelihood" of being a case of communal [i.e. Hindu-Muslim] violence. For example, even if the groups were not clearly identified in the report, it would still be marked as "Strong Likelihood" if the precipitating events were clearly religious. For example, the killing of a cow as the precipitating event would render the case "Strong Likelihood" of being a religious riot between Muslims and Hindus, since a cow is very sacred in the Hindu religion.

Those coding the cases of ethnic violence in Varshney and Wilkinson's project selected from a list they compiled of possible Precipitating Events and Reported Causes. I also took this approach, putting together a list with similar categories and a range of additional events/causes based on general knowledge of events commonly associated with religious and tribal communal violence in Nigeria. (See following Appendix)

The goal of this coding project is to distinguish violence that *tends to* take a more religious dimension versus violence that *tends to* take a more inter-tribal dimension. The coding of communal violence is more complicated than simply identifying whether or not the case is one of "ethnic" violence. In some instances, even though tribal groups or cleavages are present, the communal violence may primarily pit Muslims and Christians against one another or be primarily fueled by a religious event or narrative. The underlying assumption, of course, is that one is dealing with *probability,* not certainty. For example, if a clash between Muslims and Christians was sparked by an attack on a place of worship or attack on co-religionists elsewhere, it does not mean that tribal cleavages may not also be present (particularly if the religious/tribal cleavages map on to

one another), but it is "more likely" that this type of case is associated with the religious cleavage or fueled by religious difference or offense than the tribal cleavage. Thus, the method of coding I adopt is based on the following hypothesis:

> Hypothesis: Cases of inter-tribal violence should not only be based on identification of the conflicting parties with a tribal identity, but the conflict should also *tend* to be associated with a tribally-sectarian dispute/offense/claim. Similarly, cases of inter-religious violence should not only be designated as such based on identification of the conflicting parties with religious identities, but the conflict should also *tend* to be associated with a religiously-sectarian dispute/offense/claim.

This coding approach, therefore, is not merely an exercise in categorization, but is also designed to *confirm* or *disconfirm* whether the classification of the two categories of communal violence can be differentiated with any level of confidence.

To capture the likelihood that a clash is more likely a case of inter-religious communal violence or inter-tribal communal violence, therefore, I adopted the following coding strategy that essentially mirrors Varshney and Wilkinson's designation of a "Definite Case":

For inter-religious communal violence
  1) The conflicting groups identified in the report are Muslim and Christian
  2) The Reported Cause(s), but, in particular, the Precipitating Event(s), are associated with Religious events/disputes.

For inter-tribal communal violence
  1) The conflicting groups identified in the report are noted by their tribal identity (e.g., Berom and Hausa-Fulani)
  2) The Reported Cause(s), but, in particular, the Precipitating Event(s) are associated with Ethnic or non-Religious events/disputes.

These cases all represent a very strong likelihood of being one type of communal violence or another. Other analysis can then be carried out to see if the differentiation is sustained across other variables or categories of analysis as well. In cases where the identities of the conflicting groups are unclear or not specified, the clashes could be designated (although they are left as "Unclear cases" for the time being) as having strong likelihood of being inter-religious or inter-tribal based on their Precipitating Event(s) or Reported Cause(s). If, for example, the conflicting parties are not specified but the event sparked from inter-religious violence occurring elsewhere, the assumption is that there is a decent likelihood that the clash in question is inter-religious in nature.

APPENDIX H. Communal Violence Dataset: List of Reported Causes & Precipitating Events

Reported Causes and Precipitating Events

Category: Political
1. Election campaign (local/LGA)
2. Election campaign (national)
3. Election results (local/LGA)
   A. Annulment of results
4. Election results (national)
5. Election violence (general)
6. Political demonstration/protest
7. Political speech (agitation)
8. Location/re-location of govt office/headquarters
9. Political (unknown)
10. Political (other/specify)
11. Creation of LGAs/Inclusion in LGA

Category: Economic
1. Economic interest (land) – rights, use, ownership, border/boundary
1-2. Economic interest: cattle grazing/land use
2. Economic interest (cattle)
3. Economic interest (market location/re-location)
4. Economic interest (unknown)
5. Economic interest (stealing of animals/non-cattle)

Category: Ethnic
1. Ethnic Event
   A. Peaceful demonstration/protest
2. Pol-Ethnic
   A. Election campaign (local, fellow ethnic)
   B. Election campaign (national, fellow ethnic)
   C. Election results/loss (local, fellow ethnic)
   D. Election results/loss (national, fellow ethnic)
   E. Political speech (agitation)
      a. By ethnic/traditional leader
      b. By ethnic-political leader
   F. Naming of educational institution
   G. Contested ownership of town
   H. Failed peace negotiations
3. Ethnic (political/social) Rights
   A. General indigenous vs. non-indigenous rights dispute

B. Political inequality in representation/colonialism product (marginalization, real or perceived)
C. Right to appointment own ethnic member to political/chieftaincy position
D. Violation of political/chieftaincy rights by appointment of non-ethnic group member
E. Creation of chiefdoms
F. Forceful removal of traditional ruler
G. Right to return and rebuild in a community
H. Right to burial on plot of land
4. Previous violence
A. Previous violence against fellow ethnic members (same town/village)
a. Eyewitness/present
b. Media report
B. Previous violence against fellow ethnic members (elsewhere)
a. Eyewitness/present
b. Media report
c. Dead bodies arrive in town/hospital
5. Treatment of Ethnic Group
A. Disruption of traditional festival
a. By other ethnic group
b. By state/police
B. Arrest/detention/imprisonment of kin
C. Offensive speech against leader
D. Market quarrel (buying/selling ethnic discrimination)
6. Ethnic tribal tradition
A. Control of a traditional shrine
B. Traditional celebration/festival
7. Ethnic (Unclear)

Category: Religious
1. Religious Event
A. Event: evangelist/crusade (planned/actual)
B. Event (other/specify)
2. Pol-Religious Event
A. Event: demonstration/protest (religious)
a. By Muslims
i. Violent
ii. Peaceful
b. By Christians
i. Violent
ii. Peaceful
B. Event: election results/loss (local, fellow religious)
a. Fellow Muslim
b. Fellow Christian
C. Event: election results/loss (national, fellow religious)

        c. Fellow Muslim
        d. Fellow Christian
   D. Election campaign (local, fellow religious)
        a. Fellow Muslim
        b. Fellow Christian
   E. Election campaign (national, fellow religious)
        a. Fellow Muslim
        b. Fellow Christian
   F. Event: Political speech/agitation (religious content)
        a. By Muslim
        b. By Christian
   G. Event: Political speech/agitation (by religious leader)
        a. By Muslim religious leader
        b. By Christian religious leader
        c. By Muslim Rel-Political leader
        d. By Christian Rel-Political leader
   H. Political Appointment
        a. Of Muslim instead of Christian
        b. Of Christian instead of Muslim
   I. General perceived political suppression of religious group/Political control by opposing religious group

3. Desecration
   A. Desecration of religious site/symbol (place of worship)
        a. Church
        b. Mosque
   B. Desecration of religious site/symbol (holy book)
        a. Bible
        b. Qur'an
   C. Desecration of religious site/symbol (other)
        a. Burial ground
        b. Traditional religious shrine

4. Defamation of religious figure
   A. Prophet Mohammed
   B. Biblical figure

5. Speech
   A. Religious speech/sermon (by Muslim)
        a. Against Christian religious leader
        b. Against Christian biblical figure
        c. Against Christianity (general)
   B. Religious speech/sermon (by Christian)
        a. Against Muslim religious leader
        b. Against Prophet Mohammed
        c. Against Shari'a law
        d. Against Islam (general)

6. Demolition/Construction

A. Legal demolition/Attempted legal demolition (Christian site)
    a. Church
    b. Religious organization building
    c. (Other/specify)
    d. Unknown
B. Legal demolition/Attempted legal demolition (Muslim site)
    a. Mosque
    b. Religious organization building
    c. (Other/specify)
    d. Unknown
C. Illegal demolition/Attempted illegal demolition (Christian site)
    a. Church
    b. Religious organization building
    c. (Other/specify)
    d. Unknown
D. Illegal demolition/Attempted illegal demolition (Muslim site)
    a. Mosque
    b. Religious organization building
    c. (Other/specify)
    d. Unknown
E. Placement/construction of religious site/symbol
    a. Church
    b. Mosque
    c. (Other/specify)
    d. Unknown

7. Previous violence/Revenge
A. Previous violence against fellow Christian(s) (same town/village)
    a. Mobilized after report by eyewitness
    b. Mobilized after hearing media report
    c. Mobilized after sighting of dead bodies (street or in-transit)
B. Previous violence against fellow Christian(s) (elsewhere)
    a. Mobilized after report by eyewitness/displaced
    b. Mobilized after hearing media report
    c. Mobilized after sighting of dead bodies (street or in-transit)
C. Previous violence against fellow Muslim(s) (same town/village)
    a. Mobilized after report by eyewitness
    b. Mobilized after hearing media report
    c. Mobilized after sighting of dead bodies (street or in-transit)
D. Previous violence against fellow Muslim(s) (elsewhere)
    a. Mobilized after report by eyewitness/displaced
    b. Mobilized after hearing media reports
    c. Mobilized after sighting of dead bodies (street/in-transit)
E. Previous violence against Cult group members

8. Attack
A. Attack on church

      a. General destruction

      b. Bombing

   B. Attack on mosque

      a. General destruction

      b. Bombing

9. Shari'ah debate/implementation

   A. Protest/demonstration *against* expansion of Shari'ah

      a. in northern states (general)

      b. in home (local) state

   B. Protest/demonstration *for* expansion of Shari'ah

      a. in northern states (general)

      b. in home (local) state

   C. Protest/demonstration against case of Shari'ah enforcement (regarding specific individual/s)

10. Radical Islam: Radical religious group mobilization

      a. Marwa/Maitatsine,

      b. Boko Haram

      c. Izala

      d. Kalakato

      e. Muslim Brotherhood

      f. Al-Zakzaky

      g. (Other/specify)

11. Market Quarrel (buying/selling religious discrimination/offense)

   A. Selling of non-halal meat to Muslim (reality/perceived)

   B. Discrimination against Muslim buyer (real/perceived)

   C. Discrimination against Christian buyer (real/perceived)

12. International event (religious offense)

   A. Danish Cartoon Crisis

   B. Bangladesh Cartoon Crisis

   C. US Invasion of Afghanistan

   D. Miss World Pageant

   E. 9/11 Attack on U.S.

   F. (Other)

13. Treatment of Religious Group

   A. Detainment/arrest/imprisonment of religious leader

   B. Mis-treatment of religious group's member(s)

   C. Regulation of preaching

   D. Police/military brutality/killing committed against religious group member(s)

14. Intra-Religious Conflict

   A. Muslim vs. Muslim feud

   B. Christian vs. Christian feud

15. Disruption of religious event

   A. Muslim

      c. Service/worship

      d. Procession/ceremony

        e. Demonstration
   B. Christian
        a. Service/worship
        b. Procession/ceremony
        c. Demonstration
16. Cult feud/competition
17. Other

Category: Education
1. Event: university or school student election
2. Dress code policy
3. Dorm policy

Category: Police
1. Intervention in a dispute

Category: Personal
1. Personal Quarrel
2. General market Quarrel (buying/selling)

Category: Criminal
1. Gang activity/violence
2. Theft
3. Attack

Category: Unclear
1or2. Cause insufficiently reported/Not reported

APPENDIX I. Census Data for Kaduna State, 2006

2006 Census Population distribution, Kaduna state LGAs

	Local Government Area	Total Population
1	Birnin-Gwari	258,581
2	Chikun	372,272
3	Giwa	292,384
4	Igabi	430,753
5	Ikara	194,723
6	Jaba	155,973
7	Jema'a	278,202
8	Kachia	252,568
9	Kaduna North	364,575
10	Kaduna South	402,731
11	Kagarko	239,058
12	Kajuru	109,810
13	Kaura	174,626
14	Kauru	221,276
15	Kubau	280,704
16	Kudan	138,956
17	Lere	339,740
18	Makarfi	146,574
19	Sabon-Gari	291,358
20	Sanga	151,485
21	Soba	291,173
22	Zangon-Kataf	318,991
23	Zaria	406,990
	Kaduna State Total	6,113,503

Source: (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2010), 21.

APPENDIX J. Census Data for Plateau State, 2006

2006 Census Population distribution, Plateau state LGAs

	Local Government Area	Total Population
1	Barkin Ladi	179,805
2	Bassa	189,834
3	Bokkos	179,550
4	Jos East	88,301
5	Jos North	437,217
6	Jos South	311,392
7	Kanam	167,619
8	Kanke	124,268
9	Langtang North	142,316
10	Langtang South	105,173
11	Mangu	300,520
12	Mikang	96,388
13	Pankshin	190,114
14	Qua'an Pan	197,276
15	Riyom	131,778
16	Shendam	205,119
17	Wase	159,861
	Plateau State Total	3,206,531

Source: (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2010), 41.