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Religion, Insecurity and Social Cohesion in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria is one of the fastest growing economies in West Africa. It is also a home to multitude of ethnic groups, religions and cultural affiliations. However, the country has been experimented with several political formations with mixed results ranging from raising insecurity and disruption in social cohesion. The recent transformation into a federal state has put religion, ethnicity and the nature of the federal state into direct confrontation with each other. Like many developing countries, Nigeria faces the major challenges in managing diversity of religion, ethnicity and social cohesion. The study adopted multidisciplinary research approach. Available literatures reviewed indicated that recent events show a rising tension between various ethnic groups, and various religion organizations in Nigeria. The raising level of conflicts between Islam and Christianity which are the major religious affiliation of most Nigerians has affected greatly the nature of security and social cohesion existing in the nation prior the inception of religion in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper explores the role of religion in addressing the raising reports of insecurity and disruption of social cohesion in Nigeria as a prerequisite to development of Nigeria. The article argues that social cohesion can only be enhanced and deeply promoted through collaborative efforts of all religions and through engagement with federal and state authorities in finding a common grounds for various religious organizations in Nigeria.

Keywords: Religion, Insecurity and Social Cohesion

Introduction

Some people may perceive religion as a cause of strife, disorder, bloodshed, and devastation; yet, this narrow perspective stems from the complex nature of religious life. Because of intolerance, injustice, and social strife committed in the name of religion, religion is viewed as a harmful power in society rather than a constructive, good force (Clifford, 2014). Religious differences give rise to conflicts as a kind of societal dysfunction when adherents of a certain dogma fail to understand the essence of their religion. Conflicts arise in social and personal spheres when religion teachings are not fully understood. Religious politics exploits human emotions to further its own agendas, using jihad, crusades, and wars as justifications. The abuse of power and authority that comes along with religion, combined with the negative mindset that underlies it, are the real issues, not religion per se. As a result, the problem of religion serving as a catalyst for conflict and contributing to the nation's growing level of insecurity is intricate and multifaceted, requiring layer-by-layer analysis. This is due to the fact that religion transcends ceremonial practice and has an impact on all facets of human existence, including social, economic, emotional, psychological, and spiritual (Daniel, 2017).

Since religion has become a crucial element in many historical and contemporary wars, many historians have seen it as a catalyst for violence. Though it doesn't always cause conflict, religion plays a crucial role in fostering peace and the

process of healing after a war (Cole and Brett, 2010). Since religion has been used to justify most violent outbreaks in the past and today, there is no doubt that religion and rising levels of insecurity are related. The ongoing conflicts in Nigeria, Iraq, Israel/West Bank/Gaza, and Sri Lanka provide as examples of this (USAID, 2009). Additionally, it is simple to draw a connection between religion and social cohesiveness since religiously motivated individuals have taken remarkable steps to heal divisions, foster reconciliation, or support peaceful cohabitation among the nation's diverse ethnic groups (USAID, 2009). Thus, it becomes evident that knowledge of the relationships between religion, insecurity, and social cohesiveness is necessary to comprehend the dynamics of conflict, both the causes of discord and the forces of resilience.

Fletcher, Catherine, and Timothy (2015) define social cohesiveness as the ability to bring individuals together or cohere. It describes a process of creating communities of interpretation and shared values, minimizing wealth and income gaps, and generally empowering people to feel like they are part of the same community and are working toward the same goals (Jensen, 2018). According to Daniel (2017), religion provides a means for individuals to unite, share values, and cultivate a feeling of community. Furthermore, religious rites, traditions, and conventions support social cohesiveness rather than being meaningless. Holidays like Christmas, Ramadan fasting, and Diwali promote harmony and camaraderie in society. While there are times when religious diversity leads to conflict or dysfunction in society, it also brings us closer to one another as we find common ground throughout various faith communities. The benefit of humanity is the greater objective of religious institutions.

Religious institutions play a vital role in fostering social environments and contributing to the health of society. In addition to fostering social cohesion, their main focus is on the spiritual development of humankind. The ultimate aim of religious and philosophical consciousness, which is strongly promoted by world religions, is to motivate people to become responsible and constructive members of society. Moral philosophy, which religious institutions emphasize, creates a sense of responsibility that goes beyond personal to social responsibility (Dennett, 2016). Religious institutions actively support charitable endeavors and values of altruism by helping the elderly, hosting fund-raising events, and helping those in need.

Religiously motivated violence is one of the biggest challenges to global peace and security in a severely divided society (Fletcher and Catharine, 2014). Conflict is natural and acceptable because it is a component of the social and political aspects of human existence. Conflict, however, frequently devolves into violence, resulting in significant losses of life and property. As the social fabric of the community was shredded, the costs and effects of conflict became intolerable (Ramadhan, 2015).

The prevailing belief in secular society today is that social disorder and insecurity stem from religious practices. Many people find that religion causes conflict on a number of levels, including social, economic, and political (Fagan, 2016). Humanity has suffered immensely throughout history due to religious and national identity. Because religious history

includes events like the crusades, jihad, holy wars, or acts of violence, religion is associated with negative connotations. A sociological framework should be used to examine religion's impact on social dysfunction and insecurity, whether it is good or not. Due to the fact that religious life is complex and multifaceted, it is important to look into aspects of religion such as social cohesiveness and charitable advantages. Concentrating on these two elements will assist in establishing a relationship between religion, insecurity and social cohesion.

Literature Review
Conceptual Framework
Concept of Religion

James (2010) defined religion is a relatively-bounded systems of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence, and in which communion with others and otherness is lived as if it both takes in and spiritually transcends socially-grounded ontologies of time, space, embodiment and knowing. Religion promotes the growth and cohesion of a nation. It gives individuals a better understanding of life and sets rules and regulations that govern people's behavior since it is considered that living a godly life entails fulfilling one's obligations to both God and other people. Another way to describe religion as a sound entity that is functional is to say that it helps to maintain the balance and stability of society.

A relatively limited system of beliefs, symbols, and practices that address the nature of existence and in which communion with others and otherness is lived as if it both takes in and spiritually

transcends socially grounded ontologies of time, space, embodiment, and knowing is what Clifford (2014) defines as religion. They state that the goal of this definition is to avoid modernist dualisms or binary conceptions of spirituality vs materialism, immanence versus transcendence, and holiness versus secularity.

Clifford (2014), also defined religion as "the belief in spiritual beings". He argued, back in 1871, that narrowing the definition to mean the belief in a supreme deity or judgment after death or idolatry and so on, would exclude many people's from the category of religious, and thus "has the fault of identifying religion rather with particular developments than with the deeper motives which underlies them". He also argued that the belief in spiritual beings exists in all known societies.

Religion can also be defined as a social-cultural framework that links people to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual aspects through prescribed behaviors and rituals, morals, worldviews, books, hallowed locations, prophecies, ethics, or organizations (Nongbri, 2013). On the other hand, academics cannot agree upon a specific definition of a religion. The divine, sacred objects, faith, a supernatural entity or creatures, or "some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life" are among the elements that different faiths may or may not possess. Rituals, sermons, celebrations, feasts, trances, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art, dance, public service, or other facets of human culture are examples of religious practices, according to Ezeanga (2010). Religions have sacred histories and

narratives, which may be preserved in sacred scriptures, and symbols and holy places, that aim mostly to give a meaning to life. Religions may incorporate symbolic myths, which are occasionally said by followers to be genuine, that have the side purpose of explaining the origin of life, the world, and other things (Odudele, 2016). Faith has always been seen as a source of religious beliefs in addition to reason.

Concept of Insecurity

The word "insecurity" has myriads of connotations. It denotes danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Beland (2015) defines " insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order and security. Achumba, Ighomeroho, Akpor (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur.

Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. The anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Cole and Brett (2010) affirms that above definitions of insecurity as "a state of being not secure,

lack of confidence; to enable us understand this term, we now turn to the meaning of the word 'insecure' which the Advance English Dictionary defines as 'not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people; not safe or protected. This definition further expounds the meaning of the term to include not just the general meaning but it touches the individual person "not being confident about one self". Insecurity is a feeling of uncertainty, a lack of confident of anxiety about yourself. It can also describe the state of being open to danger or threat.

Concept of Social Cohesion

Jensen (2018) defines social cohesion as a process that "...builds shared values and communities of interpretation, reduces disparities in wealth and income and generally enables people to have a sense that they are members of the same community and that they are engaged in a common enterprise facing shared challenges." According to Sartori (2017: 58–69), people "endlessly seek identity in some kind of belonging." People live in social groups based on factors such as caste, class, clan, ethnicity, race, and religion in all societies. Historically, both men and women banded together to help one another through cooperative work.

The interconnectedness of members of social groupings that promotes cooperation and fair resource allocation at the home, local, and state levels is known as social cohesiveness. It alludes to the elements that bind a community together. Factors such as common religion or race can help a society come together. Religious customs can strengthen a society's sense of cohesion by fostering a sense of unity among its

members. Structural stability depends on social cohesiveness, which also helps to lessen the psychological and material burden of poverty. Additionally, it incorporates weaker groups rather than excluding them and affirms both individual and group identities (Deepa et al., 2009: 175). A component of social wellbeing is social cohesion. Unity within a group is what determines it; mutual understanding, shared understanding, and reciprocity in relationships (Deepa *et al.,* 2010).

At a community level, social cohesion is an asset that provides security, regulates behavior and improves on people's standards of living, while at state level, cohesive societies are likely to be efficient and capital rich therefore making them to be more productive than in fragmented societies. Putnam *et al.,* (2013) showed that a lack of "social capital is not merely a loss of community in some warm and cuddly sense"; rather social cohesion and civic engagements are "practical preconditions for better schools, security, faster economic growth more efficient government and improved standards of living". With inadequate 'supplies' of social capital, social institutions weaken and lose efficiency.

Cohesion has a significant impact on how effective a state is at the state level. For example, policies that foster unity between diverse groups should be prioritized in nations with high levels of tension or instability. This is particularly significant in nations when many identity groups are dispersed across the nation rather than concentrated in certain regions, rendering the introduction of federalism and other territorially based institutional frameworks meaningless. Programs that strengthen social and cultural ties between

groups, institutionalize collaboration, and foster reconciliation in situations where there has previously been enmity between groups should be implemented in these nations.

Religion, Insecurity and Social Cohesion

Following the above background, the question of what is right and wrong (Ethics) lacks concrete definitions in the context of Nigerians since her dominant religious groups have contrary believe about ethics. For instance, the issue of violence via killing of lives, destruction of properties was totally abhorred in the Christian religious but the Muslim counterpart indulge in it without feeling remorse. In other words, the Christians value lives as precious while other religion consider killing of lives as holy as otherwise. However, the essence of national development as a multidimensional ideology that requires proper coordination of the entire structure irrespective of religious affiliation should be encouraged. Of course, religion and ethics have strong role to play in determining the status of national security of a given nation like Nigeria. Besides, we cannot forget in a haste to talk about religious fanaticism/extremism as a serious factor behind the cause of insecurity in Nigeria today. It is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation unity, economic growth and development.

Religious fanaticism and extremism have been among the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The previous and recent incidences of attack on churches and Christians in Northern part of the country by Muslim extremist have rendered several states in the north unsafe for life and properties. The damage of

these extremists have caused can been seen in the following words. Religion has unleashed on mankind…it has left in its wake, a heavy toll of destroyed lives and wanton destruction of property. It has delayed workable political agreements and brutalized societies. Religious violence has been responsible for the collapse of one political order or the other throughout history (Ogunade, 2012).

Role of Religion in ensuring Social Cohesion

Religion permeates every aspects of man's existence in the universe, be it politics, social, cultural or economic life of the people (Bankston and Zhou, 2015). It performs the social functions such as providing aims, purpose forms, defense and sense of direction. The roles of religion in promoting social cohesion are:

(a) Religion Stimulates Social Habits and Checks Anti- Social Behavior

Religion is "an efficient means of social control, stimulates social habits and checks anti-social tendencies". It offers the whole society a concept of its own scared value. It prescribes a particular kind of behavior or conduct to its adherents in terms of knowledge, thinking, reflection decisions, choices, tastes, opinion, habits, feelings and freedom of actions (Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blyth, 2008). Such particular life styles are created, maintained and sustained through religions doctrines, ethics, and laws safe guards are prescribed against deviation from these life styles. Religion polishes and fashions morality in positive dimension. To neglect religion is to do away with morality, without religion moral development of the society will be meaningless.

(b) Religion gives Emotional Security, Spiritual and Material Support

Religion is an instrument for defense. It provides belief and attitudes that help to defend the people against vexing doubts, anxieties and aggression. As people do struggle with life of uncertainties, powerlessness and insecurity religion provides answer to the things that threaten people's life and survival. It was even noted that religion offers emotional, spiritual and material support to its members in times of tension, stress or hardship (Lawal, 2013). The poor and wretched ones are to be given alms or gifts from the rich ones among them. Victims of natural hazards or wars are to be aided and their life must protect as a sacred entity and peaceful coexistence of the society. Also religion offers resistance against frustration, hostility, suffering, anxiety, despair and hatred.

(c) Religion Reforms and Resettles Deviants

A deviant is person who is deficient in moral and social standards from what is normal and accepted. Religion can be used to call the out law persons or sinners back to repentance, and makes them become socially integrated into the society (Odudele, 2016). Religion struggles with the ultimate problems of human life that deprive man from behaving in the morally and socially accepted ways. It gives a sense of direction and makes people to perceive, feel, think, act and behave in a specifically desired ways. It moves people away from despair and restores confidence in them. Armed robbers, adulterers, drunkards, drug- addicts, law- breakers and frauds to mention a few have been changed to behave in a socially approved manners and society see and treat them with trust and confidence.

(d) Religion Fosters Social Solidarity and Friendships

Religion serves as a powerful means for the solidarity among its members and nearly all the great social institutions have been born in religion (Ezeanya, 2010). Also, religion regulates social life of the society by creating some sort of order for its members to live together. Religion encourages solidarity, consensus, cordially, harmony, cooperation, unity, stability, security and peaceful co-existence. Religion creates several fellowship groups for the adults and youths alike. Out of these fellowships, friendships, marriage and brother hoods emerged. It allows the adherents to coordinate their activities in submission to rules and regulations under the guidance of values, so that they can live harmoniously with their fellow human beings.

(e) Religion helps to bring about Social Change

A change haves place in religion as a social phenomenon. In Nigeria, religion helps to bring about social change. Social change has described as the change that occurs in world views, ideas, values, beliefs, rules, relationships, institutions, symbols speech, languages, style of thinking and behaviors and the means of production and distribution of goods and services (Fadiyimu, 2014). A social change is the alteration in the patterns of social action and interactions. Religion introduces and disseminates new idea and information about education, medicine, literature, agriculture, games, markets organization and administration. Religion brings establishes new form of education, dressing, marriage, law courts and languages in Nigeria.

(f) The Relevance of Religion in Cultural Development

Religion helps in transforming the society by introducing new cultural elements. Religious doctrines, laws organizations, modes of dressing, dogma, buildings, patterns of marriages, training of children, burying the dead and many other items of culture are influence through religion. Morality is used to give meaning and purpose to the cultural behavior (Obikunle, 2015). Wherein the culture deviates from the real religious meaning, then it has to be checked, so that there is balanced relationship between the cultural elements and religious ideology. Indecent modes of dress, is discouraged for the sake of modesty and moral implication given.

(g) Religion Ensures the Retinues Existence of the Society.

Ayuba and Alex (2016) opined the positive role of religion is to holding society together as a form of "social glue". Religion serves as a social bond that holds the society together. It strengthens the basis belief and values of the society. It stresses for the social cohesion of all its members to live in unity and peace. Religious ceremonies are performed to remind people that they have a common history and identity, thereby ensuring the continuity for the existence of the society. There are events in the life of an individual and in the life of a society that point to the fact that God is working out this purpose for the common good of the individual and the society.

Effects of raising Insecurity Occasioned by Religious Crisis on Social Cohesion

The resultant effects of religious crisis has increased the rate of insecurity in Nigeria, thus, negating the economic

growth of the country. It effect pervades all the sector of the economy. Generally, crisis breeds insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow economic development. This is the case in Nigeria where in addition to gratuitous killings and maiming of thousands of persons properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed. Certainly, these huge losses have deprived the nation of needed manpower and services for the growth of it's wobbling economy.

Another major consequence of religious crisis on the economic development of Nigeria is on the reputation of Nigeria in the international community. Many countries have started seeing Nigeria as a terrorist country which affects our business men and women that travel round the world to do business. Onwumah (2014) also affirms that religious crisis portrays Nigeria in a very bad light internationally. It depicts our leaders, at all levels and in different facets of life as weak, naïve, selfish and self-centered. In an environment of strong dedicated and selfless leadership, the diversity and complexity of the Nigerian society would have been harnessed and channeled into national development efforts.

In an atmosphere of peace, the economy tends to grow more as more foreign investment and earnings are attracted via FDI and tourism. Nigeria would have been a tourist haven, but the frequent occurrence of crisis in different parts of the country at different points in time will definitely discourage foreign tourists (Onwumah, 2014). The effect of it is that, foreign exchange needed to drive development that could have been brought in by foreigners is lost.

Though Nigeria is richly endowed in terms of tourism and resources, it is said that, by African standards, her performance is an abysmal failure. Places like Kenya, Ghana, Egypt and others have more people coming into their countries than Nigeria. The reason for this is not farfetched. Nigeria is perceived as unsafe and indeed not conducive in terms of security caused mainly by communal and religious crisis.

Religious crisis has had devastating effect on Nigerian educational standards ranging from incessant closure of schools, destruction of school facilities to abduction and raping of schools children which has serious effect on the psychologies of school children in the nation. This assertion was supported by Adebayo (2010), according to him, education is very vital in any sustainable developmental program. The nation is striving to put in place amenities for the purpose of elevating the education standard of the country. This is, however, hampered by incessant closure of schools and institutions in places where religious crisis are being witnessed. Many schools had been burnt down while many were forced to close down for months. The education of innocent youths was equally disrupted under tumultuous situations created by religious and ethnicity crises, as many were forced to emigrate from crisis area.

Religious and ethnicity crisis will definitely affect the foreign direct investment (FDI) flow into Nigeria. FDI has positive relationship with economic growth as the more FDI flows into the country the more jobs are created, the per capital income and the higher the standard

of living. This was buttressed by Onwumah (2014) when he posited that in economic terms, religious and ethnicity crisis damages resources and facilities which took time to be acquired. No foreign investor will like to invest funds in country that is divided by communal, religious and ethnic crises (Ayinla, 2013). There are fears at two levels.

- The basic aim of foreign investment is to make profit which is not possible in an environment of crises.

- The resources invested already will definitely go down the drains.

Meanwhile, the source of Muslims and Christians crises in Nigeria has been religious ethnicity, social and political. The dramas of intolerance by the two religions led to successive misunderstanding between them, sometimes degenerating into violent open war or skirmishes. This drama was marked by the 1980 religious crises that started in Zaria involving members of two religions, resulting to the Wanton destruction of live and properties. The misunderstanding led to loss of lives, torching of churches/mosque, business premises (Adega, 2011).

Theoretical Review

The study was based on the **Durkheim theory of Religion**. Durkheim viewed religion in his Elementary *Forms of the Religious Life,* which is certainly the best-known study on the sociology of religion. Within the context of the entire society and acknowledged its place in influencing the thinking and behaviour of the members of society. Durkheim, accordingly, believes religion is a part of

the human condition and the content of religion might be different from society to society over time. Religion will, in some form or another, always be a part of social life. Durkheim also argues that religion is the most fundamental social institution, with almost all other social institutions, at some point in human history, being born from it. For these reasons he gave special analysis to this phenomenon, providing a philosophy of religion that is perhaps as provocative as it is rich with insights (Durkheim, 1912).

People tend to separate religious symbols, objects, and rituals, according to Durkheim, which are sacred, from the daily symbols, objects, and routines of existence referred to as the profane. Sacred objects are often believed to have divine properties that separate them from profane objects (ibid). Even in more-advanced cultures, people still view sacred objects with a sense of reverence and awe, even if they do not believe that the objects have some special power.

Durkheim also argued that religion is not only concerned with beliefs, rather, encompasses regular rituals and ceremonies on the part of a group of believers, who then develop and strengthen a sense of group solidarity (Durkheim, 1915). Rituals are necessary to bind together the members of a religious group, and they allow individuals to escape from the mundane aspects of daily life into higher realms of experience. Sacred rituals and ceremonies are especially important for marking occasions such as births, marriages, times of crisis, and deaths (Durkheim, 1915).

Durkheim's theory of religion exemplifies how functionalists examine sociological phenomena. According to Durkheim, people see religion as contributing to the general well-being and continuation of society in general. Thus, religion functions to bind society's members by prompting them to affirm their common values and beliefs regularly. The theory states that religion allows for social cohesion, while social rituals are the mechanism providing the means to this end.

Methodology

This paper adopted the multidisciplinary research method. Multidisciplinary research is a pursuit of truth with the help of numerous specialized branches of learning which aims at achieving a common goal with the aid of knowledge of other disciplines. The study method always tries to understand what is in the mind of the people i.e., how things should be or what needs to be done.

Therefore, the paper relies mainly on research works such as journals, online materials, thesis, dissertations, research journals, newspapers and magazines among others and is to examine the role religion play in addressing insecurity and promoting social cohesion among different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Discussion

It is generally agreed in academic circles and elsewhere that religion continues to be a strong ideological source for identity formations and values including those dealing with power, conflict, peace and development. In Nigeria, religion has a new resonance in politics, economics and regional integration. Religious actors (including among others Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Pentecostal Christians and others) are playing critical roles in bridging the gap between the state's capacity to consolidate gains in its policy of Ethnic Federalism and social cohesion based on ethnic lines.

With a population of over 150 million inhabitants, the major religious groups in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. The foremost incidence of religious crisis since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 was triggered by an alleged violation of a traditional religious rite. Although lack of statistical data has made it extremely difficult to estimate the exact number of religious crisis in Nigeria and their resultant fatalities (Salawu 2010), the general assumption is that the incidence of religious crises has grown exponentially since the return to democracy rule in 1999. The history and findings on religious crises across the country however showed that 90 percent of them occurred in the northern part of the country (Ezeanokwasa, 2009).

In view of the perennial religious tensions between the two dominant religious groups in Nigeria, there is a sustained culture of mutual suspicion and unhealthy rivalry between them. The perceived hatred between Nigerian Christians and Muslims, have often manifested in interreligious crisis. Most of these crises had led to destruction of lives and properties particularly in the Northern part of the country. Some of these cases are listed in the table below for further confirmation and as evidence to the foregoing assertion.

Table 1: Causes of Religious Crisis in Nigeria, 1999-2018

S/N	Date	Town/State	Nature of Crisis
1	July 1, 1999	Sagamu, Ogun State,	Crisis between Yoruba traditional worshipers and Hausa groups as a result of the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2	December 20, 1999	Ilorin, Kwara State	Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 Churches, properties worth several millions of naira destroyed.
3	February 28, 2000	Aba, Abia State	Religious crisis that led to the killing of over 450 persons.
4	February 21-22, 2000	Kaduna, Kaduna State	Crisis over the introduction of Sharia, an estimated 3000 people died.
5	October 12, 2001	Kano, Kano State	Religious crises, in protest to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 persons were killed.
6	September, 7-17, 2007	Jos, Plateau State	Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged.
7	November 16, 2002	Kaduna, Kaduna State	Attacked of Christians by the Muslims over article written by lsioma Daniel on Miss World, over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed
8	February 14, 2004	Numan, Adamawa State	Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over location of the Central Mosque close to Bachama Paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed. Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over location of the Central Mosque close to Bachama Paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.
9	February 18, 2006	Maiduguri, Borno State	Religious crisis between Christians and Muslims over Danish Cartoon on Prophet Mohammed in Jyll and Sposten newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized
10	March 22, 2007	Gombe, Gombe State,	Religious crisis over the killing of Christians teacher for allegedly desecrating the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall.
11	November 28, 2008	Jos, Plateau State,	Religious crisis between Muslims and Christians over the controversial results of local election. Over 700 people killed.
12	July 26-30, 2009	Bauch, Borno, Kano and Yobe State	Religious crisis unleashed by Boko Haram sect on Christians. Over 700 people killed 3,500 persons internally displaced, 1,264 children orphaned, and over 392 woman widowed, and several properties destroyed.
13	March 7, 2010	Jos, Plateau State	Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christians-dominated villages of Dogo-Nahawa, Shen and Fan. 13 person killed.

14	April 11, 2010	Jos South, Plateau State	Attack on a Christians villages Fulani herdsman. 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched.
15	January 5-6, 2012	Gombe, Gombe State,	Gunmen stormed a Deeper Life Church, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The Boko Haram Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting
16	January 5-6, 2012	Mubi, Adamawa State	Suspected Boko Haram militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically, killing over 12 and injuring others.
17	May 2016	Padongari, Niger State	Religious crisis that left 4 persons dead.
18	June 8, 2016	Kakuri, Kaduna State	A Christian man was stabbed for not joining Ramadan Fast.
19	March 14, 2018	Abuja	Protest by Muslim Groups Rocks National Assembly on the Public Hearing over Amasa Firdus, Law School Hijab controversy.

Source: Adapted from Sampson, 2012; Sahara reporter, 2019.

However, despite the above empirical evidences on the effect of religious crisis on the raising cases of insecurity and disruption of social cohesion, the study which centred on the role of religion in addressing the raising cases of insecurity and promotion of social cohesion in Nigeria through interviews conducted realized that in many developing countries, social orders and religious establishments are the essential suppliers of public administrations to the networks/ communities. However, in multi-religion settings, religious establishments address the security challenges brought about by viciousness that have religious suggestions, the communities keep on connecting in these shared spaces. Supporting the above, Ramadhan, (2015) that the connector elements of these spaces make religion in the entirety of its viewpoints; values, structures, assets and so on helpful for peace-building and social cohesion.

Moreso, the findings showed that as a divider, religion is utilized by culprits to take part in brutality focusing on religious people and structures having a place with different beliefs, bringing about bigotry, dread, doubt and profiling dependent on religious association as had happens in Southern part of Kaduna and some part of Plateau states in Nigeria (Ramadhan, 2015). The essential tenet of all religions is to recommend morals, standards and qualities that advance social equity and sympathy for those out of luck. Casualties of viciousness, both of strict or in any case are arranged as those out of luck, religion plays a fundamental to mitigate their anguish.

Additionally, it was also realized that religion has been an inspiration for activity, explicitly to help reconciliation, social attachment and peace-building endeavours. Abrahamic beliefs specifically contain clear statutes and directions for equity and harmony, yet all through mankind's set of experiences, religion has been a significant supporter of treacheries, viciousness, disdain, and prejudice. Similarly, findings made showed that in the peace-building process, there are alot of

religious/faith-based local and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as Civil Society Organisations that are working in collaboration with the Federal and State government to promote peace-building and social cohesion in Nigeria.

Based on the above, it can be said that religion's role in conflict management and social cohesion is a complex and controversial one. Religion can not only be part of the solution, it can potentially be part of the problem in social exclusion. Taking religious leaders and other religious actors to task in social cohesion is crucial in transforming previously divided societies. Religious entities and their leaders have resonance within communities (both at the federal and local levels) to provide a political and social voice for the voiceless and can become powerful symbols to militate against violent or divisive behavior, promote conflict management, develop a socially cohesive society and rebuild social relations through reconciliation. The finding is in line with the observation of Gilat & Razin (2016) which state that Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria need to continue to work earnestly and decide to what extent they can express themselves with a common purpose and avoid being manipulated by political forces. This will ensure that their members do not instigate activities capable of increasing the insecurity state of the nation.

Conclusion

In opposition to compromise and long-term, tranquil, all-encompassing social orders, faith actors ought to be accessible and active during all stages of conflict. Faith-based actors are particularly involved in and focused on a few areas; they include efforts to achieve interreligious harmony and combat extremism, as exemplified by the Christian Aid Council (CAC) and the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN). It's critical that different religious perspectives on how to foster social attachment complement one another. Therefore, fostering social cohesion in Nigeria necessitates integrating security, peace, and advancement initiatives amongst various religious groups. One cannot overstate the peril of insecurity.

When a country faces the challenge of insecurity, all other plans come to a standstill. Nigeria, a nation home to more than 150 million people, cannot allow political and economic growth goals to be derailed by insecurity. However, the paper concludes that religious organizations must play a crucial role in educating their members on the negative implications of religiously manufactured conflicts on rising insecurity and disruption of social cohesion in order to address the rising cases of social dysfunction and insecurity in the nation.

Recommendations

Based on the above observations made on the study conducted on religion, insecurity and social cohesion, the following recommendations are made:

- Effort should be made in promoting resistance and passing messages of peaceful co-existence towards other religious networks;

- Efforts should be made by concern bodies in building unions by working in and through with other religious pioneers;

- To build attention to social attachment through the use of strict based schools and training organizations;

- By censuring demonstrations of violence or violent talk dependent on strict contrasts through the issuance of joint articulations;

- Engaging in exchange to building synergistic associations with different partners;

- Ensuring powerful correspondence frameworks between various strict gatherings;

- Identify and use instruments that help solidarity and managing conflict; and

- Support interpersonal organizations that unite isolated groups.

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