Inter Group Conflict in Jos, 1947 – 1991: Beyond Ethno-Religious Explanation

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Abstract

Jos conflict is one of the protracted conflicts in Nigeria. Both its historical and contemporary dimensions have received well-deserved attention from scholars of various fields. However, an aspect of its historical dimensions remained understudied. This work examined the nature and basis of theinter-ethnic and religious tension between the Berom, the Afizere and the Anaguta popularly referred to the indigenous groups and the Hausa-Fulani in Jos between 1947 and 1991. The paper argued that though ethnic and religious identities were used in the struggle during this period, it was largely a struggle for political and economic control of Jos and its fortunes by the elites in Jos. It further demonstrated how political, religious and economic changes of the 1980s became the basis for the involvement of the masses and the eventual dramatic turn into violent phase of the conflict.

Introduction

Jos conflict is not in any way an understudied conflict. Various authors specially social scientist have represented its contemporary phase which began with the creation of Jos North Local Government Area in 1991 by then Military Government headed by General Ibrahim

Babangida.[1] Even the historical aspect of the conflict – the pre – colonial, and colonial dimensions up to 1947 when the Berom Native Authority was created, which appeared to have been neglected in the last few decades, have also commanded a good chunk of literature in the recent time.[2] However, the period from the 1947 when the Berom Native Authority was created, to 1991 when Jos North LG.A.was carved out, appears to be near silent in the historiography of the conflict. The aim of this paper is to bridge this historical gap by analyzing the nature of the relationship as well as the basis of tension between the Berom, the Afizere and the Anaguta known as indigenous groups in Jos and the Hausa-Fulani referred to as settlers between 1947 and 1991.

Brief History of the Jos Conflict

Jos is the capital of the present day Plateau State of Nigeria. It is made up of five local government areas of which Jos North is the

[1] H. Alozieuwa, "Beyond the Ethno-Religious Theory of Jos Conflict", *African Peace and Conflict Journal, Vol.* 2 No.4, 2009, pp. 10 – 34; C. Kwaja," Government and Civil Society Efforts in Promoting Peace in Plateau", in J. Para-Mallam, (ed.), *Finding Durable Peace in Plateau,* Ilorin: Haytee Press.2012, pp. 77-88; S.D.Mwadkwom," Religion, the Settlers Question and the Emergence of Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria: A Survey of Jos", *Swedish Missiological Themes*Vol. 89 No 1, 2001, pp. 54-71; ; S. Omotola, " Citizenship, Ethnic Violence and Governmental Response: The Declaration of State of Emergence in Plateau State Nigeria", in O. Akinwumi, O. Okpeh, & J. Gwamna, (eds.) *Inter-Group Relation inn Nigeria During the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Markurdi: Aboki Press, 2006, (pp. 749-773; S.G. Best,.*Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State*, Nigeria, Ibadan: Spectrum, 2007

[2] U. Danfulani, S. Fwatshak,"Briefing: The September 2001 Event in Jos, Nigeria", *Journal of African Affairs, Vol.* 101, 2007, pp..243-255; J.C.Nwaka "Ours is the City of 'Peace': British Colonial Administrative Policies and the Struggle for the Ownership of Jos" *KIABARA Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 20, no. 1.2013, pp.114-132.
J.C.Nwaka J.C. "Speaking to Peace or About Peace?Analyzing the strategies of Managing Host-Settler Conflict in Jos, Nigeria, 1947-2008", *Journal of International Politics and Development (JIPAD)* (Babcock and Indiana Universities), Vol.12, no.2 ,pp. 25-46; J.C. Nwaka, "Religion, Economy and the Pre-colonial Dimension of the Jos Conflict" *AfrikaZamani: A Journal of African History,* Vol. 24.

beehive of economic and political activities. Although, a cosmopolitan city with virtually all the major ethnic groups in Nigeria heavily represented, it is generally taken to be the ancestral home of three ethnic groups of central Nigeria/Jos Plateau - the Berom (who are the majority); the Afizere, also referred to as Jarawa; and, the Anaguta - known as the indigenous group. There is also the Hausa or Hausa-Fulani[3] ethnic group whose presence, like the Igbo, Yoruba and Urhobo, date back largely to the colonial period or before it. Jos conflict, which involves the Hausa-Fulani, often referred to as the settlers, and the indigenous group, bothers much on the ownership of Jos particularly its present day township area (Jos North LGA). To the indigenous group, Jos city is their land from time immemorial.[4] The Hausa do not only claim ownership of Jos as well but also maintain that they were responsible for its development right from the colonial time.

Although intergroup relations between the two groups during the pre-colonial era was conflict-ridden, a consequence of the Hausa-Fulani Jihadists attempt to overrun the Jos Plateau polities (Nwaka, 2016), colonial rule upgraded the conflict to a status of indigene-settler conflict (Nwaka. 2013). For its commercial interest, particularly tin mining in Jos, the British brought the two groups together under PaxBritanica and kept them under separate administrations until 1947. Initially, the unwillingness of the local people to participate in the European mining labour force was followed by the influx of the Hausa labourers in these mines (Bingel, 1978). Their presence and that of migrants from other ethnic groups of Southern Nigeria in and around the mining centers necessitated the establishment of mining camps. Such camps attracted

[3]Although Hausa, and the Fulani were two distinct ethnic groups, the Nigeria political equation redefined them as
one ethnic group – Hausa-Fulani

[4]Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network (PIDAN). *The History, Ownership and Establishment of Jos and Misconception about the Recurrent Jos, Conflicts*. Jos: Dan-Sil Press, 2010.

petty traders mostly of Hausa=Fulani stalk who moved in with their goods seeking patronage from mining labourers (Anes,1934). It was some of these camps located in the present day Jos that grew to become the Jos Native Town. To organize these camps, Hausa leaders were used because of their leadership qualities. In line with the colonial policies, the camps were later reorganized into four large areas known as Hausa Village Areas headed by Hausa leaders. The indigenous group was kept in a separate administration because they were believed not to have acquired sophisticated leadership skill required for handling the alien groups in the camps:

> *The non-indigenous natives who arrived in the Naraguta, now Jos division consequently upon the European mining activities have been administered since 1912 by a special introduced Native Administration as the in comers. The pagans are independent of this special administration.* (Jos Province, 1918, p. 32)

As one would expect, big mining centers attracted more people. Based on this, mining camps at the location of the present day Jos North became the beehives of economic and political activities during the colonial era. This boosted power and position of the Hausa village leader in charge of the area. In 1913, a request to raise it to a status of a colonial town (Jos) was sent by F.B. Gall, the then Resident of Central Province at Naraguta (Bauchi Province, 1910), to the chief secretary of Northern Protectorate at Zungeru. *"138x my 134 of 21x Recommended that township finally be laid out Jos, instead of further scattered grant x if approved think that they might be of first class view growing importance Jos"* (Monsel, 1913, p.2). This proposal was approved on the 21st of June 1913. In 1915, Jos officially became a town and was proclaimed a township in 1921(Jos Province, 1921, p.99).

In line with the colonial township arrangements, the section of the town with the native people (Hausa-Fulani - in the majority, some local

people who increasingly joined the rank of the mining labour force and other Nigerians - was regarded as Native Town while the other section with Europeans, non-Africans and some African elites was referred to as Township. From every indication, the Hausa leader in charge of the Hausa village Area in Jos was the number one man in the Native Town. His authority, however, was not raised to the rank of a real Native Authority in the British colonial blue print because the Four Village Areas were, in the real sense, settlements within the districts of Jos Division.

> *The "Hausa Area", which would be more correctly described as stranger settlements, containing as they do an extremely mixed population representing most tribes in Nigeria, are situated in the tribal areas and are nominally, but not in practice, subject to the jurisdiction of the tribal Native authorities. No Native Authority has yet been evolved for them and they are administered directly by the District Officer through four Hausa headmen based on Jos, Bukuru, Rop and Gurumu (Jos Province,* 1937:p. 28).

Although referred by his people as *Sarkin Jos* (King of Jos) and used by colonial officials interchangeably with *SarkinHausawa Jos* (King of the Hausa People in Jos) (Jos Province,1948), the position of the Hausa Village Head in Jos was largely borne out of a commercial expediency. It was therefore not surprising that the title, *Sarkin Jos* was not included in the list of native authorities gazetted in 1922 (PIDAN, 2010). Thus, the separate administration seemed to be a temporary measure. Reporting on his Division, the resident in charge of Jos noted thus:

> *Jos Division consisted of Fifteen Pagan Districts and four Hausa Village Areas… these latter areas included in several pagan districts, but each pagan district is wholly inside a particular area. The end in view is that the pagan District Heads should in*

> *course of time assume full administrative control over all in their districts* (Jos Province, 1934, p.25).

Through gradual re-organizations, the Berom Native Authority was eventually nurtured to maturity. Aware that the two authorities: the Berom Native Authority and the Hausa Village Head, cannot exist together, the Hausa-Fulanirulership in Jos, which could be likened to a quasi-native authority, was subordinated to the Berom Native Authority in 1947. The Hausa-Fulani group did not only vehemently resist this then, but it later became the basis of the struggle for the ownership of Jos. The struggle, however, did not degenerate into violence until after 1991 when the then Military Government headed by General Ibrahim Babangida created Jos North out of the Jos L.G.A, a move that appeared to be a reversal of the 1947 status quo (Suberu, 2001). The new local government did not only leave the bulk of the indigenous group in less developed Jos South LGA, the King of the Berom, generally referred to as the *GbongGwom Jos* (King of Jos), following this creation, found himself isolated from the bulk of his people. He was left with two options: the first was to remain in Jos North LGA dominated by the Hausa, while the second was for him to leave the heart of the city and his seat of government right from 1947 and follow his people to Jos South. By implication, the first option was a loss of Jos to the Hausa settlers. Hence, the struggle for the ownership of Jos assumed a violent dimension particularlyat every LGA election in Jos North**.** Between 1994 and 2011, Jos witnessed more than eight major violent eruptions claiming hundreds of lives and property worth billions of naira. What then was the nature of the relationship between the two groups before the emergence of the violent phase of the conflict?

Inter-ethnic Relations in Jos after 1947

The colonial policy of grouping into tribal chiefdom; settlement pattern in Jos town, which separated one group from another; categorization of labour in the tin mines into skill and unskilled labourers

along ethnic line; religious composition, which correspond to ethnic divide, had already evoked ethnic sentiments before the emergence of Rwang Pam in 1947 as the paramount ruler (GbomGwom Jos)of Jos. The subordination of the Hausa-Fulani to the Berom Native Authority headed by Pam deteriorated further inter-ethnic relations between the two groups. Before the appointment of Rwang Pam, the Berom had come together in 1945 to form the Berom Progressive Union (BPU) which was used to struggle for the economic and political development of the Berom people and for the control of Jos. With this union, the Berom garnered some carrots from the mining companies in the name of compensation for their land which was taken particularly towards the end of the first half of the twentieth century when the activities of the mining companies intensified.[5] Although the appointment of Rwang Pam as the paramount chief of Jos was in line with the British colonial blueprint in Jos, as earlier stated, it was likely the Berom, through their progressive union, pressurized the British authority into given power to them, at least, at the time they did. Colonial documents are replete with evidence of what seemed like such pressure:

> *Recently the Bi Rom has shown every sign of awakening of political and economic consciousness and I consider that their views must be very carefully considered if Government is not to find a serious situation on its hands. They would certainly object most strongly to the exclusion of these towns from their jurisdiction.*[6]

Another colonial document reported thus:

[5] Activities of the mining companies intensified following the British loss of Malaya to Japan during the second World War. Many Berom were conscripted into mining company labour force as skilled and unskilled labourers, NAK JOS PROF8379/1953, Annual Report; Also see NAK JOSPROF/1949 Mining Policy Compensation – memo by D.Robin; B. B. Freud, Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines, London: Longman, 1981.p. 163

[6] AHAK (Arewa House Archives Kaduna): SNP 1/38/307. Confidential Report C252/25, 1947

> *The Resident favours the subordination of Jos and Bukuru to Birom largely on the grounds that the Birom being 'owners' of the land are becoming conscious of their territorial rights and should in time with increased education be able to absorb these stranger communities…. Bi Rom are bitterly demanding "our land", & we should decide on a policy before explosion come.*[7]

The Hausa-Fulani, in response, articulated their resistance to what they perceived as the abolishment of the title of *Sarkin* Jos, by forming their own organization which was later transformed into Hausa Tribal party.[8] Indeed, the subordination of the Hausa-Fulani authority to the Berom evoked Hausa-Fulani tribal sentiment. Consequently, the latter mounted opposition to the extension of the jurisdiction of the newly created king of Berom to Jos township.[9] In order not to escalate the already mounting tension, the authority of the paramount chief was not extended to Jos township irrespective of the fact that the status of the Hausa Village head (Sarkin Jos) in Jos had been reduced to *MagaginGar*i (town chief).[10] This struggle for political power sharpened ethnic divide and tension.

Ethnic tension between the two groups further heightened following the ethnic politics of the late 1940s and 1950sin Nigeria. During the party formations and alliances of the period, the Hausa-Fulani in Jos aligned with Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), which was more of a Kano based party, and through this made several demands for the restoration of Hausa-Fulani as *Sarkin* Jos. Infact, the activities of NEPU

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[7] Ibid

[8] M. Mangvwat, "The History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province, 1902-1960" Ph. D Dissertation , Department of History, University of Jos, 1984 p. 367

[9] AHAK, C,252/25,Confiential Report, 1947

[10]National Archives Kaduna (NAK) ,JOSPROF. Annual Report, 1951, Also see,

were centered in Jos Native Town and in the mining settlements where there were Hausa-Fulani. NEPU's activities, as Mangvwatargues, did not articulate the problems of the Berom and other local natives in Jos.[11]Following the victory of NEPU in the regional election of 1951 – an election in which the Jos Town Council voted in its favour – the party demanded that Jos Native Town be severed from Berom Native Authority. A demand for the restoration of*Sarkin* Jos was also made by the party.[12]It was, equally, NEPU leaders in Jos that championed the formation of Hausa Tribal Party in 1956 – a party which also made outright demand for the restoration of Sarkin Jos.[13] The Berom elite on the other hand joined the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which recognized, even if expedientially, the authority of Rwang Pam as the King of Jos.

A close examination of the NPC-Berom elite courtship is important for a clear understanding of the role of ethnicity in Jos conflict at this period. Both NPC and NEPU were Hausa-Fulani Parties. In a situation where ethnic divide is the most prominent cause of a conflict, the local natives in Jos are not likely to identify with any of them. Either they form their own political party or align with other non-Hausa-Fulani party, especially, when there were such other parties. Contrary to expectation, the elites gravitated towards a more Hausa-Fulani party, the NPC. Although it could be argued that such was the case because their perceived enemy was already part of NEPU, however, that the political elite did not seek alliance with either the National Council of Nigerian Citizens(NCNC) of the Igbo or the Action Group (AG) of the Yoruba, which were in desperate need of such alliance, but moved along with the number one Hausa-Fulani party in the north that was in possession of

[11] M. Mangvwat, p.451

[12] NAK, PROF/1952 Annual Report. 1953

[13]Ios Town Council Affair cited in Mangvwat, p.367

power in that region, showed where their interest was. Indeed, Rwang Pam needed to strengthen its political authority in Jos and through it establish his control over Jos and its economic fortunes. That seemed more realizable in courtship with the most powerful party in the north than in any of the southern parties. Ethnic differences therefore succumbed to political and economic interests. This became more pronounced as time went on.

As a result of the alliance, the elites worked towards the delivery of Jos town to NPC. In the 1954 regional election, NPC was at par with NEPU in Jos town. In return, Rwang was not only recognized as the King(Sarkin) Jos, his authority was officially extended to the Native Town.[14] He was also made a second class chief in the Northern Regional House of Assembly with portfolios attached to it. With this, the office of *MagajinGari* was eventually reduced further to *WakilinGari* (town representative).[15] The Plateau political elites of Jos could be in Hausa-Fulani party professing "One North, One People, Irrespective of Religion, Tribe or Creed" in so far as its political control of Jos was ensured. To be in control of Jos politically is to be in control its economy. It is on this note that Mangvwat has argued that: "the Hausa-Berom conflict (during this period – **my emphasis)**was essentially a quarrel over who should control the economy and affairs of the Native Authority particularly the township.[16]The Native Authority, he further noted, had many committees and sub committees through which numerous portfolios were controlled. The struggle for Jos at this period was therefore the struggle for these portfolios.[17]

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[14] J. Dudley, *Party Politics in Northern Nigeria*,London: Frank Cass 1968, pp. 436-437

[15] Other ethnic groups from Southern Nigeria who settled in Jos town in large number had also their own representatives just like the Hausa-Fulani, in the Jos Town Native Authority Council headed by Rwang Pam.

[16]M. Mangvwat, pp. 369-372

[17] Ibid

It is pertinent to note that while the political class joined the NPC, the masses gravitated towards the Middle Zone League which had few Berom elites at its center of affairs.[18]The league which was formed in 1952, later merged with the United Middle Belt Party to produce the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) that was later used in pressing for the creation of Middle Belt State.[19]Unfortunately for the League and the UMBC, those who led them could not refuse the overtures of the NPC when it was obvious that they can share from the largesse which the party had. Consequently, the Plateau leaders of the party, including the Berom among them later joined the NPC. In addition to the portfolios which the elite were sure to get by being part of NPC, Mangvwat has argued that the Plateau elites feared being dominated by the Tiv in a new proposed party.[20] In other words, if Mangvwat's view is accepted, it means that the Plateau elites preferred to be in Hausa-Fulani Muslim party rather than being dominated by the other ethnic group in the Middle Belt who were also tilting towards Christianity. The argument here is not just that the elite placed their interest before that of the masses, as Mangvwat has established in his well-researched work, but that ethnic or cultural diversity was not actually the reason for the tension between the Hausa-Fulani and the Plateau Group. The fear of losing out economically through political domination by the Hausa-Fulani was in actual fact the underlying cause of the tension. Once such fear was rife, the elites would carve the masses into it by emphasizing ethnic differentiations and the need for separate political space. By its nature, ethnic identity lends itself to such manipulation. Though ethnically divided, the Plateau elites could close

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[18] *P. C. Logam*, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity*, 1948-1967 Jos: Selidan Books, 2004, p.46

[19] Ibid; Also see B.J. Dudley,

[20] M. Mangvwat, pp.460-465

ranks with the Hausa-Fulani for personal aggrandizement. Such ranks could be emphasized when the need arises.

The above was the pattern of ethnic relationship in Jos until the era of civil war when tension between the two groups was swallowed, to a marked degree, in some developments at the regional and national levels. Following the creation of Benue Plateau State by the Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967, the process of severing Jos and indeed the entire Plateau from Hausa-Fulani hegemony began. The idea of one north, one people, which was more of a rhetorical political slogan began to evince sign of corrosion. A further separation of Benue from Plateau in 1976 gave rise to a new State of Plateau for the Plateau people. State creation helped to strengthen the identity of the indigenous groups in Jos as owners of the land and indigenes of Jos. As the constant political reshufflings, colonial and post-colonial, fortified the positions of the Berom, the Afizere and the Anaguta as the owners of Jos, the Hausa-Fulani on the other hands kept dominating the economy of Jos by buying more lands, erecting estates and business centers. The flight of the Igbo in 1966 added to their advantage as it provided them with the opportunity of buying landed properties at cheaper rate.[21]

The emergence of Gowon from the Middle Belt as military leader of Nigeria, though had no direct bearing on the struggle for Jos, was a plus for the indigenous group in their cause, even if psychological. It is from this point that Col. Diinka's coup d tat of 1975 could be appreciated. The coup among other things appeared to be retaliation for the termination of Gowon's regime by the Hausa-Fulani. The point here is that the struggle for Jos was not isolated from the development at the regional and national

[21] Following the massacre of the Igbo in 1966, many of them undersold their houses and other assets as quickly as possible. The Hausa used this opportunity to under price the assets. Some of them were part of the Abandoned Property abandoned properties for more than three years were appropriated. However, such incidents of appropriation of the Igbo property was more common in Rivers State than in Hausa land in general

level. AsAmbaUva noted, one of the grievances of the Plateau people (including the Jos people) against the Hausa-Fulani was the magnitude and brutal manner in which the Middle Beltans in the Nigerian Military were executed following Dinka's Coup.[22] Experience in Nigeria has shown that, sometimes, conflict at the local level is a translation of development at the national level.

In addition to ethnic politics, economic relations sharpened ethnic polarization and tension between the two groups. As noted earlier, economically, the Hausa-Fulani dominated the economic sector in Jos metropolis.[23] The wealthy among them engaged in high-level speculative businesses, large-scale transport business, oil (petroleum products) marketing, estate ownership and some other big businesses. This group, as Pam noted, did not only maintain strong and useful contact with their relations at home and those at Federal Government institutions, but also had intimate attachment to the city of Jos.[24] The middle and peasant classes among them were involved in retail, cattle grazing, shoe shinning, small-scale transport and petty trade. Most of the establishments of the Hausa-Fulani, particularly the first category, were in the northern part of Jos city where federal and state structures were most prominent. In fact the area was regarded as the heart of Jos and its economic life wire.[25] By encasing the former Native Town and Township area of Jos, it has the highest concentration of the Hausa/Fulani in Jos. The indigenous group was largely made up of petty traders, civil servants, farmers, traditional medicine men, and iron workers. Since the closure of tin mining, the

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[22] T. AmbaUva, "Identity politics and the Jos crisis: Evidence, lessons and challenges of good governance", *African Journal of History and Culture* (AJHC) Vol. 2 , No. 3, pp. 2010, pp.42-52.
[23] Other groups that are in control of the economy of the city include the , Igbo the Yoruba, the Urhobo and some other southerners

[24] Dung Pam Sha, *The Politicization of Settler-Native Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos Central Nigeria*, Ibadan:Stirling-Horden, 2005,p.40

[25]H. Alozieuwa

economy of the people was largely dependent on agriculture. Tin mining activities coupled with cattle grazing caused land degradation and erosion that seriously affected agricultural output.[26] Moreover, some of them adopted modernized agriculture only in the late 1990s.[27] Consequently, many of them were found in the civil service. In fact, Plateau State as a whole, partly as a result of this development, has been described as a civil service state.[28] The Hausa-Fulani trade network placed them relatively at a better advantage than the indigenous group. Such economic lopsidedness added to the problem and sharpened the struggle for the city

With Structural Adjustment Programme of the 1980s, economic gap between these two groups widened further causing further anxiety and tension. Those in control of big businesses tightened their hold on the economy by buying lands and assessing credit facilities with which they further advanced their economic pursuit in Jos. For instance, Gaya Best has muted that about 89.5% of the acquired land went to businessmen and bureaucrats most of whom were Hausa-Fulani.[29] The latter's link with sources of credit like multinational companies, banks and their connections with their ethnic and religious men who were in control of federal institutions enabled them to access credit easily. For instance credit facilities were made available to them through the Bank of the North and Northern Nigerian Development of Company. Such facilities were not accessible to the other group. Therefore economic lopsidedness increased

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[26]M. W.Pasquini and M.J. Alexander, "Soil Fertility Management Strategies on theJos Plateau: The Need for Integrating
"Empirical" and "Scientific" Knowledge in Agricultural Development."*Geographical Journal*, Vol. 171. June, 2005,pp 112–24G.

[27]R. Blench, *Access Rights and Conflict over Common Pool Resources on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria*., 2003, P.2
http://www.rogerblench.info/Conflict/Jos section only.pdf;

[28]S. U. Fwatshak, African Entrepreneurship, *in Jos, Central Nigeria, 1902-1985*, California: University Press, 2010,p. 5
[29] S. Gaya-Best, *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State*, Nigeria, Ibadan: Spectrum, 2007

fear of domination by the Hausa Fulani and evoked ethnic sentiment at any slightest chance. Developments in the city were viewed by each group through ethnic spectacle. For example, the provision of facilities in Jos metropolis occupied mostly by Hausa-Fulani and the southerners under Urban Development Scheme was most often seen by the indigenous group as a neglect of their own area. Road constructions by Jos metropolitan Development Board in the 1990s were equally reacted to in like manner. It is pertinent to note at this juncture that the effect of structural Adjustment Programme was not only felt by the indigenes, its heat zoomed from the Hausa-Fulani side as well. High level of unemployment, income inequality, poverty and illiteracy were all recorded among the two groups as with other groups in Nigeria. The only difference was that some Hausa-Fulani men were in big businesses controlling millions of naira while the poor among them were the poorest of the poor as could be seen in the case of the Amajiris[30] who filled every street begging for money. Moreover, their population was small compared to that of the indigenous group.[31]Thus, in terms of opportunities which political power provides in a winner-take-all politics of Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani were in dire need like their counterpart in Jos. The lopsided economic development was a source of worry to the Berom, Afizere and the Anaguta because; the Nigerian electoral process has been monetized. The chances of winning election in such a system without money were slim. To forestall the domination of the Hausa-Fulani, the former clung to their control of political power in Jos through primordial ties. It is within this context that the concept of indigene-settler identity was evoked. Since the Nigeria constitution did not make

[30]The Amajiris are group of Hausa-Fulani unemployed youth who trod the streets of northern cities sustaining themselves on random living. They are known for buying conflicts from aggrieved parties at any slightest opportunity .

[31] The Hausa-Fulani in Jos was just a small fraction of the Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria who are found mostly in the far north of the country. The Plateau group are found in mainly in Plateau State

provision for non-indigene to hold certain political posts in area other than the person's birth place, the indigenous group used the indigene-settler identity to struggle for the control of Jos against its economic domination by the Hausa-Fulani whom historically and constitutionally were immigrant settlers. On the other hand, the Hausa-Fulani, to consolidate their economic stronghold in Jos kept pressing for favourable political frontier. Their categorization as settlers was not only rejected but a further claim was added to it: JOS BELONGS TO US[32]. In other words, they were not just indigenes of Jos but owners of Jos as well. With their financial strength and political connection at the federal level, the agenda seem realizable especially with the military dictatorship of the 1980s and 1990s

Suffice it to point out also that the parties' use of their cultural groups in the struggle equally heightened ethnic tension. While the Berom made use of Berom Progressive Union, which was transformed into Berom Educational and Cultural Organization (BECO) in 1964, to mobilize its people,[33] the Hausa Fulani, in addition to Hausa Tribal Party, formed the Jasawa Development Association(JDA) in 1987. These bodies were not only used to articulate the stand of each group in the struggle, but were equally employed to enhance the development of their members. For example, the Berom opened: Dalo Memorial High School in Foton, the Central Bank of Berom, the Community Bank which they own in conjunction with the Anaguta and the Afizere. The Hausa/Fulani had the Jasawa Community Bank and a number of Islamic educational institutions for their children. Though these were commendable developmental

[32] Interview with JibrilAbdulahi (73 years old) a retired civil servant, 27th Jan 2013, at Ali Kazuare, Alsosee Memoranda submitted by Alhaji Sale Hassan and AlhajiInuwa Ali, to Justice Nikki Tobi Commission of Enquiry , Plateau State of Nigeria, Government White Paper on the Report of Commission of Enquiry into the September 7th Disturbance in Jos, Ministry of Information and Communication, Online version, pp 26-29

[33] The Anaguta and Afizere later formed their own known as Anaguta Development Association (ADA) and Afizere Cultural and community Association (ACCA)

projects, their projection along ethnic line, no doubt, affected inter-ethnic relations. Accusations and counter accusations of marginalization were leveled against each other in both private and government establishments. The Jasawa Development Association in their memo complained of marginalization by the Plateau-dominated government in the area of employment, scholarship awards and participation in local government.[34]In addition, some of these cultural bodies were hijacked by politicians in their struggle for political power at the local and State levels. The key officials of BECO were members of the Middle Belt Forum which was a political forum. The JDA was not different. In 1987, Alhaji Tele Hassan was credited to have asked the Hausa-Fulani in Jos to take the political control of Jos from its holders in order to return to the pre-1947 status.[35] This mandate, among other things, explained the formation of Jasawa Development Association in that Year. The latter was said to have been used by the politicians of Hausa Fulani bloc in intimidating, and harassing their opponents in Jos and in Plateau in general. [36]

Arguably, therefore, the struggle for Jos was not, largely, a product of ethnic differentiation. After all there were five ethnic groups involved in the conflict. Why would the Anaguta ethnic group close ranks with the Berom, another ethnic group against the Hausa-Fulani? The Afizere would latter team up with the Hausa-Fulani against the Beron and Anaguta in the struggle for political power. Ethnicity was an instrument used particularly by the elite/political class in the struggle for political and economic power in Jos. It provided a fault line on which the struggle was carried on.By emphasizing and promoting ethnic differences, the political

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[34]Plateau State of Nigeria, Government White Paper, Report of the Judicial Commission of Enquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Jos and Its Environs, September, 2001, pp. 69-70
[35] PIDAN p. 98; Triumph Newspaper,, 21st January, 1987

[36]Ismaila Mohammed was said to have used the thugs recruited by Jasawa Development Association to terrorize his opponent during the Local Government election in Jos North. Pwat David Pam, (53years old) 2nd December 2012, at JentaApata

class was able to make the masses part of their struggle in Jos, Plateau and middle Belt. Economic frustration of the period made the masses pliable for exploitation.

Christian-Muslim Relations after 1947

Like ethnicity, there was no evidence of violent outbreak of inter-religious character between the two groups before the last decade of the 20th century. Contrary to the views of Imo, this was not as a result of the absence of tension along religious line.[37]Jos, right from the colonial period, was a seat of anti-Islamic mobilization in the north. The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio swept through the entire Hausa land and beyond. Available literature demonstrated how the British policy helped in preserving the Islamic north by restricting the activities of the Christian missionaries from penetrating the Hausa land.[38]The Plateau was one of the areas in the lower north where the missionaries were given free hand to operate. By 1945, the Sudan United Mission, the Church Missionary Society, the Roman Catholic Church and some others had not only gained a sizeable population of followers, but had also produced a crop of educated elite on whom the bulk of the population in Plateau depended on to carve an identity different from that of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims.[39] The hostile nature of pre-colonial relationship, the British attempt to impose the Hausa-Fulani emirate rule on the Plateau – a move which the latter believed was a consequence of the distorted information presented to the British in Bauchi[40], and the general attitude of the Northern Regional

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[37] C. Imo, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria" in *Mandyeng, Journal of Central Nigerian Studies*, Early Rains 2001, pp. 99-114

[38] See E.P.T. .Crampton,*Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975, T. G.O..Gbadamosi, and J. F. Ade Ajayi, "Islam and Christianity in Nigeria", in O. Ikime's*Groundwork*, ,*Groundwork of Nigeria History*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, 347 – 366

[39] M Mangvwat, pp. 395 428

[40]Ibid, 64 67

government that seemed to have used Islam to build one north, lent its weight to the desire for a separate identity from the Hausa-Fulani. Christianity became a basis for this movement. The fear of Hausa-Fulani domination in the region, particularly through forceful conversion of the pagans to Islamic religion, was rife among the Christian missionaries in Plateau. This explained constant support the Plateau elites got from missionaries in their pressure for freedom of worship from colonial government and latter, northern regional government.[41]Encouraged by the support of the missionaries, which Kukahargued was more of a moral support than otherwise, and with western education, the Berom, who were among the first to gain such opportunity in Plateau, championed the anti-Islamic cause in Jos, in Plateau and in the Middle Belt.

Sequel to political development at the national level from the late 1940s-1960s, the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Alhaji Ahmad Bello, intensified his political drive towards building a strong and monolithic North using Islam. With externally accessed fund, a massive Islamization of the whole North, particularly the Middle Belt, was embarked upon. The Saduana was noted to have remarked cynically about the Plateau in the regional assembly thus: "*As for slaves (the Plateau people), it is only because Islamic power is not strong here that we have not got slaves to sell*.[42]The drive for a strong North with which to context against the Western and Eastern Nigeria for the soul of Nigeria on the eve of independence was garbed in Islamic religion in Plateau and in the Middle Belt as a whole, thanks to the relationship between Islam and politics. The first major reaction of the Plateau people along religious line was in 1948. In a response to the motion moved by Dangogo at the Northern Regional Assembly, that all

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[41] The missionaries supported the Christians elites in some of the conferences organized for the purpose. In some cases, they pressurized British Government from abroad on the issue concerning the Christian group in the Middle belt as a whole.

[42]Ahmadu Bello, Northern House of Assembly Debate, 1955. P.6, quoted in M. H. Kukah, *Religion*, *Power and Politics in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum, 1993, p. 48

missionary activities in northern Nigeria be suppressed on the ground that they were causing confusion, a meeting of all Christians was held in Bukuru, Jos to determine their fate amidst the perceived threat posed by Islam.[43] As Kukah rightly pointed out, it was obvious that not only Christian religion seemed to be threatened; the political future of non-Muslims was also in doubt.[44] Consequently, officers were elected to take up the task of propagating the anti-Islamic feeling by raising the political consciousness of the non-Muslims in Plateau and the entire Middle Belt. The Bukuru meeting which was known as RaholKannang meeting had Rev. David Lot (Panyan) as its president and Mosses Rwang (Berom)as its secretary.[45] At the second meeting of the group held in another Berom village, Du, the post of travelling officer whose duty was to travel to various communities in the region to sensitize the people on the need for Christian unity against the threat of Islam was elected.[46] One consequence of this meeting was the formation of non-Muslim League, a body through which Christians were to articulate their responses to Hausa-Fulani Islamic threat in the area. Following the formation of political parties on ethnic platform in the early 1950s, the League metamorphosed into a political party, the Middle Zone League with its headquarters in Jos.[47] In 1955, it merged with the Middle Belt People's Party to form the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) which began to demand for a separate state – the Middle Belt State. Though disunited, common threat of domination by the Hausa-Fulani Muslims in the North and its implication for the political feature of the Plateau and indeed the entire Middle Belt brought

[43]M.H.Kukah, p. 48

[44] Ibid

[45]C. Logams, Middle Belt Movement in Nigeria Political Development: Study in Political Identity" Ph.D Thesis, Keele, 1985 pp731-36

[46] Ibid,

[47] Ibid

all Christian groups together in what could be regarded as an anti-Islamic alliance. Little wonder the missionaries were accused of whipping up anti-Muslim sentiments in the Lower north. At the Muslim Congress of 1956, they were accused of being behind the move for religious freedom and separate state. Reporting on the perceived role of the missionaries in the Christians anti-Islamic move, the Nigerian Citizen Newspaper writes:

> *... who would deny that the cry for religious freedom which echoed at the Christian Council of Meeting in Jos and at the Western Region was not evidence of Christian Missionaries' organization…. By writing a clause about religious freedom our constitution, we are causing the elimination of that freedom, inviting unrest*[48]

As pointed out earlier, the missionaries provided their support to Christian elites in Plateau in championing the cause against Hausa-Fulani Muslims. This was more of moral support in form of advice and granting of leave of absence to mission workers who were involved in the struggle for Christian identity.[49]Patrick Dokotri, who was part of the elite also affirmed that the missionaries supported the idea of a separate state even though they were not the one who originally muted the idea.[50]

Suffice it to argue at this juncture that religion, just like ethnicity, was an instrument used in a struggle for some other gains. Though on the facial value, the anti-Islamic movement was a struggle for the survival of Christianity in Plateau, beyond this, religion was meant to be the platform on which the political and economic desires of the elites were pursued. "*Christianity and Christian identity seemed to have fluctuated with the fortunes*

[48]MagajiDanbata," Missionaries Condemned at Muslim Congress", *Nigerian Citizens*, 20.6,1956 p. 2

[49] Ibid 51

[50]Patrick Dokotri quoted in M. Mangvwat,p. 410

of Christian politicians".[51]A few points will buttress this. Though Christianity was embraced by the Plateau groups in Jos and other Plateau groups as against Islamic religion of the Hausa-Fulani, majority of the indigenous people remained pagans.[52] In other words, if it were purely on religious grounds, the mass population of the three Plateau ethnic groups in Jos would have given their support neither to the Christians nor to the Muslims. They provided their support because they perceived Islamic domination in terms of Hausa-Fulani rule over them. Religion, just like ethnicity provided a clear fault line from which the identity of the Hausa-Fulani was defined by the Plateau population at this period. Such religious and ethnic overlap on the side of the Hausa-Fulani was a good one for the political elite of Plateau to exploit. They therefore projected their cause on religious as well as ethnic grounds.

Religious exploitation was also associated with Western Regional interest in Middle belt as whole. The AG's interest in alliance with the UMBC was said to be behind the drive for a separate state and the use of religious politics in breaking up the north.[53]A UMBC politician who defected to the NPC reported after his defection:

> *The southern politicians suggested to us that we should make these demands on the basis of* ***religious politics****. They said that if we are serious about emphasizing* ***religious politics****, they would give us any kind of help. Everyone*

[51] H. M. Kukah, p. 54

[52] The figure produced by the 1952 census which placed the Christians(84.5%) as the most populous in Jos was in relation to Muslims(12%) and traditionalist (3.5%) in the township. See Plotincov p. 76. The bulk of the people in Plateau at this period was largely pagan who resided outside the Jos metropolis; Also see C.G. Anes p. 310 .

[53] B. J. Dudley,p. 183

> *knows that the agitation for the Middle Belt State is a dead issue.*[54]

For a Yoruba, political icon, Obafemi Awolowo, who understood the importance of religion in balkanizing the North – a challenge which his region and party also faced,[55] it was easy to sell that to the embryonic political elites of the Middle Belt.

Finally, the attitude of the Plateau politicians showed clearly where their interest rested. On being provided with political opportunities and largesse from the Hausa-Fulani power bloc, the struggle was weakened or sold. Pastor Lot and Mr. Dokotri, for instance, later joined the NPC and were given political appointment.[56] In his assurance to Ahmadu Bello of his support, Pastor Lot displayed what looked like Christian assurance to the Sarduana: "*All of us in this region are ready at every second to sacrifice ourselves to die, I repeat, to die in order that Ahmadu Bello will be alive. I know sir that all Christian community (sic) are always praying to God that Sir Ahmadu Bello will be protected by God Almighty hands"*[57]. Having placed their own personal interest above that of their faith and their people, they contemplated a Christian body that will function within the Islamic NPC. Thus in 1964, Northern Christian Association (NCA) was founded with the Sarduana as one of its patron. As if this was not enough, the seat of NCA was shifted to Kaduna, for reasons not far from the desire of the NPC to be in control of the Christian body.[58] Although it maybe argued that Sarduana's conciliatory speeches *vis-à-vis* religion especially in the

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[54] S.A. Atum, Northern House of Assembly Debate February, 27, 1965 quoted in H.M. Kukah,p. 51

[55] The minority group in the Mid-West was also agitating for a separation from the Western Region. However, their own agitation was not as strong as the Middle Belt in the north.

[56] H. M. Kukah, 51; Also see Mangvwat. pp. 465-468, C. Logans, pp.785-793

[57] Pastor David Lots quoted in H.M.Kukah, 51

[58] Ibid

1950s, might have accounted, considerably, for the need to close ranks with the Muslims, it showed the shallowness of the elites' religious cause. It is on this note that religion could be described as a double-edged sword. It can be used in managing and resolving conflict as well as providing a platform for escalating and enduring conflict. In the case of the Plateau, it was used by the embryonic political elites in building an identity different from the Hausa-Fulani Muslims in the face of fear of domination by the latter. But when the political cuttings were drawn in their favour, they employed its conciliatory potentials.

It will seem as if attention in this section is more on Middle Belt and Plateau than on Jos itself. As pointed out earlier, like ethnicity, religious identity politics in Jos, at this period, was not isolated from the development at the zonal and regional level. Even interdenominational sects did not count so much then as is the case today. It is true that the Hausa-Fulani in Jos belonged to a Kano-based party, which religiously tilt to Tijaniyya brotherhood as against the Sokoto NPC of Qadriyya, in Christian-Muslim relationship of the early period, such demarcations did not matter. Little or no attention was paid to intra-denominational sects by either Muslims or Christians. The role of such demarcation in Christian-Muslim relationship is more of a recent phenomenon with the advent of Pentecostalism and Islamic fundamentalism. Thus, the relationship between the champions of Christian cause and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims was transported down to their people at the local level. However, it is important to note that in spite of fear and suspicion at the group level, at the level of individual, relationship was not so tensed up especially as the mass populations of the two camps were not highly atoned to the development at the regional level. Both Muslims and Christians interacted at the individual levels. As the demarcation in the township dissolved following the exit of colonial authority, both ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims penetrated all nooks and crannies of the town seeking for means of livelihood. Even though there were some areas that were regarded as Hausa-Fulani stronghold or Berom, Anaguta, Afizere stronghold, this did

not imply that people from opposite camps did not settle there for business or any other activity. Houses built by Muslims were occupied by Christians as tenants and vice versa. In many cases, both Hausa-Fulani Muslims and Christian of Jos Plateau were found as tenants in one building.[59] Stores built by the Hausa-Fulani Muslims were occupied by the Christians of Berom, Anaguta and Afizere stalks and vice versa. Similarly, business partnerships were established across religious and ethnic divideand people from the two sides were found, inclubs and business associations. Though Hausa-Fulani maintained its culture, its language, cultural wears and other social life were copied by the local people in Jos as well as some southerners. The constructions of schools provided avenue for interaction between Christians and Muslims. Since most of the voluntary schools were owned by missionaries up till the mid-1970s, Muslims children were trained in most of them alongside Christians. With the establishment of tertiary institution in Jos, both Christian and Muslim students shared accommodations in hostels and rooms and received lectures in same classroom. In fact, Imo has argued that the University of Jos is the only University in the whole of Northern Nigeria where Islamic Studies co-habit in one department with Christian Religious Knowledge.[60] Similarly, medical facilities provided by Christian missionaries were utilized by Muslims and Christians in Jos. Ojefua confirmed that in the early 1980s, more Hausa-Fulani were treated in the Fatima Hospital than the group from Jos.[61]

As from the 1980s, the relatively cordial relationship at the micro level began to give way to high tension and mutual suspicious. This was as a result of three major reasons; First, the 1979 constitutional conference revealed the role religion will play in the nation's second republic and in a

[59] The three stores which were being occupied by my sister and her husband in TafawaBalewa 1984 when I visited them were owned by an Hausa man Alhaji Isa Dodo. The latter was using one of the stores for his own business.

[60] C. Imo Christian-Muslim Relations

[61] Mrs. HellenOjefua (73 years old), A Rtd midwife , 23rd January, 2013 at the University of Jos

democratic Nigeria in general. Second, the 1980s witnessed the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria particularly in the northern axis – a consequence of the Iranian revolution of the period. Third, Pentecostal churches multiplied in Nigeria injecting an overdose of fundamentalism in the polity. These developments helped to introduce tension between Christians and Muslims at the local level in Jos. For instance, the level of tolerance at that micro level gradually gave way to mutual fear and suspicion following the infiltration of the Islamic fundamentalists, the Maitatsine, in Jos after the murder of their leader Mohammad Marwa in Kano. The effect of this infiltration was captured by Imo in these words:

> *When the news of their arrival was disseminated, the Christians especially the indigenous Plateau people were placed on the alert. They became vigilant and no longer took matters relating to their relationship with the Muslims for granted. The relationship between the Muslims and Christians began to be characterized by fear and suspicion.*[62]

While the large population of Christians in Jos was afraid of being attacked by the fundamentalists, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Jos who were not part of the fundamentalists were afraid of being attacked by the dominant Christian population in Jos who may not distinguish between the fundamentalists and the traditional Muslims. Such fear and suspicion further affected the relationship. Muslims road block during the Juma'at prayer, for instance, began to receive negative comments and in some cases some Christian groups adopted the same measure during prayers.[63]The enlistment of Nigeria under the organization of Islamic

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[62] C. Imo.

[63] One of those Christian groups that adopted such measure was ECWA. It was said to have claimed one of their members in 1994. The man who stayed behind after a church service to clear the road block was found dead in a gutter the following day. He was believed to have been killed by an unknown person (s)

Conference and reaction it generated increased further the fears and suspicion of Christians all over Nigeria. In cities like Jos where both group existed in substantial number, mutual antagonism was rife. Utterances and attitudes which ordinarily were welcomed or ignored became intolerable as they were scrutinized with religious spectacle. It was under this condition that Kafancha and Kaduna violence of 1987 broke out between Christians and Muslims. In Jos, though there were no such outbreaks. Fear was rife in the city. Christian Muslim relationship at the local and individual level was no longer what it was before this period. For instance, some Muslim landlords declined renting their houses to Christians. A good number of Christians were no longer willing to be accommodated in a house owned by Hausa-Fulani Muslims.[64]It was in the midst of this fear, suspicion and tension that the fierce struggle for Jos at the group level resurged in the early 1990s. Perhaps, strengthened by the feeling that the power at the center was headed by a Muslim, the Hausa-Fulani formed JDA to struggle for Jos once again. The formation of this was, as noted earlier, a follow up to the call by Alhaji Sale Hasan for Muslim youth to reclaim Jos for the Hausa-Fulani in Jos. This development was viewed by the Plateau group with misgivings. For many, it was a move by the Muslims to cause problem in Jos.[65] The Jasawa youth did not help matters as they were involved in all sorts of uncanny behavior including intimidation and harassment of innocent citizens. Through the pressure mounted by the organization, Jos North LGA was carved out in 1991 by the Military Government of Ibrahim Babangida. Consequently, intergroup relation took a dramatic turn throwing up,

[64] The researchers in-law was one of those who following the development in Jos changed apartment from house owned by a Gombe man in Bauchi Road to the one by an Igbo in Apata in 1989

[65] Some Berom believed that the JDA was formed in order to use it to intimidate them particularly during election. Bitrus Pam,(63year old) 21ST January, 2013, at Ahmadu Bellow Way

more than ever, religion and ethnicity as the most crucial instrument in the struggle.

Conclusion

The creation of the Berom Native Authority and the appointment of Rwang Pam in 1947 as its head by the colonial government did not end the struggle for the soul of Jos between the local groups in Jos and the Hausa-Fulani migrant settlers. To maintain the 1947statuesquo, the indigenous elite in Jos employed ethnic and religious identities to consolidate its political gain and to further strengthen its political stronghold in Jos. The Hausa-Fulani, on the other hand, maintained and further consolidated its economic fortunes in Jos. The move by the Military Government of Ibrahim Babagida to create Jos North L.G.A. appeared to have altered what looked like equilibrium of power between the two. Jos North L.G.A was not only a subtle reversal of the 1947 status quo, it was a move to give the Hausa-Fulani a political power in the heart of Jos. Furthermore, the struggle for Jos from 1947 was largely the elite's struggle. However, the challenges of the structural adjustment programme, religious fundamentalism and the nature of political climate in Nigeria as from the 1980s opened the way for the masses involvement. Arguably, the tension between the indigenous group in Jos and the Hausa-Fulani did not end after 1947. Although it largely remained at the elitist level, religious, economic and political changes of the 1980s onward created a climate that generated a dramatic turn in the nature of intergroup relations between the two groups.