

# Ethno-Religious Crises and Terrorism as Bane of Economic Development and Good Governance in Contemporary Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The history of Nigeria is replete with ethno-religious crises and diverse acts of violence that have characterized its existence as a nation. Nigerian's crises have taken an exponential dimension, from ethnic clientelistic tendencies to religious bigotry and now the new terrorism-killer herdsmen who go about as armed bandits and are kidnapping for ransom, sacking and uprooting communities, seizing farmlands from the autochthonous occupants who hitherto use to cultivate such farmlands for subsistent and commercial purposes. The main objective of this paper was to examine how ethno-religious crises and terrorism in Nigeria have hampered economic development and good governance and to show how the new terrorism originated, its causes and effects that have retarded economic growth and good governance and advance possible measures that could address the menace of these killer herdsmen/armed bandits. Giving the socio-historical nature of the theme, qualitative research methodology was used. This involved content analyses of available secondary sources and focus group discussions. From the data collection and technique of data analysis, the researchers were inspired to anchor the research on the attachment theory. From the non-statistical data gotten through personal communication and in various focus group discussions, the results revealed the starkest truths. It was revealed that religious fundamentalist jihadists lack childhood attachment to good parental upbringing, thus lending credence to the attachment theory discussed in the paper. The study also revealed that these jihadists have over the years been planning to overthrow the secular Nigerian government and that these new religious expansionists are bent on Islamizing the Nigerian state and that as conquering and apocalyptic warriors, they have links with other Fulani who share same Fulanization ideology and vow to enshrine Sharia law at whatever cost-including meaningful economic development and good governance. The paper concluded and recommended among other things that the restructuring of the Nigerian state to reflect true federalism is one of the surest ways of arresting the present insecurity situation in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** New Terrorism, Killer Herdsmen, Kidnappers, Armed Bandits, Autochthonous Occupants, Terrorism

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Research

Nigerians now live in precariously uncertain times. The security of this country by the government of the day has long seized to be a sine qua non. All kinds of social problems have become the fate of many Nigerians. Obiefuna and Adams [37] captures this peculiar situation of the Nigerian nation thus:

In contemporary Nigeria, there are a plethora of perilous

social problems that its citizens are faced with. In almost all the six geopolitical zones, States, Local Government Areas, Wards and Communities, people face all forms of social problems which include, but are not limited to: acts of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, police brutality, cabal or corporate influence, Islamophobia, child abuse, poverty, abortion, religious fundamentalism, unemployment, gambling, various forms of sharp practices, cultism, gangsterism, drug abuse, social deviations, forced labour, forced and/or early marriage, youth restiveness/protests, and displacement. The list is

endless – some of these social problems are caused by the government's inability and failure to attend to the essential needs of its citizenry. The situation in Nigeria has become so volatile that one needs to be seriously conscious, careful and vigilant wherever one finds his or herself.

Every careful observer of this ugly phenomenon would see, unequivocally, that the observation of the above scholars is appropriate for the circumstances Nigerians find themselves today. In fact, ethno-religious crises are not only ubiquitous but have become recurring decimals thereby, making headlines on various fora including media (social and print). Every nation in contemporary times however advanced technologically, or less developed, assays to consider the security of its citizen as an indispensable element of its governance. This is not the case in Nigeria. It is, therefore, in this light that Ejiofor [21] opines that terrorism has become so mobile that terrorists go about undisturbed. What that means is that terrorist activities are now characterized by an extreme degree of fluidity such that terrorists move with great freedom and go about unperturbed and unscathed.

The Nigeria of the twenty-first century is characterized, according to Iwe [28] by religious fanaticism. This has birthed several terrorist groups in the history of Nigeria. In fact, ethno-religious violence and religious fundamentalist ideas seem to be the drivers of every sector of Nigeria's economy. Lamenting further about this perilous and tottering circumstances in Nigeria, and with particular reference to the role of the "religion of peace" in the present insecurity of the Nigerian State, Bonk [11] posits: "In the case of the Muslim religion whose divine aegis is invoked to legitimate extreme and seemingly indiscriminate violence against civilians, scarcely a day passes without widespread and repetitive media attention. And of course, the media is not making things up". The above assertion is not drawn from an invidious analysis of the reality on ground. The statement was made by the above scholar in a keynote address in a conference, held at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan Oyo State, far back in 2013. Today, this assertion still holds sway nine years after. Could this be a prophecy?

A similar statement was made barely a year apart by NnamdiKanu [31] in his twitter page on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 2014. He affirms that, "Then a group, deadlier than Boko Haram will emerge, they will seize our farmlands, rape our women, kill our women, kill our people and their master will protect, defend and even arm them, because their sole agenda is to enslave us forever. Those who cannot see it now, will see it. Later the hatred in their souls for my people is legendary. They do not see us as humans. They kill, they slaughter, they burn and they destroy. Mindless bloodletting is in their DNA; my people are in trouble".

The above view as expressed by NnamdiKanu, the self-acclaimed Biafran agitator, eight years ago, shows that the Nigerian experience of the present ethno-religious crisis is not only pathetic but arousing scornful pity as well. It is a deplorable, despicable and contemptible state of affairs. It is a difficult or unpleasant set of circumstances where injustice has been glorified and honoured. Truth is not just jettisoned,

despised and ignored, it is outrightly criticized. It cannot be spoken even in churches or mosques. The new terrorist narratives have changed all that. Say the truth even in a group chat on any of the social media or in print, relatives and close associates would put a call across to you, or private chat you, warning you that they do not want to lose you or have you kidnapped by government agents or agents of the new terrorists. Friends would warn you that you have no right to say the truth except, perhaps, the commodities (cows) of the new terrorists. Cows alone have unfringeable rights and their owners. Their owners are being supported by the government of the day. They have existed for more than five years and the government's reluctance to emphatically declare them as TERRORISTS shows that the cabal's influence is indeed powerful.

The new terrorists have spread their tentacles far beyond the shores of Nigeria. The ideology of these fundamentalists has a deep root in the minds of their followers. The preys are usually the less privileged and uneducated people who are hoodwinked into yielding to such fundamentalist teachings. Fanatical Muslims could just be unpredictable and brutal. A case in point is the recent lynching of a college girl, Miss Deborah Samuel on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 in Sokoto State of Nigeria, over alleged blasphemous comment about Prophet Muhammad on her class WhatsApp group. She is said to have commented that the WhatsApp group was for academic purposes and not for religious issues. This attracted the rage of fanatical Muslim students who later dragged her off the security men who had taken custody of her and the angry mob stoned her to death and set her ablaze. This is how serious ethno-religious crises are in Nigeria. It is, therefore, in light of this ricketiness and giddy ethno-religious circumstances of the present Nigerian state that this paper intends to examine how this affects the development index and good governance in Nigeria.

## 1.2. Statement of Problem

Ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria have affected almost every sector of the Nigerian economy. In the area of education, schools, especially in the northern part of Nigeria are the worst hit. Socially, people, especially northern citizens have suffered all forms of social problems including displacement, all as a result of ethnic and religious crises. Studies such as Obiefuna and Adams [36], Adams [2], Adams [3] have all lend credence to the role these crises have played in the displacement of millions of Northern citizens of the Nigerian State. Apart from the above studies, scholars like Nmah and Amannambu [34], Ochonu [38], Olomajobi [39], Ufuona [46], Moumouni [33] and Hodgkin [25] have all shown, in their various studies that ethnic and religious crises have dragged the Nigerian State into a complete state of disrepair.

While one alludes to the fact that the above studies have discussed the various aspects that ethnic and religious crises have affected the Nigerian economy, the dimension of how this affects the economic development and good governance has scarcely been researched on. This makes this study apt as

it seeks to address the paucity of literature in the aforementioned area, especially within the last decade.

### 1.3. Purpose of the Study

The overriding purpose of this study is to investigate how ethnic and religious crises have served as the bane of development and good governance in the Nigerian state. Apart from the above general purpose, other specific purposes are:

- 1) To examine the trajectories of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria,
- 2) To evaluate the various causes of ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria, and
- 3) To examine, and attempt to profile the new terrorist who is either perceived as an apocalyptic or conquering warrior, bent on euthanizing the already dying Nigerian nation.
- 4) To examine Nigeria's Development Index and Governance amidst ethno-religious crises with the aim of proffering remedies.

### 1.4. Research Questions

The following oral interview questions were used by the researchers to elicit responses from discussants during field trip:

- 1) To what extent do you agree that ethnic and religious crises have adversely affected the development index and good governance of the Nigerian State?
- 2) How would you respond to the trajectories of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria?
- 3) What, in your view, are the causes of ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria?
- 4) Can you attempt the definition of a terrorist, especially within the Nigerian context?

## 2. Research Method

The study made use of oral interviews designed to evoke responses from participants through one-on-one oral interviews and focus group discussions. Participants were randomly selected across the ages/sexes from 20 years of age to 85 years and above. In view of the fact that the study is to assess the impact of ethnic and religious crises on the nation's development index and good governance, a cross section of both Christian and Muslim adult believers were interviewed either personally or in focus group discussions. The research setting is Calabar Municipality and Nassarawa. Nassarawa is a predominantly Muslim community that is located within the Calabar Metropolis. Both communities are within the Calabar Urban area of Cross River State, Nigeria, West African sub-region.

The study's sample and sampling techniques comprised of one hundred and fifty (150) participants that were randomly drawn from both communities. 75 participants were randomly selected from each community and interviewed either personally or via focus group discussions. The

minimum numbers of focus group discussants were 8 participants, while the maximum numbers were 12 participants. A total of 19 focus group discussions were conducted, bringing the total number of those under this group to 130 while the remaining twenty (20) respondents were orally interviewed in the aforementioned study area. This study also made use of research instrument designed to gather data from respondents. The instrument was oral research questions that were adopted to gather non-statistical data from participants.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

One theory relevant to this research paper is the attachment theory. The attachment theory is used in this paper to show how, according to Saltman [43] insecure attachment with one's parents could lead to difficulty in relating with people in any society and with one's own children as well. The theory is relevant here because, as shall be seen much later, it shows that the new terrorists who now cause all kinds of mayhem and violent acts of terror in Nigeria, no doubt, have insecure attachments to their caregivers, no good parenting and poor parental backgrounds or upbringing. Proponents of this theory maintain the view that childhood development is key to how adults behave in society. They agree that socio-emotional imbalance in children leads to deviant behaviours during adulthood. Keller [32] in particular, stresses further that, "moreover, attachment quality (secure vs. insecure) is assumed to have far-reaching implications not only for socioemotional development but also for all other domains of development".

The attachment theory has John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth as its pioneers. Bretherton [12] writes that John Bowlby was the first to propound the theory. He says that John Bowlby developed this theory from his experience in London Child Guidance Clinic, a place he had several experiences with many maladjusted children who had poor parental upbringing and insecure childhood. He notes that Bowlby's experience showed that "like the boy at the school for maladjusted children, many of the clinic patients were affectionless and prone to stealing. Through detailed examination of 44 cases, Bowlby was able to link their symptoms to histories of maternal deprivation and separation". In view of the above assertion, one could categorically maintain that, in the light of examining the current insecurity situation and the activities of the new terrorists – Fulani herdsmen and armed bandits in Nigeria, there is no doubt that they have insecure attachment and may have suffered all kinds of emotional traumas during childhood. The perpetrators of most ethno-religious crises in Nigeria belong to this category of people. The result of course, is the resolve to destroy, annihilate, conquer, uproot and occupy any community in sight. As noted above, the new terrorists have histories of not only maternal and parental 'deprivation and separation' as affirmed by Bowlby, but that they were born and bred in "the culture of violence" as well, as observed by Obiefuna and Adams [36].

Buba [13] also lends her voice to the assertions by the above scholars when she concludes that terrorists' activities in Nigeria have links with poor parental arrangements and the *almagiri* factor in Northern Nigeria. This position shows that the importance of family upbringing is crucial in moulding children into adulthood. Thus, lending credence to the importance of the attachment theory used in this study. Bretherton [12] further writes that: "One of the major tenets of security theory is that infants and young children need to develop a secure dependence on parents before launching out into unfamiliar situations". He further notes much earlier, the importance of secured dependence on parents thus:

Familial security in the early stages is of a dependent type forms a basis from which the individual can work out gradually, forming new skills and interest in other fields. Where familial security is lacking, the individual is handicapped by the lack of what might be called a secure base italics added from which to work.

This, no doubt, further strengthens the applicability of the attachment theory in this paper as this goes on to prove that Fulani herdsmen who are the new Nigerian terrorists have serious childhood issues. This is because from an early and young age, they are detached from their parents and asked to go grazing with either their parent's herds or those belonging to uncles or other distant relatives. In fact, there is even a culture of 'business settlement'. A situation whereby a young boy is sent to herd farm animals for a period of time-some five to ten years, others ten to fifteen years and thereafter, he is settled with livestock after the duration of service. This culture is predominant among the Fulani. It is a fertile ground for all kinds of religious fundamentalist ideas to be inculcated in the young people who are detached from their biological parents. It is imperative to state here, that this extrafamilial relationship predisposes these young minds to all forms of radicalization processes and exposes them to both local and international terrorist cell groups. This situation leaves the vulnerable young people to violent cultural (Obiefuna and Adams [36]) upbringing without parental interference. It is in this regards that Keller [32] writes: "Many intervention programmes aimed at fostering good parenting and infant/child care are based on principles of attachment theory expressed as positive parenting practices". where these positive or good parenting practices are lacking, as one can see in the lives of most Fulani and *almagiri* children in Northern Nigeria, the consequence of such gap is usually disastrous and has resulted in the birth of this new terrorist group called cattle herdsmen/armed bandits. It therefore, follows that these ethnic and religious backgrounds cause tensions in the society and often results in crises that affect meaningful development and good governance.

#### 4. The Trajectories of Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

The situation of the present Nigerian state is that of a sorry state. Little wonder Obiefuna and Adams [37] opine that

Nigeria needs God's intervention. In spite of the above assertion by these scholars, the history of Nigeria is replete with violent acts. Right from the pre-independence era, the Nigerian state has not failed to register cases of violence on its innocent citizens. In fact, it is beyond the scope of this paper to catalogue all violent cases in Nigeria and give the history from the pre-independence era, independence and post-independence eras. This, nonetheless, will not deter the paper from examining a brief history of the phenomenon from, at least, the most recent past.

Historically, ethnic and religious identities are very observable aspects of the Nigerian state. They decide who wins elections, especially that of the presidency and gets appointed into one key area of the national economy or the other. There is no crisis in Nigeria that does not have ethnic clientelistic or religious fundamentalist undertones. Scholars such as Oluduro [40], Ekundayo [22] observed that most Nigerians are very religious. This has made other scholars to also add that religion, therefore, is a key player in the Nigerian state Canci and Odukoya [15]. The first and most prominent ethnic and religious crisis is the jihad of 1804 led by Usman Dan Fodio. This religious war has become a reference point in Nigerian history whenever one discusses issues of ethno-religious violence. In light of the foregoing, Amanambu [10] postulates thus: "In 1804, a young Islamic scholar, Usman Dan Fodio successfully overran the entire ancient Hausa land and overthrew dreadful authorities with the launch of Islamic Jihad". This jihad laid the foundation stone of what is today known as Fulani herdsmen-the new terrorists. Like their ancestor in centuries past, they too are driven by the desire to Islamize the Nigerian people as a whole. As the 1804 jihad had ethnic and religious ingredients that fueled the embers of violence in that century, so do one sees it in the Nigerian state of today. The leader, (Usman Dan Fodio) was a full Fulani man, who, by 1789, according to Sulaiman [44], affirms that he (Usman Dan Fodio) was so influential, powerful and had recruited and trained many Islamic militia who became a serious threat to the then kings in northern Nigeria, notably, Bawa Jan Garzo, the king of Gobir.

This powerful and influential Fulani man changed the narratives of most northern kingdoms and the relic of his adventures still haunts the Nigerian state and its people to date. There is no way one can deny the fact that the new terrorist – Fulani herdsmen/armed bandits whose ancestry is traced to Usman Dan Fodio and the legacies of 1804 jihad are bent on conquering the Nigerian state, a feat, their leader, icon and legend failed to achieve in 1804. This feat which Usman Dan Fodio could not achieve in 1804 is yet the dream of the new terrorists. To show how resolute and determined, the crusaders of the Islamization ideology are, Chinweizu [18] cites Dr Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto's speech to his caliphate constituency on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 1960 in a Parrot News Paper thus:

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great-grandfather, Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities of the

north as willing tools and the south as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us, and never allow them to have control over their future.

From every indication, it is clear that today's terrorists, with this strong ethno-religious indoctrination, are only playing the script of their forebears. They are trying to achieve what they perceived as a failed feat that their forefather Usman Dan Fodio failed to achieve.

Apart from the relic of the 1804 jihad that laid the foundation of the current ethno-religious crises, Ochonu [38] contends that it is the 1914 amalgamation that led to the present ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. He declares that "the amalgamation made little sense otherwise, and has often been invoked by Nigerians as the foundation of the rancorous relationship between the two regions of Nigeria". One may see reasons with him because the amorphous geopolitical entity called Nigeria does not possess the unifying elements that could qualify it as a sovereign state. This is so owing to the fact that at every point in Nigeria's history, one ethnic religious group tends to exhibit various hegemonic tendencies over other minority groups. Throughout its history as a nation, the Nigerian state has had to struggle with one religious teacher, with ethnic or religious biases or the other. Right from the time of Usman Dan Fodio who set the pace, there has always been one religious teacher whose activity(ies) is/are tied to violence, not without religious connotations. So, religion plays a central role in the lives of most Nigerians especially among the Muslim north. This, in a way, has undoubtedly retarded good developmental strides in all spheres of life. Cambell [14] corroborates the above statement by affirming thus:

Some African scholars have recently highlighted the role of Nigeria's religious leaders by providing specific instances of them exercising their power and influence. Particularly notable was that of imams in northern Nigeria and even the Sultan of Sokoto in promoting vaccination against polio in the face of fundamentalist claims that vaccines were part of a Christian plot to limit Muslim births. Religious leaders play a central role in determining whether an individual will accept contraceptives and family planning.

Thus, Islamic religious leaders have always played a role in good, bad, and ugly circumstances in Nigeria. This is as a result of the control of the Sokoto caliphate. In fact, after the British colonialists have gone, the Nigerian state fell into the hands of the caliphate colonialists. It is the caliphate colonialists and their teachers that are supporting all forms of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. There is, however, no doubt that the British handed over Nigeria to the Muslim north. Chinweizu [18] affirms:

The British officially created northern Nigeria in 1900, and southern Nigeria in 1906. The separate colonial administrations of these two entities were amalgamated in 1914 on the explicitly stated principle that northern Nigeria, 'the husband', would financially live off the dowry/revenue/resources of southern Nigeria, 'the wife'. Then, during the process of decolonization, between 1955

and 1960, the British made the caliphate the successor to their colonial power by rigging the caliphates political party, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) into office. The caliphate i.e. The Sarkuna or feudal ruling class of the North (the caliphate-equivalent of the British aristocracy), has ever since made that amalgamation principle an article of faith and has enforced its 'husband' rights as Allah-given, permanent and unamendable.

He further stresses that it is the caliphate ideology and influence that controlled the Nigerian security apparatuses, all government and non-governmental parastatals. He maintains that it is its influence that made Olusegun Obasanjo, a former Nigerian president not to take drastic measure in curbing the menace of Boko Haram when it first started in 2002. All these are not happening without key players like fundamentalist Muslim religious leaders and the political support from the caliphate. The attendant result of this unholy union is the continuous backwardness and retrogression that is seen in terms of economic backwardness and bad governance in the Nigerian state. In four different focus group discussions, participants accepted that ethnic clientelism, religious fundamentalism couple with the caliphate colonialism have affected the speedy economic growth of the Nigerian state. In light of the above assertion, Nosike [35] also agrees with the observation of the above discussants by maintaining that this scenario has not only affected but beclouded the visionary leadership potentials of an average Nigerian leader. In like manners, Eluemunor [23] adds that even the said All Progressive Congress (APC) which promised to savage the economic situation has failed to do so. He asserts that though the party came into power through ethno-religious sentiments, it "has proved to be a medicine worse than the disease it was voted into power to cure".

Historicizing ethno-religious crises in this single research paper is a huge task. What has been done so far is laying the foundation for one's understanding of what one sees now as the new terrorists. With the strong waves of the 1804 Usman Dan Fodio's jihad that swept across most northern states and some part of southern Nigerian, series of ethno-religious crises greeted the young entity called Nigeria prior to her independence, during and in the post-independence era. Olomjobi [39] attempted to list a few cases. He mentions, first, those that took place prior to independence. These were the Jos crises of 1945 and Markurdi crisis of 1947. The Gideon Meriodere Urhobo Article of 1949 and Kano's riots of 1953. Then came the independence violent riots that took place in Tiv land in 1960 and 1964 respectively. Maitatsine riots that almost cripple northern economy in 1980, 1982, 1984 and 1985, Kano riots of 1982, Kaduna (Kafanchan) riot of 1987, Kaduna Polytechnic Chapter riots of 1988 and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria riot of 1988, Bauchi violence of 1991, Katsinariot of 1991, Kano riot of 1991, Zangon-Kataf, riots of 1992 and 2001, the Jalingo riots of 1992 Funtua riot of 1993, Jos Plateau riots of 1994 and 2002 and a host of others too numerous to mention here in this paper, were all religiously motivated and had fanatical religious leaders' backings. Olomjobi [39] further confirms that:

An understanding of the cause of the riots cannot be separated from the unmasking of the central figure and motivating force of the movement, in the person of Muhammadu Marwa, an Islamic preacher and pseudo-Muslim prophet and citizen of Cameroon.

As was the case with Usman Dan Fodio, this foreigner as well, did not find it easy to establish the Maitatsine warriors as most of his teachings were rejected by some liberal and conventional Muslims in Northern Nigeria. It must be noted that he also had an insecure childhood upbringing and hence was detached from his family early in life in Cameroon where he hailed from. This lends credence to the attachment theory's principles as stated earlier in this paper.

It is imperative to note that the Maitatsine movement as a terror group morphed into a much more dreaded and fearful Boko Haram cell group led by Abukakar Shekau who, was himself a student of Muhammadu Marwa. Studies such as Afeno [7], Connell [20], Celso [16] and Buba [13] affirm this fact. Once again, one can see the link between fanatical Muslim religious leaders and violent acts of terror in Nigerian history. Today, the splinter group of Boko Haram, Islamic State of West Africa Province also has its leader in the person of Abubakar Dan Buduma. The new terrorists, Fulani herdsmen and armed bandits also, certainly, have religious leaders who are backing them.

## 5. The Causes of Ethno-Religious Crises in Nigeria

Several factors are responsible for the upsurge in violent ethno-religious crises. The following are some of the factors responsible for ethno-religious crises in Nigeria:

The economic interests of foreign countries remain one of the causes of ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria. The interest of British Multi-national oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the wanton exploitation of this natural resource without due consideration of environmental degradation and its impact on the inhabitants and in addition, the unbalance and/or lack of compensation of the victims of this exploration of oil in the region accounts majorly for militancy in the region and elsewhere in Nigeria. In a personal communication interview with Ejekor Ogri, Simeon Akpa, Ojeho Ekoho, Jude Njalia, Mary Ojong, and Mgbarushure Nicholas, it was revealed that oil exploration in the Niger Delta region without due compensation is the sole reason for militant activities in the region. In addition, Okon John, Urubulam Ewuoke, Ajen Lawrence, Dennis Urubuke, James Alang, and David Uronge (in a personal communication interview conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2022) all agreed that China's interest in gold in Northern Nigerian states such as Taraba and Zamfara has a destabilizing effect on the peaceful co-existence of the people in the region. Aleyomi [9] also affirms the assertion made by the above respondents. He lists foreign interest as one of the factors responsible for ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. The relic of 1804 Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad: The ceaseless ethno-

religious violent crises that have unabatedly continued to plagued this geopolitical entity called Nigeria leaves one with no doubt that there is, perhaps, a residue of the 1804 jihad in ancient Hausa land that still haunts this country. Otherwise, how would one explain the ruthless annihilation of non-Muslims, Muslims with more liberal dispositions and other 'perceived' enemies of the caliphate ideology? The Jihad which was initiated and executed by Usman Dan Fodio, a Fulani Islamic cleric who was born in December 15 1754 in Maratta village of Gobir, in what is today known as northern Nigeria. His ancestry is traced to Senegal. In agreement with the above statement, Hodgkin [25] writes:

Usman was born in the Hausa state of Gobir, in what is now northwestern Nigeria. His father, Muhammad Fodiye, was a scholar from the Toronkawa clan, which had emigrated from Futa-Toro in Senegal about the 15<sup>th</sup> century. While he was still young, Usman moved south with his family to Degel, where he studied the Qur'an with his father. Subsequently, he moved on to other scholar relatives, travelling from teacher to teacher in the traditional way and reading extensively in the Islamic sciences. One powerful intellectual and religious influence at this time was his teacher in the southern Saharan city of Agadez (Niger Republic), Jibril ibn Umar, a radical figure whom Usman both respected and criticized and by whom he was admitted to the Qadiri and other Sufi orders.

Usman Dan Fodio, as one could see from the historical facts, established the Sokoto caliphate after been influence by his mentor, Jibril ibn Umar, a radical Islamic teacher in Niger Republic. He became a teacher, after he came under the influence of sheikh Jibril. One could see from this historical fact, that the issue of ethno-religious crises is not that of the religion, but, as Kofi Anan, a onetime United Nations' Secretary General said, "the problem is not with the faiths, but with the faithful". Moumouni [33] also harps on this fact by affirming that "as a preacher, Usman Dan Fodio was listened to and followed by the religious devout, which led to him being persecuted by the successors of Bawa Jan Gorzo, consequently, the Jihad of 1804 and the foundation of the Islamic Empire of Sokoto". Driven by the zeal to 'purge' ancient Hausa land of any disbelief or doctrine that was not in tandem with his own radicalist background, he initiated the jihad in Gudu in 1803 and by 1804, he and his warriors launched the jihad that swept across northern Nigeria and some parts of southern Nigeria. His intent was to conquer the whole of Nigeria and make it fall under the influence of the caliphate. Usman's inability to achieve this dream has never gone down well with most Islamic fundamentalists. A failure they (his successors of today) still think they can correct through ethno-religious violence. In view of the fact that most religiously motivated violence in the history of Nigeria are not without religious sentiments, one is therefore, left no doubt that there exists a remnant of that 1804 jihad in the minds, thoughts and religious philosophy of most Muslim fundamentalists, hence, the continuous ethno-religious violence experienced in Nigeria. It is the relic of this jihad that has continue to fuel the caliphate ideology and what

Chinweizu [13] calls “caliphate colonialism”. Besides, the Fulani tribe has a long history of not forgetting things easily. The Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai had tweeted in 2012 that “anyone, soldier or not, that kills the Fulani, takes a loan repayable one day no matter how long it takes”. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2021 he was asked at a webinar organized by the Africa leadership group to throw more lights on what he meant, Ufuona [46] writes:

Reacting to a question of whether it was right for the Igbo man to avenge the death of his kinsman killed during the Nigerian Civil War; the governor said that ‘if a Fulani man dies in war it is different, if a Fulani man is arrested by the authorities and convicted, it is not an issue. What the Fulani never forgets is when he is innocently targeted and killed and the authorities do nothing. He will never forget and he will come back for revenge. That is it.

This statement is a confirmation of the view expressed above that the Fulani have a history of not forgetting things easily. This view was also affirmed by discussants in eight different groups discussions conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022. In fact, one AlhajiNa’abbaHaruna, in one of such interviews agreed that the Fulani are very good at keeping records of past histories no matter how insignificant (oral interview, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2022).

There are other causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. Iwe [28] mentions religious fanaticism as one of the major causes of violence in Nigeria. Nmah and Amanambu [34] mention ‘religious triumphalism’. Although the scholars also hold the view that this was also one of the remote causes of the 1804 jihad, the urge to make Islam suppress all other religions in Nigeria is obviously seen in the new terrorists of today. Obiefuna and Adams [36] list other causes to include but not limited to: the culture of violence, the doctrine of sainthood (Shaheedism) or martyr, poverty, governance issues among others are the causes of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. Affirming some of these causal factors, a group of discussants in another focus group discussion agreed that poverty and bad governance are also recognizable factors that cause ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. On the same issue of what causes ethno-religious crises, some respondents differ in their responses. In a focus group discussion conducted on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2022, some participants did not hesitate to say that apart from what may have been mentioned as causal factors, environmental degradation and indoctrination are also causative factors. The further state that the Fulanization, Islamization and Expansionist ideologies are also strong factors. They all agreed that all these affect a country’s development index. These views are in line with the findings of studies such as: Obiefuna and Adams [36], Adams [2] and Adimike [6].

## 6. Profiling the New Terrorist: Apocalyptic or Conquering Warriors

Profiling, according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary [41], is “the act or process of extrapolating information about

a person based on known traits or tendencies”. It is “the act of suspecting or targeting a person on the basis of observed characteristics or behavior”. In today’s Nigeria, it is quite challenging, but certainly not impossible to profile a terrorist. Responding to the question on how to profile a terrorist in the Nigerian context, discussants responses showed that there are indeed diverse views on this issue. Some of the respondents interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022 said that a typical Nigerian terrorist is fearless, a lone wolf, brutal, insensitive and an ethno-religious bigot. Some of those interviewed agreed that he or she is complex and shrouded in mystery. They look innocent but are deadly, especially when dealing with a “target enemy”. Jonah Ayang in particular reported that:

“A Nigerian terrorist, male or female is enigmatic in nature with a mixture of street life and a religious extremist. He/she is merciless and does not hesitate to detonate a bomb at a targeted audience, be it a market place, worship centre or any social gathering”. They are mostly northern Nigerians from the Hausa/Fulani stock. What adds to the myth is that they are faceless, shameless, and most probably originated from the almajiri since they all appear to have such traits-hardened ethno-religious fanatics with strong and unyielding belief that Nigeria must be Islamized, Fulanized and the full implementation of the sharia law enshrined in the Nigerian state. This gives one a picture of the fact that the group which is popularly known as Boko Haram and its other groups are bent on revenge and expanding the course of Islam beyond northern Nigeria, an ideology that seems to guide or drive them. This makes them so ruthless and violent.

Thus, it is obvious that the idiosyncratic attributes of a typical ethno-religious bigot in the Nigerian State has revealed that assembling or constructing an outline of his/her individual features are not only cumbersome but heterogeneous and complicated. These complexities are as a result of several factors which combine to make it difficult for some people to understand the phenomenon of terrorism because there are, abundant, diverse mindsets to harvest from. These mindsets include: conquering warriors, non-state actors, state terrorists, and apocalyptic or whatFotion, Kashnikov and Lekea [24] termed “martyr terrorists”. Explaining these complexities further, Tzachor [45] posits:

Terrorists have a complex set of social, psychological, ideological, religious, and political motives and behaviours. Because terrorist seek notoriety and attention, they tend to select targets that symbolize the power of their enemy or that will draw the attention of the global media. Prevention of efforts should thus focus on the protection of and security measures for the targets likely to draw terrorists’ interest. Terrorists tend to come from societies where people are in distress (economic, natural, political etc), and they perceive their conditions as being ignored or caused by those with the power to change their circumstances for the better. Being residents of a nation that supports or tolerates terrorist organizations is another risk factor for being a terrorist.

Profiling the Nigerian new terrorists is therefore not as tasking as it is often feared. The new terrorists in Nigeria are

driven by dissimilar motives but are united in ideological and religious philosophy. The same strong resolve to Islamize, colonized, inhabit, possess, conquer and control both human and material things that was exhibited by their forebear – Usman Dan Fodio is still alive in the lives of the new terrorists and ethno-religious bigots in today's Nigeria. The new terrorists who may be called cattle herdsman, Fulani herdsmen, cattle hustlers, armed kidnappers, armed bandits, or whatever nomenclature, are nothing but Fulani jihadists who are bent on conquering, Islamizing and Fulanizing Nigeria. They are desperadoes and die-hard haters of Western education and civilization, and anything that has Western connotations. These crusaders of religious bitterness are bent on tearing apart, the hitherto peaceful existence of the Nigerian state with the sole intent of enthroning the Sharia law in all the regions of the Nigerian polity. They are unlike the pure, peace-loving and warm welcoming Muslims whom our forebears lived and did business within ages past. These new breed of fundamental Muslims are ready to threaten any personality, as they did to AtikuAbubakar when the lynching of Deborah Samuel in Sokoto took place. He (AtikuAbubakar, the PDP presidential flagbearer) was threaten that if he does not rescind and delete his messages on Facebook and twitter which condemned the lynching of Miss Deborah, they (Islamist jihadists) will work against his presidential election. He succumbed to pressure by immediately deleting those messages from the social space. This, is, the true profile of the new Nigerian terrorist! Just three days ago 14/6/2022, they have threatened that Nigeria will be soaked in blood if Mr. Peter Obi, one of the presidential aspirants under the Labour Party, an Igbo man, emerges as Nigerian President come 2023.

Fulani herdsmen are the 21<sup>st</sup> century crusaders of the Islamization agenda. Like their model, they are also detached from the comforts of family life and find themselves in various poor social backgrounds and are in disenfranchised communities, suffer all kinds of psychological traumas, disengaged from family bond to parents, emotionally imbalanced, rationally handicapped, hence they are easily radicalized into believing all forms of apocalyptic promises of heavenly bliss and enjoyments in the afterlife. Thus, justifying lack of attachment as posited by attachment theorists. Tzachor [45] captures this description vividly when he writes that the absence from close family predisposes them to other unfavourable social circumstances they find themselves, thereby making them to take irrational, immoderate and inconsiderate decisions to harm their fellow human beings and society as well. He further writes:

This fosters a search for meaning and recognition that will provide a grandiose sense of self as special, primarily as a psychological defense from a feeling of insignificance and not being loved. This often includes judgmental and antagonistic attitudes toward those who have different beliefs, values and behaviours, because this threatens their own sense that they have superior attributes and beliefs. Further, terrorists will have intense and usually violent reactions to any perceived attack on or criticism of their

beliefs and mission.

This is the perfect description of the Fulani herdsmen. He is not ready to negotiate. He is of the philosophy that his Fulani tribe is superior. This makes him an ethnic clientelist with a 'winner takes it all and the loser loses all mentality'. He believes Allah gives the land and that any territory, community or village his and his cattle tread on, has become their property. The new Nigerian terrorist, is not an alien to Nigerian peoples. He was welcome once as a sojourner or cattle rearer doing peaceful and legitimate business with locales in any community he finds himself. As noted by Nmah and Amanambu [34], the Fulani have been with the Nigerian people as far back as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They have, however, of recent, also recruited their brothers of other African and non-African stock as well.

Fulani herdsman whether born in royalty or an orphan, does not see himself as a less human. In a mosque in the seat of the caliphate, he presides over prayers. In the middle belt, that is among adherents in north central geopolitical zone he leads in prayers. In the south south or south west, he cannot be a worshipper in a mosque and another non-Fulani leads the Jumaa prayers. He is the image, and of the lineage of Usman Dan Fodio and there is no hiding of such identities. They go to any length to prove their superiority. He believes that his cow has value much more than his fellow human being who is not of the Fulani descent. One's farm land or farm produce are for him to graze and there are no prices to pay as well no compensation where his cattle stray. Should his herd destroy one's farm land and eat up the farm produce he neither apologizes nor pays compensation. He rather thinks one should die and let his cattle live. This is the attribute of the new terrorist. In fact, it was in Premium Times [42] that some of the characteristics were extracted from the confession of a "repentant" terrorist.

The profile of a Fulani herdsman of today is no longer friendly as those the Nigerian forebears or ancestors knew and welcomed. They are not the ones that came with the iconic staff to lead herds but those with sophisticated assault rifles, ready to unleash mayhem with the slighted provocation. This is the profile of today's Fulani herdsman. He is supported by the MuhammaduBuhari's led government. When they burn communities down and kill their victims in thousands, the government doesnot call them terrorists but armed robbers and kidnappers who the government pays handsome ransoms. No arrests will be made, no attempt to protect volatile or even vulnerable communities. They are allowed to roam free like their animals. The new terrorists in Nigeria are not really aliens or strangers, they are simply Fulani herdsmen who, over the centuries, decades, years, months and days, have been planning, strategizing and cooperation among themselves, after the failed jihad, to establish the caliphate and exert their hegemonic influence on Nigerians. They have invited others of same ideologies to join them in Nigeria. These new "invitees" even possess Nigerian passports, Nigerian bank accounts and bank verification numbers. They have Nigerian voter cards and their names are conspicuously captured in voter registers in most Northern and Southern States. The government protects them,

give them supplies and most times, one hear news of their being protected and supplied their daily needs in our bushes and forests by the Nigerian government's security agents and government officials. These facts are no longer hidden from all social media outlets/platforms. This is the true picture of the Nigerian state amidst economic imbroglios. It is therefore, as a result of these observed phenomena that Obiefuna and Adams [36] aver that the culture of violence in northern Nigeria has deep roots that could be very difficult to uproot.

## 7. Nigeria's Development Index and Governance Amidst Ethno-Religious Crises and Terrorism

There is no doubt, the Nigerian state has suffered many developmental setbacks in the wake of Boko Haram, Islamic States of West Africa Province (ISWAP), Ansaru, renewed ethnic bigotry Fulani herdsmen and other sinister terrorist cell groups. Budgetary deficits have been born by the various states of the federation as a result of the presence of terrorists activities. The Center for Preventive Action [17] also affirms that the Nigerian State has suffered untold economic challenges in the wake of ethno-religious crises. The gross domestic product (GDP) debt of the government has increased to 34.98% in 2020 from 29.10 percent in 2019 Adebawale, [5]. He also writes that from the office of Debt Management Office (DMO), Nigeria's total debt as of June 30, 2015, stood at ₦12.12 trillion, and that by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, the portfolio had risen to ₦39.55 trillion and by the first quarter of 2022, it has rose to ₦40.0 trillion. These figures are authenticated by the Director-General, Patience Oniha, in an interview with Channels TV, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 2022.

In view of the above statistics by the Nigerian Debt Management Office (DMO), Ukpe [48] rates Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since the Nigerian State returned to democratic rule in 1999. He asserts that under the Olusegun Obasanjo's term in Office, that is, 1999-2007, the GDP stood at 6.95%. Under Umuru Musa Yar'Adua 2008-2010 it rose further to 7.98%, but unfortunately, it dropped to 4.80% under the leadership of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2011-2015). The study also reveals that the Nigerian GDP further plummeted drastically during the Muhammadu Buhari's Presidency (2016-2020). It declined to 0.31% in 2020 and jumped up a little in 2021 to 0.81%. It is, therefore, on records that the Buhari led administration recorded the poorest in terms of G.D.P, while that of Umuru Musa Yar'Adua recorded the highest in just two years. The clear indication of these figures is that during the Yar'Adua's administration, Nigeria recorded less ethno-religious crises and terrorist attacks. Adams [1] affirms that the decline in economy growth and infrastructural progress is caused by soaring insecurity issues.

Another non-governmental body that uses the dragonfly terrorism tracker database to record terrorist activities and their impacts on national economics is the Institute for Economics and Peace [27]. Through its Global Terrorism

Index (GTI), it records all cases of terrorism globally. In its 2021 report, 2015 was the peak, that is, a year with much deaths and economic crises. The report further states: "Forty-eight percent, or 3,461 of all terrorism deaths globally occurred in sub-saharan Africa (which Nigeria's is among)". The report further reveals that "JamaatNusrat Al-Islam walMuslimeen (JNIM) (popular known as Boko Haram) is the fastest growing terrorist organization and was responsible for 351 deaths in 2021, a 69 percent increase". The reports concludes that all these terrorist attacks have direct negative impact on the national economies of the affected country. Akwara and Akpan [8] in their study "observed that the failure of the present administration in Nigeria to deal decisively with the menace of insurgency and terrorism has led to poor governance". Joshua and Olanrewaju [30] also add that the impact of terrorism is not only felt on the economic development and good governance of any nation, but it also affects the educational system. They submit: "Terrorism is inimical to human security, political and socio-economic development of which education is one".

From the foregoing therefore, it is obvious that ethno-religious bigotry and terrorism are the main drivers of poor economic development and bad governance. Coker and George-Geny [19] support the above assertion and further add that "bad governance and insecurity slow down sustainable development in Nigeria". In another study, Iyaji [29] lends his own voice to the effect of religious bigotry, ethnicity and insurgency to national economic development. In a study that spans between 2008 to 2017, "findings showed that terrorism adversely affects Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow to telecommunication sector, while corruption impacts on oil and gas sector". This view was also expressed by discussants in seven different focus group discussions. The participants further narrated how these social vices are even aided by top government officials whose responsibility it is to checkmate such evils.

In another survey by Ugwu and Eme [47] it was revealed that terrorist's activities have disastrous consequences on the "social and economic sectors of the Nigerian state". participants in an another focus group discussion conducted on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022 agreed as well, that terrorist activities, especially in Northern Nigeria, have affected the siting of many industries. One of the respondent categorically mentions Kaduna State which was one of the locations for the textile industries and companies, but this has long changed as even existing companies in the said state, have since relocated to the Southern part of Nigeria. This assertion is also authenticated by the work of Imhonopi and Urim [26]. So, the industrial revolution that was anticipated in Northern Nigeria is now a mere dream as most northern states have been overran by Islamist jihadists.

## 8. Addressing the Menace of This Monster: Some Suggested Remedies

There are several remedies to the current ethno-religious

crises in Nigeria. Some of them are briefly discussed below:

- 1) Restructuring of the Nigerian State: The surest way that the Nigerian state will come out of this present economic backwardness is to restructure this country to reflect a true federal state. It is only when this is done that the individual states of the federation would be empowered and made to compete favourably in economic developmental strides among each other. This healthy economic competition will bring about meaningful development which will be a true character of a federation. When each state begins to manage its own resources/internally generated revenues (IGR) and only pay a percentage to the central government, then we would have started making head ways towards economic development of the country.
- 2) Bill banning open grazing: The government of the day should endeavour to ban the bill on open grazing. Open grazing is an archaic agricultural practice, unhealthy for the twenty-first century humankind. Ranching should be introduced to forestall the rampant and incessant Fulani herdsmen attacks who practice such antiquated pastoral system of farming. The Nigerian state is at the brink of a precipice. Such agricultural practices should not be practiced so as not to push this fragile Nigerian state that is sitting on a keg of gunpowder, over the edge thereby leading to its explosion and disintegration.
- 3) The danger of climate change: This issue of climate change and its effects on the northern part of Nigeria should be looked into by the government. Since the north is the worst hit in terms of desertification, drought and other environment challenges, the government's intervention has become necessary as this will forestall mass exodus of Fulani herdsmen down south where they become a security threat to their southern counterparts.
- 4) The government should legalize small arms possession: A situation where a particular ethnic group (Fulani) has become Lords of the ring, possessing small arms and other deadly weapons and explosive devices, there is need for the government to review its extant laws on arms possession. This will enable other ethnic groups (major or minor) to also possess licensed small arms that could be used for self-defense when the need arises.
- 5) Overhauling of the security/intelligence apparatus: The entire security institution or structure should be overhauled. Several evidence abounds from previous studies to buttress the fact that the Nigerian military and para military apparatuses of the Nigerian state has been infiltrated by ethno-religious bigots and fundamentalist jihadists. In a three year survey study carried out by Adams [4] statistical and non-statistical evidence showed that the Nigerian security apparatus has been surreptitiously penetrated by fundamental Islamic jihadists. The government should therefore, overhaul the security architecture and effect fundamental changes. This includes changing the present service chiefs, who Nigerians, have over the years been

complaining of their ineptitudes and unprofessional approach to security issues in Nigeria.

Apart from the above recommendations, others are: discouraging religious fundamentalist ideas and doctrines, the government should enact laws against religious leaders who promote fanatical ideologies and theologies and indeed what Nosike [35] calls "good and visionary leaders who will take Nigeria to the promise land", government should check poverty by employing school leavers and other job seekers, and the Nigerian state should be a true democratic state where one English or common laws are in practice and the fundamental human rights of persons are adequately protected by the government.

## 9. Conclusion

This paper examined the Nigerian experience of ethno-religious crises and terrorism and showed how these have adversely affected the economic development and good governance of the Nigerian state. The paper further argued that whatever nomenclature the Fulani herdsmen go by, they are the new terrorists who are terrorizing the Nigerian state and its citizenry. The paper also explained that Fulani herdsmen are ruthless killers who leave no stone unturned when it comes to violent attacks. The attachment theory as propounded by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth was used to anchor the paper since the theory's basic principles explained, in details, the unique nature of the Fulani people. The paper also examined the trajectories of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria. Though it did not catalogue all the cases of the violent attacks executed by Islamist jihadists, but it however, showed how the remnant of the 1804 jihad has continuously, and ubiquitously exerted its caliphate ideology, thereby influencing all the ethno-religious crises and religious terrorism in Nigeria's history, all of which have indubitably and adversely taken a toll on our economy and governance of the Nigerian nation.

The paper also showed that the "new terrorists" are not actually stranger elements as it were, but a tribe that had co-existed with our ancestors in time past and have now morphed into full blown terrorist cell groups, inviting their kin in other African countries to join them in causing all kinds of havoc and destruction. The paper also showed that since this renewed zeal to attack Nigerians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria's debt profile has taken on astronomical dimensions, thereby leaving very low development index. The paper concluded by recommending that, way forward, restructuring of the country to reflect a true federal state and a host of other recommendations suggested in this work, are the only remedies to forestall future occurrences.

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