

Personal and Communal Relationships: Implications for Ethno-Religious Violence

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Abstract

Nigeria, the most populous country in black Africa has been wrecked by periodic violence, and has been described as a deeply divided state in which major social and political issues are vigorously or violently contested along the lines of the complex ethnic, regional and religious divisions. Ethnic conflicts and disputes over land and many other resources often end up as religious conflicts. Although many states are affected with violence between innumerable ethnic groups and the resultant growth of the ethnic militia groups, many Nigerians believe that the real reasons for the frequent violence (in several parts of the country) is not based on ethnic or religious differences but the scramble for land; scarce resources poverty, joblessness, political clout, corrupt politics and the negative role of regional and ethnic elites. This paper addresses conceptual issues regarding the place of personal and communal relationships, ethnicity, religion and violence and draws conclusions as regards the implications for ethno-religious violence. It presents a positive panacea against violence induced by ethnic and religious affiliations.

Keywords: *Personal and communal relationships, ethnicity, religion and violence.*