

COUNTING THE COSTS: ETHNIC VIOLENCE VERSUS HUMAN AND CAPITAL FLIGHT FROM WUKARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

AKWARA, AZALAHU F, & CHARLES, ALFRED

Department of Political Science, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Each ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria sends so many people fleeing from their homes and to loss of material possessions. Survivors flee from the areas never to return again while some others come back to start life all over again having lost all their lives' possessions. All such exoduses are accompanied by human capital flights and material capital flights that would have gone into development investments in the affected areas. This paper examines these conflicts and their costs to the victims and economies of the areas in which they occur, and their impacts to national unity and integration. The paper finds that the various ethno-religious conflicts in the country especially in the north-east and the north- central geopolitical zones in Nigeria are caused by crises of identity on the parts of the migrant settler populations who lack ethnic identities and therefore adopt religious identities in their areas of domicile; and that the crises would continue in all regions in the north with indigenous ethnic minorities until the ethnic minorities disengage themselves from the domination of the migrant settler populations. The paper recommends that the end to these ethno-religious conflicts lies in the abandonment of religious extremism and approval of inter-religious marriages between members of the various religious faiths in the country; and a stop to challenging indigenous customary and traditional practices; respect for constituted traditional authorities; and a stop to vying for traditional and political positions by settler elements in their areas of domicile.

KEYWORDS: Ethno-Religious Conflict, Ethnic Identity, Religious Identity, Migrant Settler, Crises of Identity