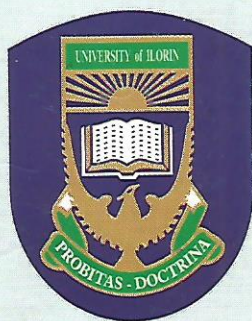


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gbengusfakus@yahoo.com

fakuade.ag@unilorin.edu.ng

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RESOLVING THE SHARE-TSARAGI CRISES THROUGH THE INTERNAL MECHANISMS OF RELIGION AND INTER- MARRIAGE

Olademo, O.^a; Omotoye, R.W.^a; Ikibe, S.O.^b; Ibrahim, L. O.^c; Tijani, Y.O.^d; Aboyeji, A.J.^e; Abubakre, S.O.^f; Adebisi, A.A.^c; Fahm, A.O.^a; & Adimula, R.A.^g

^a*Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^b*Department of Performing Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^c*Department of Arabic, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^d*Department of French, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^e*Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^f*Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^g*Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

^{*}*corresponding author –O. Olademo, Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Email: wuraolaanike@yahoo.com*

Abstract

Share and Tsaragi, two neighbouring communities in Kwara State, Nigeria, have not yet imbibed the culture of peaceful co-existence. There have been about six commissions/panels on the two communities' boundary dispute between 1976 and 2015, whose recommendations have either been rejected by warring parties or never implemented by the relevant authorities. The focus of this study is to examine how religion and inter-marriage could lead to lasting solution and reconciliatory measures to foster peace in the inter-communal conflict between the two communities, which have lingered for too long. The study was both descriptive and analytical. The primary sources of data collection were questionnaires, and structural interview. The Likert Scale was used to measure the response on all dimensions of 128 respondents selected, using a convenience sampling technique. Structural interviews and confidence building workshops were conducted with/for stakeholders in the two communities. Data analysis was done using SPSS software, simple percentage and descriptive analysis, respectively. The secondary sources focused on journals, textbooks and the internet relevant to the research topic. Two-key findings of the study are: lack of readiness by the two communities to imbibe genuine spirit of give and take and the viability of religion and inter-marriage as internal mechanism to resolve the crisis. This study is anchored on the territorial theory with three approaches bordering on proximity, interaction and territoriality in explaining why communities rage and wage wars over boundary or territory related matters.

Keywords: Inter-Ethnic Crisis, Inter-marriage, Religion, Peace, Internal Mechanisms

Introduction

The inter-communal conflict between Share and Tsaragi communities in both Ifelodun and Edu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kwara State has lingered for a long time. The recrudescence of violence between the two communities should be worrisome to the state and beyond. In the last few decades, the protracted borderland dispute between the two communities in Kwara State has remained a potent flashpoint for violence. At the bone of contention is a piece of farmland called *fiangiawa/fejewe* (over 200 hectares) which the two communities lay claim to.

According to Salman & Abdulrasaq (2016), the creation of Ifelodun LGA in 1976 with headquarters in Share (a Yoruba community) was said to have been misconstrued by Tsaragi community (Nupe people) "as an attempt by the government to confirm the former as the landlords". The Justice AbdulGafar Mahmud commission confirms that the two communities were at peace with each other until they were divided into two separate districts with Share now under Ifelodun in Kwara South Senatorial District; while Tsaragi falls under Edu in Kwara North Senatorial District. Since then, the two communities have engaged in bloody conflict over issues such as boundary dispute or land ownership, forceful acquisition of community land and each group's expressing historical claimant to the territory.

The question begging for an answer now is: Why has the crisis between these two otherwise peaceful neighboring communities of Share and Tsaragi remained protracted despite numerous efforts over the years to address the conflict?

The identified reasons by previous commissions/panels include:

- i. Absence of mutual love;
- ii. lack of mutual trust;
- iii. lack of readiness by the two communities to imbibe the spirit of give and take; and
- iv. lack of readiness to accept the recommendations of various Commissions of inquiry set up on the conflict

In all, there have been about six commissions/panels on Share/Tsaragi boundary dispute between 1976 and 2015, whose recommendations have **either** been rejected by warring parties, or never implemented by the relevant **authorities**. Justice AbdulGafar Mahmud commission lamented this much **when** it argued that "the state government's reluctance in implementing the recommendations of various panels and commissions set up to investigate

incidences of violent clash between the two communities, [had] been one of the factors fueling the regular recurrence of violence between the two neighbors” (Salman & Abdulrasaq, 2016).

Religion as a phenomenon is common to all human culture. It is one of the most important institutional structures that make up the total social system. Religion is concerned with man's relation to and attitude towards God and other spiritual beings. Furthermore, marriage in Christianity is an exclusive relationship between a man and a woman, who loves each other and wants to spend the rest of their lives together. Also, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an that Allah SWT has created man and woman as mates for one another so that they can live together and lead a peaceful life. Marriage is the only process through which families are brought into existence, and it plays a very significant role in the formulation of a good and cordial relation between individuals at the micro level in the society.

Inter-ethnic marriages heighten the benefit of sustaining peace and development in many societies. Some benefits of inter-marriages are as follows:

- i. It facilitates maintenance of the sense of security in inter-ethnic settings.
- ii. Self-content and chastity for both husband and wife.
- iii. Spiritual calmness, cooperation and partnership in accomplishing the divine obligation.
- iv. Social necessity by means of which families can be established.
- v. It enhances and strengthens social bonds among the individual members of society.
- vi. It provides a healthy environment for the maintenance of cordial relations and reciprocal love between the spouses.

Despite many official interventions through panels to resolve this problem the tension persists. It is therefore pertinent to know what really constitutes the stumbling block towards resolution of the conflict. At this stage we must ask ourselves why all the stakeholders' and governments' efforts could not make for a lasting resolution of the perennial conflicts that have thrown the two towns into frequent mayhems. Consequently, this paper prescribes religion and inter-marriage as internal mechanisms to resolve the crisis between the two communities. Data from the field among the people of both communities suggest that religion and inter-marriage factors are possible lasting solutions and reconciliatory measures that can foster peace in the two communities.

Consequently, this paper examines causes of the protracted crisis between Share and Tsaragi; discusses the challenges from previous attempts at resolving the crisis; identifies the roles played by religious leaders in attempts to resolve the crises; and recommends religion and inter-marriage as internal mechanisms to resolve the crisis.

Conceptual Clarifications

Religion

Scholars are divided on the issue of religion's relevance in the state affairs. Many scholars have argued that religion has caused a lot of problems for humanity, and therefore clamour for its jettisoning and abandonment. Examples include Femi (2014) and Oludemi (1989), among others. Femi (2014) asserts that religion should be thrown away. According to him "religion is a collective delusion, a symbolic thinking or an understanding behaviour". He further describes religion as an expression of immature thought and powerful emotions. Again, Karl Marx argues that religion is an illusion and advocates for its elimination in the society. Based on this, he submits that religion was a means of expressing pain, it is sigh which the oppressed people experience (Femi, 2014). Oludemi (1989) furthers the argument by observing that it is only when religion is practised as is expected that peace could be guaranteed.

An example of a scholar who subscribes to the position that religion promotes peace is Neil A. Levine. According to Levine (2009), when conflicts assume religious overtones, religious power-brokers can emerge apart from formal institutions and chains of authority. At the core of its nature, religion is a critical consideration for development programs, because it often transcends geographic boundaries and can be used to reach a wider network of followers. Attitudes towards religion has both positive and negative implications for the world today, where it is estimated that more than two-thirds of the world's population identifies with a religion. Levine goes further that religion can emerge as a key factor within conflict situations, whether they are primarily of a political, ethnic, intra-societal, or ideological nature, due to the fact that religion is often a core source of identity.

Haar (2005) suggests that religion is neither inherently good nor bad for peace, and that its influence is undeniable. This led to what is known as "peace with religion". This approach focuses on the importance of coexistence and interfaith dialogue. Peace with religion emphasises promoting the common principles present in every major religion. Religion,

therefore, can play an important role in peace-making and conflict prevention and resolution.

Intermarriage

Intermarriage has been discussed by several renowned scholars such as Kalmijn (1998), Ogiri (2013), Ting-Toomey (1999) and Kim (2001). Kalmijn (1998) submits that what makes intermarriage sociologically significant lies in its inherent dynamics. It is not just a reflection of the boundaries that currently separate groups in society, it also bears the potential of cultural and socio-economic change. In the sociological literature, the existence of mixed marriages between the members of groups in a society is generally expected to reduce the probability of violent conflicts among those groups and to increase the social cohesion of that society. In the same vein, studies by Ogiri (2013) show that acceptance of intercultural marriage is increasing at a rapid pace and an increasing number of intercultural couples are reporting that their families have openly accepted their intercultural relationships, and they feel comfortable speaking about their relationships in public.

In addition, Ting-Toomey (1999) in his study buttresses the fact that intercultural marriages facilitate adaptive outcomes such as cognitive flexibility, improve social competence and increase self-awareness, while Kim (2001) noted that such marriages also foster personal growth.

Territorial Theory

Recent trends and developments have revealed that issues bordering on land, territory or border/boundary adjustments are among the most volatile catalysts for conflicts the world over. These numerous crises have attracted scholarly attention particularly in the area of theoretical postulations, specifically, to examine and explain why nations rage and wage wars over territorial and boundary related matters. In this regard, scholars have stirred the table a little. Amidst these divergent theoretical postulations, this study adopts the Territorial Theory as a guide to explaining and understanding African territorial or boundary disputes. This is because, unlike other regions, boundary delineations in Africa were ostensibly colonially bequeathed consequent upon the 1884/1885 West African Berlin Conference. Unequivocally therefore, African boundaries are fundamentally artificial and arbitrary in nature, cutting across local, tribal and trans-national borders as evident in Eretria/Ethiopia, Algeria/Morocco, Ife/Modakeke,

Offa/Erin-Ile, Share/Tsaragi, Ilofa/Odo-Owa, among several others, many of which have often degenerated into blood-letting and wanton carnage.

A territorial dispute is said to exist between two states when they lack consensus over the exact delineation or fixture of their border/boundary, national territory or common homeland; or when a state contests the right of another to exercise sovereignty over a part or whole of its homeland or national territory. The territorial theory appears to have a causal effect on interstate hostilities. Walter (2002) explicitly identified territory, which is about the most fundamental feature of state and attribute of sovereignty, as the most intractable conflict during the last century. In the building up of the territorial theory, Efem (2010) identified three fundamental approaches to explain why communities and countries rage and wage wars over boundary or territory related matters. These approaches border on proximity, interaction and territoriality.

- a. **The Proximity approach** suggests, especially for technologically undeveloped societies where wars are traditionally triggered by closeness and nearness, that distance is a natural constraint on propensity for conflict escalation. As such, far-away states have lesser reasons to fight compared with closer ones, since they are likely to have minimal dealings. In other words, the relationship between contiguity and war is predicated upon the proximity between two states. In other words, proximity increases the propensity for states that are close to each other and share common boundary to fight each other due to their physical proximity. This explains why too numerous states, like the Yorubas of Share and Nupes of Tsaragi, that share boundary together in Africa are at slit-throat.
- b. **The Interaction approach** posits that sharing a common boundary creates a natural ground for close interactions and relation, thus strengthening the proximity postulation that harps on the endemic friction between neighbours vis-à-vis their contiguity. This may however be negative as it can constitute a serious strain on interstate relations as well as a potential catalyst for both domestic and international dispute. This approach explains further that neighbouring states do not only fight due to their proximity and because they are able to do so, but due to the possible clash of national interest, which may escalate into crisis or war. This approach provides explanations of clash in national interests as answer to why contiguous states rage and wage wars.
- c. **Territoriality approach:** Whereas we consider sovereignty as a corollary of territory, sovereignty is sine-qua-non to territoriality, since the state is built upon the foundation of sovereignty. Territoriality focuses on territory as

the leading issue of national interest creating hostilities between rival states. It is observed that the lack of specific understanding of the stakes in boundary conflicts and the good management of same has often escalated into full-scale violence. Territorial issues are believed to constitute a basic underlying cause of interstate wars in the modern system since 1495. As such, whether at the interstate or intergroup level, contested territory has been a major reason for crises in Africa. Examples abound such as Badme and its region in the Ethiopia and Eritrea attachment, Bakassi Peninsular between Nigeria and Cameroon and contested farmland between Share and Tsaragi. Fundamental among reasons pushed forward by scholars (such as Goertz, Diehl and Huth) for territorial contestations include the trio of economic factor such as natural resources like fertile agricultural zones; strategic value and symbolic value, as certain spots of land contain symbolic landmark around which a group's identity is woven.

Whereas territorial issues only make war more probable, not necessarily inevitable, this territorial framework helps us to understand and elucidate why African territorial conflicts (with special focus on Share-Tsaragi crisis) are volatile and why African countries wrestle over boundaries and territories with or without resources or strategic location. As would be seen, this study on Share-Tsaragi land crisis would reveal the economic inclinations, strategic importance and symbolic value of the contested region vis-à-vis the groups' survival predicated on land as an inelastic resource between the inter-ethnic warring neighbours; ancestral heritage and symbolic ownership of the land respectively.

Whereas while resources constitute one of the overt factors, the Share-Tsaragi crisis is equally strategic and symbolic, as each party claims to be the first to settle in the area. The lack of a clearcut delineation therefore makes the Share-Tsaragi crisis both territorial and boundary related.¹⁰ Beyond the economic importance of the contested territory between Share and Tsaragi are other underlying latent values. Although Neil (2016) argued that "borders can no longer simply be understood as the geographical divisions between nation-states", it behoves us to state that African boundaries are still largely geographical.

Inter-communal Conflict/Crisis and Resolution

Shittu and Abdulkadir-Imam (2018) argued that Africa is notorious for communal crises manifesting in many countries, often degenerating into carnage, blood-letting and wanton destructions. They identified different African countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda,

Burundi, Angola, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria where escalations of political, communal and inter-ethnic conflicts along ethno-religious crises abound with different levels of destructions of lives and properties. Some of these include:

- i. Kenya between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities in 1992,
- ii. The Central African Republic's inter-communal crisis between the Séléka's Muslim fighters and the "anti-balaka", Christian militias in 2013-2014;
- iii. Sudan, where the Rizeigat and Bani Hussein Arab tribes in the Darfur and West Kordofan region engaged the Nuer and Murle African ethnic groups in South Sudan in serious warfare over religious intolerance and right over graze land;
- iv. Ghana, with cases of inter-communal conflicts between the Konkomba and Dagomba tribes, and the Andani and Abudu clans in the Dagbon Traditional Area of Ghana in 2008;
- v. Angola, where the communal crisis that ensued between the Mbundu and Ovimbundu tribes over competition for political hegemony escalated into large scale violence immediately after Angola's independence from Portugal in 1975; and
- vi. Nigeria, whose heterogeneity, cultural diversity and ethnicity has since independence escalated latent brawls into inexhaustive inter-communal conflicts, appears to be the hub. Of these, the Share-Tsaragi crisis in Kwara state, which became protuberant in 1978, only resonates the devastating effects of communal conflicts in Africa.

Uka (2008) identified the British Colonial Policy of 'Divide and Rule', which lumped innumerable radically different cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic groups together for their own economic and political benefit as the source of the unhealthy ethnic politics and mutual distrust that has culminated into ethno-religious and communal conflicts in Nigeria. This hoisted a political system that favoured the North over the South. Although recent trends show that probably since the wake of the 21st century, insurgency seems to have taken over the worst form of insecurity in Nigeria, prior to that turn, conflict had been largely ethno-political, ethno-religious, identity or communal based. Communal clashes, which include crises between farmers and herders, intra and inter-communal as well as identity conflicts, have contributed to the collapse of peaceful co-existence in

Nigeria. Providing an overview of identity crises in Nigeria, Osaretin and Akov (2013:351) pointed out that:

Since the 1980s, identity conflicts have become a recurring decimal in Nigeria, especially in the country's northern region. This identity crisis...has caused similar problems in Modakeke/Ife, Sabongari/Kano, Sabo/Ibadan, Zango/Kataf, Urhobo/Itsekiri, Jukun/Tiv, Kuteb/Jukun-Chamba and Hausa/Shagamu (Danfulani, 2006). Others include the Chamba vs Kuteb, the Ogoni vs Andom in Rivers State, the Sharia crisis in Kaduna State, the Tiv vs other ethnic groups in Azara of Nassarawa State in 2001, the Tarok vs Hausa/Fulani in Plateau State in 2004, the Geomai vs the Hausa/Fulani in Shandan Local Government of Plateau State in 2002, the Quan vs Pan in Quan'pan local government of Plateau State in 2006, the Hausa/Fulani and the Beron, Anaguta and Afizare in Jos North Local Government in 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2010 and the Boko Haram violence that has engulfed Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Kano States since July 2009.

Nlewem (2018) revealed that the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, wherein Kwara falls, is the second largest in terms of ethnic spread and cultural diversity, second after the north-east zone. The prevalence of intergroup crisis this zone is notorious for has often manifested in ethno-religious or communal crises. Although his emphasis is Nasarawa State, Kwara State, the State of Harmony is also becoming a hub of disharmony in the North-central zone, considering the spate of inter-communal fracas therein over the years. Iloffa/Odo-Owa, Offa/Erin-Ile, Share/Tsaragi are among the most explosive of such communal crises in Kwara State. However, of these, the Share-Tsaragi conflict has been particularly volatile given that while others are communally intra-ethnic, the Share/Tsaragi crisis is communally inter-ethnic, ethno-religious and identity based. Indeed, ethno-religious conflicts are distinguishable from other forms of social conflicts because they are identity conflicts, which involve ethnic groups that are predominantly of different religions (Alemayo, 2017:20-22). Uka (2008) has quipped that for as long as ethno-religious or communal conflicts are rooted in politics and issues bordering on resource control, there is palpable concern for such to constitute a serious threat to national security.

Several authors such as Uka (2008), Ige (2017), Onah, Diara & Uroko (2017) have contributed to the discourse on conflicts resolution. Uka

(2008), who underscored the serious implications of ethno-religious conflicts for security, recommended ways to reduce the incidence of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, thus placating the menace of insecurity that has hitherto threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria. Harping upon the fact that prevention is better than cure, Aboyeji (2019) argued that peace management is more imperative than conflict resolution. However, although conflict prevention is better than conflict management, not all conflicts are inevitable and not all conflicts are avoidable. Hence, whenever the avoidable becomes inevitable, as is often the case, resolution becomes desirable.

Offa and Erin-Ile adjoining communities once had peaceful relations until 1970 when the relations suddenly turned foul due to boundary-related issues vis-à-vis the expansionist needs of the two towns. In their attempt to finding a lasting solution to and forestalling future reoccurrence of conflicts, Alao, Mavalla and Akinnusi (2019) recommended government's takeover of the disputed area, in tandem with the recommendation of the 1972 Adaramola Commission of Enquiry that the disputed land should be a buffer zone to be utilised by the Kwara State government as an industrial layout. In his interrogation of the reconciliatory veracity of Radio programmes in communal conflict resolution in Africa, Shittu and Abdulkadir-Imam (2018) used the mediating programmes of Radio Nigeria, Idofian as a case study to assess the de-escalating effect on Share and Tsaragi communal conflict in Kwara state of Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Quantitative and Qualitative (mixed) methods were utilized for this research work, with data sourced through questionnaires and structured interviews. In each of the communities, the traditional rulers (2), chiefs (8), religious leaders (4), women leaders (4), and youths (20) were interviewed. In addition, a workshop each (Share 13th July 2019 and Tsaragi 13th July 2019) and a joint workshop (3rd July 2019) for both communities held at different times. The workshops served as opportunities to interact with all cadres in each and both communities at different times in a relaxed atmosphere. The questionnaire was designed following the Likert Scale format (the respondents were allowed to select among a range of alternatives along pre-specified continuum such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). The Likert Scale was used to measure the response on all dimensions of 128 respondents that were selected, using a convenience sampling technique. Data analysis was done using SPSS software, simple percentage and descriptive analysis respectively. The Study

took place in Share, Ifelodun local Government and Tsaragi in Edu Local Government Areas both in Kwara State Nigeria. 128 questionnaires were distributed using 'probability proportionate to population size' (PPPS) of each town to ensure that the distribution of questionnaires was adequately balanced concerning choice of respondents on the gender, age, status & educational background as shown in the table.

Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: The Gender Distribution of Respondents

LOCATION	GENDER		
	MALE	FEMALE	Total
SHARE	41 (65.1%)	22 (34.9%)	63 (100%)
TSARAGI	45 (69.2%)	20 (30.8%)	65 (100%)
TOTAL	86 (67.2%)	42 (32.8%)	128 (100%)

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents According to Religion

LOCATION	RELIGION		
	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM	Total
SHARE	23 (36.5%)	40 (63.5%)	63 (100%)
TSARAGI	18 (28.6%)	45 (71.4%)	63 (100%)
TOTAL	41 (32.5%)	85 (67.5%)	126 (100%)

The prevailing religion in both communities is Islam, but more in Tsaragi than Share. This fact would facilitate inter-ethnic marriage the more.

Table 3: Contingency Table of the Respondents According to Persistent Crises

LOCATION	CAUSE OF THE PERSISTENT CRISIS				
	POLITICAL EXCLUSION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION	BOUNDARY DISPUTE	INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY	Total
SHARE	2 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	58 (93.5%)	2 (3.2%)	62 (100%)
TSARAGI	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	65 (97.0%)	0 (0%)	67 (100%)
TOTAL	3 (2.3%)	1 (0.8%)	123 (95.3%)	2 (1.6%)	129 (100%)

More than 90% of the respondents in both Share and Tsaragi were of the opinion that the cause of the persistent crisis was due mainly to the boundary dispute.

Table 4: Contingency Table of Responses' Views on Previous Reconciliatory Attempts

	ARE THERE LAPSES IN THE PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE TWO PARTIES		
LOCATION	NO	YES	Total
SHARE	5 (8.3%)	55 (91.7%)	60 (100%)
TSARAGI	10 (15.6%)	54 (84.4%)	64 (100%)
TOTAL	15 (12.1%)	109 (87.9%)	124 (100%)

From Table 4 above, it is noted that the respondents (irrespective of their community) agreed that there were lapses in the previous attempt to reconcile the two communities in the conflict. In fact, only about 12% of the respondents felt that there were no lapses in the previous attempts at the reconciliation of the two parties.

Table 5: Contingency Table of Responses on Inter-marriage Situation between the Two Communities

LOCATION	REACTION TO INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGE					Total
	ALLOW	DISALLOW	ENCOURAGE	DISCOURAGE	UNDECIDED	
SHARE	15 (24.6%)	16 (26.2%)	6 (9.8%)	17 (27.9%)	7 (11.5%)	61 (100%)
TSARAGI	18 (27.7%)	22 (33.8%)	13 (20.0%)	10 (15.4%)	2 (3.1%)	65 (100%)
TOTAL	33 (26.2%)	38 (30.2%)	19 (15.1%)	27 (21.4%)	9 (7.1%)	126 (100%)

While 34% of the respondents in Share were not opposed to inter-ethnic marriage between the two communities, 48% were in support of such marriage among the respondents from Tsaragi, thereby showing a seemingly marked difference in the opinions of the two sets of respondents. It can also be seen from the table that majority of the respondents from Share (54%) either disallow or discourage inter-ethnic marriage. The corresponding data from Tsaragi showed that 49% of the respondents either disallowed or discouraged inter-ethnic marriage between the two communities. In all, only 41% of the respondents either allowed or encouraged inter-ethnic marriage, while the majority (51%) either disallowed or discouraged inter-ethnic marriage. However, data from structured interviews and submissions of youths at the joint workshop held on 3rd September 2019 for both communities confirm that several romantic interactions are already ongoing

among the youths of Share and Tsaragi. Thus, there is a gap in the reality of possibilities for inter-marriage between responses to the questionnaire and relationships of youths across both communities.

Table 6: Contingency Table of Responses on Sharing the Same Place of Worship with Members of the other Community.

LOCATION	SHARING THE SAME PLACE OF WORSHIP WITH MEMBERS OF THE OTHER COMMUNITY			Total
	NO	YES	NOT SURE	
SHARE	6 (10.2%)	51 (86.4%)	2 (3.4%)	59 (100%)
TSARAGI	15 (23.1%)	49 (75.4%)	1 (1.5%)	65 (100%)
TOTAL	21 (16.9%)	100 (80.6%)	3 (2.4%)	124 (100%)

From table 6, majority of the respondents were comfortable with sharing the same place of worship with members of the other community. In fact, 86% of respondents from Share and 75% of respondents from Tsaragi were in support of sharing the same place of worship. Overall, it can be seen that overriding view is that the crisis seemingly has nothing to do with religion. Thus, religion is a viable internal mechanism to resolve the crisis between Share and Tsaragi.

Table 7: Contingency Table of Responses on Whether Religious Leaders encourage Inter-marriage

LOCATION	DO RELIGIOUS LEADERS ENCOURAGE INTERMARRIAGE WITH THE OTHER COMMUNITY BASED ON SAME RELIGION?			Total
	NO	YES	UNDECIDED	
SHARE	22 (38.6%)	22 (38.6%)	13 (22.8%)	57 (100%)
TSARAGI	7 (10.9%)	46 (71.9%)	11 (17.2%)	64 (100%)
TOTAL	29 (24.0%)	68 (56.2%)	24 (19.8%)	121 (100%)

From table 7, there is a seeming difference in opinion as to whether religious leaders encourage inter-marriage with the other community based on the same religion. While only about 39% of the respondents from Share said yes to the question, about 72% of the Tsaragi respondents affirmed that their religious leaders encourage inter-marriage with the other community based on the same religion. The implication of this is that Tsaragi respondents

agree more with their religious leaders' position on inter-marriage than Share respondents.

Table 8: Contingency Table of Responses on Whether there was Misunderstanding in Homes with Inter-ethnic Marriages

MISUNDERSTANDING IN HOMES WITH INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGES AS A RESULT OF THE CRISIS			
LOCATION	NO	YES	Total
SHARE	39 (69.6%)	17 (30.4%)	56 (100%)
TSARAGI	45 (72.6%)	17 (27.4%)	62 (100%)
TOTAL	84 (71.2%)	34 (28.8%)	118 (100%)

It could be seen from table 8, that the overriding perception was that the respondents do not feel that there were misunderstanding in homes with inter-ethnic marriages as a result of the crisis. Overall, about 70% of the respondents do not think that misunderstanding in homes with inter-ethnic marriages was as a result of the crisis.

Table 9: Contingency Table of Responses on Satisfaction with Religious Leaders Handling of the Crisis.

LOCATION	LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS HANDLING OF THE CRISIS				Total
	DISSATISFIED	UNDECIDED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	
SHARE	5 (8.3%)	2 (3.3%)	23 (38.3%)	30 (50.0%)	60 (100%)
TSARAGI	1 (1.5%)	4 (6.1%)	27 (40.9%)	34 (51.5%)	66 (100%)
TOTAL	6 (4.8%)	6 (4.8%)	50 (39.7%)	64 (50.8%)	126 (100%)

From table 9, about 90% of respondents from both communities were either satisfied or very satisfied with religious leaders handling of the crisis, while only about 5% of the respondents were dissatisfied. Thus, the overriding perception of the respondents was that religious leaders have been handling the crisis satisfactorily in both communities.

Table 10: Contingency Table of Responses on the Appropriate Internal Conflict Handling Style for Resolving the Conflict

LOCATION	THE MOST APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONFLICT HANDLING STYLE					
	AVOIDANCE	COLLABORATION	COMPROMISE/ CONSENSUS	DOMINATION OF THE STRONGER PARTY	OTHERS	Total
SHARE	14 (26.4%)	12 (22.6%)	23 (43.4%)	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.7%)	53 (100%)
TSARAGI	17 (27.4%)	23 (37.1%)	16 (25.8%)	6 (9.7%)	0 (0%)	62 (100%)
OVERALL	31 (27.0%)	35 (30.4%)	39 (33.9%)	7 (6.1%)	3 (2.6%)	115 (100%)

While about 27% of the respondents in both communities proposed avoidance as the most appropriate internal conflict handling style, about 66% of the respondents from Share were of the opinion that collaboration or compromise/ consensus was a better way of resolving the conflict and about 63% of the respondents from Tsaragi felt the same way. But only a small percentage of the respondents felt that domination of the stronger party was appropriate in resolving the crisis. By domination of the stronger party, respondent assumed that either of the party that has more political clout than the other should dominate the resources.

Table 11: Contingency Table of Responses on Whether Religion made the Crisis Worse or Less Severe

LOCATION	DO YOU THINK RELIGION MADE THE CRISIS WORSE?			DO YOU THINK RELIGION MADE THE CRISIS LESS SEVERE?		
	NO	YES	Total	NO	YES	Total
SHARE	59 (95.2%)	3 (4.8%)	62	12 (20.0%)	48 (80.0%)	60 (100%)
TSARAGI	61 (92.4%)	5 (7.6%)	66	15 (23.4%)	49 (76.6%)	64 (100%)
TOTAL	120 (93.8%)	8 (6.3%)	128	27 (21.8%)	97 (78.2%)	124 (100%)

Table 11 shows that about 94% of the respondents from both communities felt that religion did not make the crisis worse, while about 78% also felt that religion made the crisis less severe. Thus, from the responses to these questions on the role of religion in the crisis, it is seen that religion could be a strong unifying factor that can contribute to the seamless resolution of the crisis. The items on the questionnaire were structured in both affirmative and question forms.

Findings

1. The causes of the Share/Tsaragi conflict include political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization, boundary disputes, and inter-ethnic rivalry. These causes are complex and multi-dimensional.
2. Previous reconciliatory attempts to resolve the crises include panels of enquiries set up by national and state governments in Nigeria as well as interventions by NGOs. However, these reconciliatory moves have failed to permanently resolve the conflict.
3. Responses to the possibilities and encouragement of inter-ethnic marriages among the people of Share/Tsaragi was 41%. However, data from structured interviews and submissions of youths at the joint workshop held on 3rd September 2019 for both communities confirm that several romantic interactions are already ongoing among the youths of Share and Tsaragi. Thus, there is a gap in the reality of possibilities for inter-marriage between responses to the questionnaire and relationships of youths across both communities.
4. Majority of respondents in both communities were comfortable with sharing the same place of worship, 86% of respondents from Share and 75% of respondents from Tsaragi were in support of sharing the same place of worship. Data from interviews also confirms that people from both communities often worship in the same facilities especially during festive periods. Thus, it is recommended that religion and intermarriage be encouraged as internal mechanisms to resolve the Share/Tsaragi conflicts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed to the two communities and other stakeholders:

- Religion, through the religious leaders, in the two communities should be used as internal mechanism to resolve the crisis between Share-Tsaragi Communities. Religious activities that will bring the two communities together should be encouraged and consistently pursued.
- Inter-marriage as internal mechanism should be used to resolve the crisis between Share-Tsaragi communities. Activities that encourage youth participation should be intensified across both communities like musical concerts, film shows, sport competitions and town hall meetings. Parents should stop transmitting narratives of hate

concerning the other community during socialization period of their children.

Conclusion

The governments of Nigeria (both Federal and State) have attempted to bring lasting solution to the crisis between Share and Tsaragi through the setting up of various peace panels and commissions without much success. Based on the outcome of this study, the issues of religion and inter-marriages between the two communities can and should be explored as ways of ensuring lasting solution to the problem. The two communities have indicated willingness to share places of worship and marry members of the other community, indeed information gotten during one of our workshops confirm this. Reports gotten from the two communities show that cordial interaction among the youth is already rife across the two communities. This is an indication that the two communities are willing to give peace a chance. It is expected that the recommendations from this paper would serve as a guide for governments, researchers, and other stakeholders in the quest to resolve the conflict between Share and Tsaragi, invariably boosting the socio-economic conditions of the two communities, and National development.

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