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### Urban landscapes of territoriality and ethnic violence

*The spread and recurrence of deadly riots in Jos, Nigeria*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## General Introduction

### Introduction

Apart from large-scale armed struggles that fall under the rubric of civil war, Africa is home to numerous violent conflicts involving rival ethnic categories.<sup>1</sup> Though not conventional wars, these conflagrations are as devastating in terms of deaths and physical destruction. Nigeria is among the African countries currently not experiencing a full-blown civil strife, yet pockets of intergroup antipathy still rankles the society. While secessionist aspirations in the south-east region once plunged the country into a three-year civil war and longstanding regional rivalries persist, continuous conflicts concern ethno-linguistic and/or religious identities. Being the most ethnically diverse part of Nigeria, the central region known as the Middle Belt (see Figure 1.1) has long presented the most precarious security situation.<sup>2</sup> The region's penchant for intergroup fighting may have been encouraged to fester by the paternalistic manner in which the colonial administration managed ethnic diversity. For administrative expediency, the colonial administration let the various small groups of indigenous peoples from the north, who were predominantly Christian and pagan, be subsumed under the political dominance of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani. The colonists, in their indirect rule, stayed impervious to their subjects' cultural differences and territorial integrity. Struggles by the indigenes to 'liberate' themselves started in the 1930s, but became more determined after

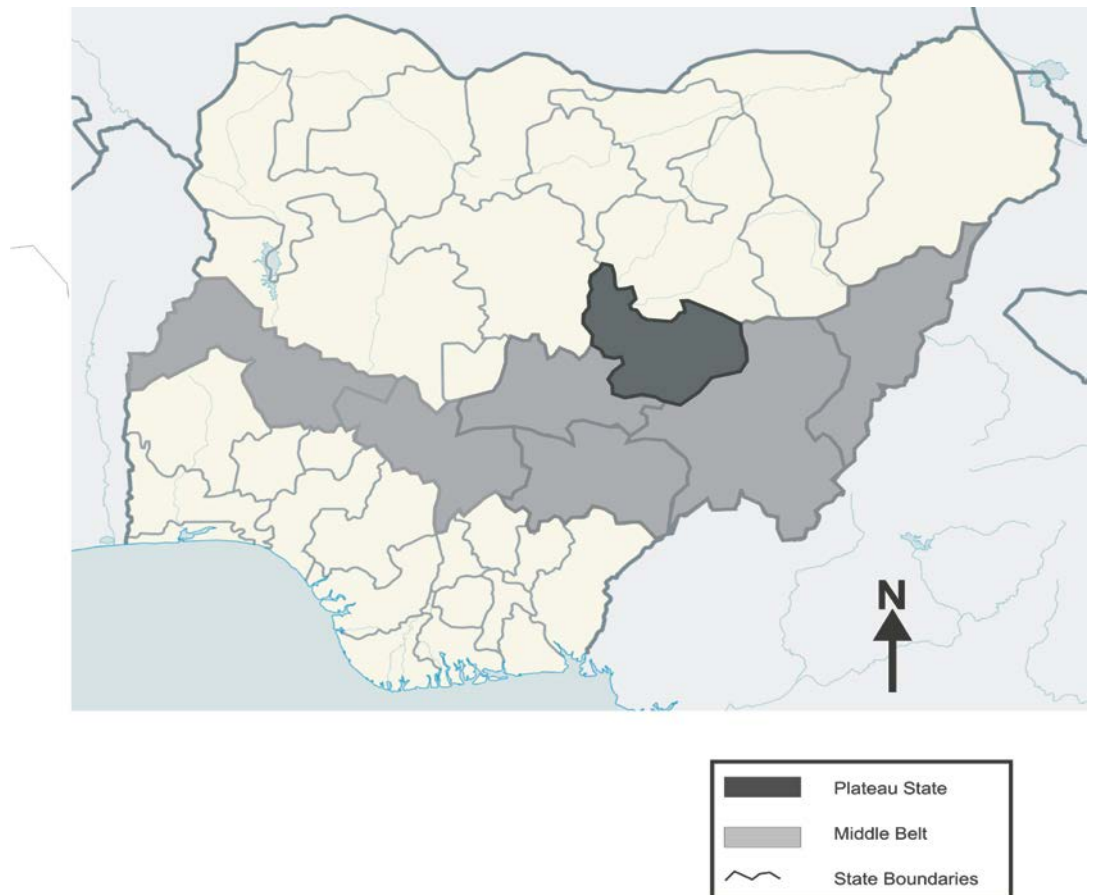
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<sup>1</sup> The dissertation uses the terms 'ethnic violence' and 'ethnic conflict' following Horowitz's (1985) understanding of violence that is perpetrated across the boundaries of ascriptive group identities including race, language, religion, tribe and caste. Included under this category is the violence between Protestants and Catholics in Belfast, Hindus and Muslims in Meerut, Shias and Sunnis in Pakistan and, indeed, Christians and Muslims in Jos (for a similar broad application of the concept of ethnic violence, see also Varshney, 2001: 364).

<sup>2</sup> The Middle Belt includes Abuja (Federal Capital Territory, FCT), Adamawa, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Southern Kaduna and Taraba Benue states.

independence in 1960. The very label 'Middle Belt', adopted by indigenous politicians of the region, represents the struggle to differentiate the area geographically and, more consequently, culturally and politically from the 'One North' notion championed by the Hausa-Fulani.

Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria showing Middle Belt and the location of Plateau State (Source: created by author).



Though Nigeria's colonial legacy has present-day salience, its role should not be overstated or allowed to eclipse recent developments. The regularity of violent confrontations in post-colonial Nigeria is best understood by considering how contemporary politics of identity and materialism, poor governance and endemic corruption have combined to erode the institutional capacity to regulate group

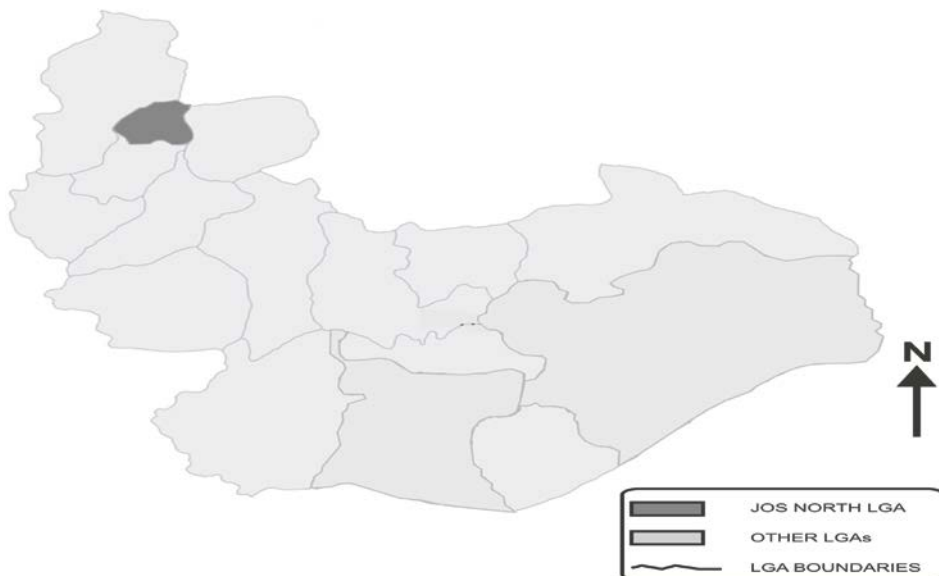
competition. Years-long military rule repressed the aspirations of the indigenous groups, partly because Muslim northerners dominated the military hierarchy, but also because authoritarian regimes left little room for the expression of collective grievances. Nigeria's return to a democratic system of government in 1999 reawakened pernicious questions around ethnic identity, indigeneity, political representation and several other contentious issues that were dormant but remain at the crux of Nigeria's citizenship crisis. Nigerian authorities lack clear definitions for indigeneity and citizenship, and have been unable to spell out how the two can coexist without contradicting each other. Who qualifies as an indigene is mentioned in an unclear way in the constitution, yet is acknowledged as the determining factor for federal and state appointments. This has led to ambiguities and contradictions in the interpretations of indigeneity and competing claims on the distribution of rights and resources, such as political appointments, employment quotas, school admissions and scholarships. It is thus unsurprising that the politics of identity has held a strong foothold in Nigeria. Groups are perpetually mobilising along ethnic lines to negotiate or renegotiate their stake and boost their chances, as indigenes, for exclusive access to distributable goods. Intense political and economic dramas have unfolded without a strong formal framework for managing and checking the excesses of actors. The result has been resorting to a kind of self-help, which has often meant – in the absence of a strong nonpartisan regulating authority – open confrontation against their own compatriots. During Nigeria's euphoric return to democracy, the Middle Belt became a hotbed of these identity politics. Indigenous groups positioned themselves to take political control of what they believed were their territories against the overbearing presence of the Hausa-Fulani. These struggles are generally framed as indigene-settler conflicts, and nowhere in the country have they been as pronounced and atrocious as in Plateau State.

One of Nigeria's 36 constituent federating units, Plateau State is perhaps the country's most ethnically diverse. It is inhabited by some 54 ethno-linguistic groups (Plateau Peace Conference, 2004: 11). However, as chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation show, indigene-settler conflicts have only involved particular groups. Moreover, they have been confined to some areas in the northern and southern senatorial districts, leaving the central zone being relatively rancour-free.

Though several parts of the state have experienced some form of violence over the last decade, Jos stands out. Plateau State's capital has been hardest hit in terms of number of deaths and scale of destruction.

In Nigeria's Middle Belt, the city of Jos sits on a tableland that averages 1,200 metres above sea level (see Figure 1.2). Following its establishment around 1915, a thriving colonial tin mining industry and a sizeable European population gave the city a head start in communication infrastructure. The city had road networks, railways and telegraph lines before most urban areas in the region. Jos' scenic topography and semi-temperate climate also attracted tourists and migrants from inside and outside the country (Plotnicov, 1967: 28). Situated on the fault line between the country's predominantly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south, the city has some 800,000 inhabitants, who are roughly equal halves Muslim and Christian.

Figure 1.2: Map of Plateau State Showing the Location of Jos (Source: created by author).



The city is also a centre of religious revivalism, where a number of both faiths' sects have headquarters (Best, 2008: 10). Many migration waves from different

parts of the country over the years have made Jos a melting pot as well as a battleground. Despite being in what was once considered among Nigeria's most peaceful regions, contestations over political representation, indigene rights and ownership of the city have culminated into episodes of collective brutality. Between 2001 and 2010, over 5,000 people were killed and some 300,000 displaced within the metropolis and the outlying rural areas.<sup>3</sup> Though the conflicts have been primarily between, on one side, the three groups considered indigenous to Jos – Berom, Afizere and Anaguta – and on the other side, the settler Hausa, violence was perpetrated mainly along religious lines. This is because boundaries between ethno-linguistic and religious identities overlap, even if not so neatly, and religion presents a wide support base for mobilisation. Most of the indigenes are Christian and the Hausa are consistently Muslim.<sup>4</sup> Because of religion's long reach, residents belonging to groups that are not ordinarily involved in the indigene-settler dispute have become entwined in the violence, too.

Contrary to what many analyses suggest, the different groups in Jos have not been coexisting entirely harmoniously. In fact, the city witnessed violent conflicts long before many parts of the country. Plotnicov (1971: 298) gives Jos the distinction of hosting the first bloody riot in modern Nigeria. A riot brewed as early as 1932, during the Great Depression and following an exodus of European miners, though it was squashed with the execution of ten of the perpetrators. What came to be known as the 'village revolts' happened in the wake of rumours that the Europeans were finally leaving. In 1945, a much more pervasive level of violence erupted between the Hausa and the Igbo, who were at the time fiercely competitive traders. Accounts differ about how it all started, though one says it began at the potato market in a dispute between a Hausa man and an Igbo man. While the trigger may well remain a mystery, competition between the groups was a causal factor in these clashes. More Igbos had migrated to Jos after World War II in

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<sup>3</sup> Different sources estimate total fatalities to be between 5,000 and 7,000 (see Higazi 2011).

<sup>4</sup> The self-ascriptions 'indigenes' and 'Hausa' are used here in want of better categorisation. Though Berom, Afizere and Anaguta internally wrangle over chieftaincy, land and some serious political differences, all three groups have consistently fought against Hausa claims to indigeneity. As the next chapter explains, 'the Hausa' in Jos represents a social category that, besides the Hausa, includes other originally non-Hausa groups such as Fulani, Nupe and Kanuri who are also predominantly Muslim. These groups have intermarried with the Hausa for generations and have adopted Hausa language, traditions and customs.

search of jobs and trading opportunities, and soon made significant progress in trade and local politics, sectors the Hausas had monopolised for several decades (Plotnicov, 1971: 305).

Though its history of ethnic riots goes back to the 1930s, deadly violence in the twenty-first century is what earned Jos notoriety. The scale is unprecedented and continues to baffle observers. As Higazi (2007: 7) notes, religion in Jos has played a prominent role during the recent rounds of riots and did so in a distinct way from earlier clashes across ethnolinguistic or regional boundaries. The first large-scale violence to occur in modern-day Jos was in 2001, following the appointment of a Hausa man as coordinator of a poverty alleviation programme in Jos North.<sup>5</sup> The violence started in a slum, south-east of the city centre. Christians and Muslims engaged in open clashes, using sticks, cutlasses, bows and arrows, spears, petrol bombs and locally made firearms. Within a remarkably short time, similar clashes erupted in different parts of the city, with mobs killing, maiming and burning. The police were overwhelmed; it took the military to finally quell the violence six days later. About 1,000 people were killed in the pandemonium. Another round of violence almost engulfed the city in May 2002, but calm was restored and it did not spread to other parts of the city. It started with skirmishes between Christian and Muslim party loyalists at an electoral registration centre and ended in mobs rampaging around Angwan Rukuba, Eto Baba, Nasarawa Gwong and Dogon Dutse areas. In the end, about 50 people were killed and up to 100 vehicles burnt (Nyam and Ayuba, 2016: 367). Yet, this was minimal compared to what happened in 2001 or what was to come in 2008. That horrendous violence was directly linked to the local government area (LGA) elections held on 27 November 2008. Once again, armed mobs killed, maimed and vandalised. After two days of fighting, 700 people were dead and hundreds of buildings and vehicles burnt and/or destroyed. Another round of violence occurred in 2010. Unlike the episodes in 2001 and 2008, which were related to (elected or appointed) political positions, this one was sparked by a seemingly trivial event. On 17 January, a

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<sup>5</sup> In 1994, small-scale social unrest followed the appointment of a Hausa as care committee chairman of Jos North LGA. Another violent episode between the indigenes occurred in Bukuru, south of Jos, in 1998 (see Best 2008: 10-11). For a complete account of the 1994 incident, see also the Justice Aribiton Fiberesima Commission of Enquiry into the riots of 12 April 1994 in Jos metropolis.

Muslim whose home was destroyed in Dutse Uku during the 2008 violence brought labourers in to start renovating the house, which he owned. An altercation then ensued between the labourers, who were Muslim, and the area's Christian residents on their way to church that Sunday morning. As in previous violence episodes, before long the altercation spiralled into mass killings, replicated in neighbourhoods across the city.<sup>6</sup>

Although the current study concentrates on urban Jos, it is worth mentioning where outside the city the violence reached. The 2001 violence spread to Kaduna Vom, Farin Lamba, Heipang, Bisichi, Vwang and Sabong Layi. Police reports detail low-level violence in Pankshin and Kabwir in Kanke, where a mob of about a thousand young men burnt a mosque and some vehicles.<sup>7</sup> In the years following these events, violent attacks occurred in different parts of southern Plateau and, to a lesser extent, the central senatorial district. Rampaging mobs wreaked havoc in Wase, Shendam, Langtang North and Langtang South LGAs. The most atrocious violence in southern Plateau started around 2002 and peaked in 2004, with the massacre of hundreds of rural dwellers in Yelwa Shendam and Wase areas. After engulfing parts of Bukuru in Jos South, the 2010 violence spread to neighbouring Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs.<sup>8</sup> The horrific attack on Kuru Jenta, where at least 150 people were killed by Christian Berom groups, was followed by a series of intermittent attacks that culminated in another major incident in which at least 200 people were hacked to death by armed militias believed to be Muslim Fulani. It is estimated that 400 deaths occurred within Jos metropolis in January 2010, and up to 1,000 in coordinated militia attacks in the rural parts of Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs (Higazi, 2011). Jos experienced several violent incidents between 2010 and 2015, but many were revenge attacks in the

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<sup>6</sup> For official accounts of violence in 2001, 2008 and 2010, see The Justice Niki Tobi Commission of Enquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Jos and its Environs in September 2001 (September 2002); Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference (September 2004); The Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Enquiry into the Jos Unrest of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 (October 2009); and Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Jos Crisis (May 2010). See also Danfulani and Fwatshak (2002), Best (2007), Higazi (2007, 2011), Ostien (2009) and Krause (2011).

<sup>7</sup> Nigeria Police Force, *Reports on Jos Crises* (accessed at Plateau State Police Command Headquarters, Jos, February 2016).

<sup>8</sup> For an exhaustive analysis of violence in the rural districts of these areas, see Higazi (in press).



wake of bombings by Boko Haram. Though difficult to extricate from the preceding Christian-Muslim clashes, the 2010 – 2015 occurrences were unique and deserve separate attention. Thus, this study primarily deals with the period between 2001 and 2010.

At the time of writing, Jos is enjoying a fragile peace. The visible presence of a military taskforce and the reconciliatory efforts of peace-building networks have contributed to creating a semblance of stability.<sup>9</sup> While the city has not recorded any incident of Christian-Muslim clashes since 2015, it still reels from the large-scale violence of the past. A high crime rate, drug abuse, mutual suspicion and fear pervade the city's divided society. Neighbourhoods are characterised by a strong presence of miscellaneous networks that combine the characteristics of vigilantes, ethnopolitical interest groups and criminal cartels posturing as vanguards of defence. These emergent assemblages pose a major security challenge even in times of relative stability. Moreover, issues at the root of the conflict remain largely unaddressed and, at the time of writing, some rural areas in Bassa, south-west of Jos, are recovering from a series of militia attacks that claimed about 75 lives in a matter of weeks.<sup>10</sup> Experts on Jos are well aware that the questions concerning indigeneity and city ownership can be ignited by political developments at any time. The LGA elections scheduled to take place in February 2018 are, at the time of writing, being viewed with apprehension.<sup>11</sup>

Jos thus presents an intriguing case study. It offers a look at how peaceable intergroup relations can suddenly give way to carnage; how congenial neighbours can suddenly become deadly enemies; and how mundane residential areas can become spaces of fatal combat seemingly overnight. As the next section discusses, scholars have studied conflict and violence in Jos from various angles. Existing literature offers a repository of insights on the structural factors and political developments that have, time and again, turned the city on its head. In other words, the underlying causes of violent conflict in Jos are known and

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<sup>9</sup> See Mustapha, Higazi, Lar and Chromy (in press).

<sup>10</sup> Sahara Reporters, 'Herdsman attacks: 75 killed, 13726 displaced,' 27 October 2017 (accessed at <http://saharareporters.com/2017/10/27/herdsmen-attacks-75-killed-13726-displaced-plateau> on 16 November 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to Adam Higazi and several other individuals who shared their perspectives in personal communication concerning the LGA elections scheduled for February 2018.

documented. However, which factors shaped its spread and patterns across many neighbourhoods have yet to be thoroughly analysed. An emergent body of research narrowly focuses on how variables such as levels of poverty, population density, street infrastructure and ethnic composition can make a neighbourhood violent or nonviolent. The recent scholarship is bringing clarity to which factors shape the spatial distribution of violence, yet some questions persist. This study adds a new dimension to the discussion by proposing that a neighbourhood's ethnic composition in combination with its location can help account for variations in spread of violence across a city's neighbourhoods.

### **Key perspectives on ethnic conflict and violence in Jos**

Ethnic conflict and violence in Jos has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Earlier historical and anthropological works trace pre-colonial encounters between the indigenous people of Jos Plateau and migrant groups. Hodder (1959) describes the cordial interaction and intergroup trading activities that thrived between indigenous groups and middlemen from the Hausa states before the dawn of colonial rule. However, whatever conviviality existed disappeared at the onset of attempts to invade the Jos Plateau by the forces of Usman dan Fodio in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although dan Fodio himself was Fulani, Hausa men were prominent in spreading jihad southward. Based on this fact, it is highly probable that when the colonialists came to Jos Plateau, the relationship between indigenes and Hausa was characterised by mutual suspicion. After the colonial administration subdued the Islamic emirates of northern Nigeria,<sup>12</sup> it turned to the huge challenge of taming the diverse, less centralised groups in central Nigeria. It took the use of considerable force to finally subdue groups on the Jos Plateau and its surroundings (Tambo, 1978; Morrison, 1977). Once the people were under control, a colonial tin industry replaced the small local one, opening a large window of opportunity to Hausa, who were at the time struggling to pay the poll tax. The tax regime was a major motivator for working in the tin mines. The

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<sup>12</sup> By 1906, the entire Islamic state of the Sokoto sultanate and its emirates, established by dan Fodio and his jihadist forces, had fallen to the superior Royal West African Frontier Force. For a comprehensive account of the conquest of northern Nigeria's Islamic sultanates by the colonial forces, see Killingray (1986).

indigenous groups who were at first very reluctant to mine soon had little choice since tax was required in cash (Freund, 1982). Researchers have shed light on the historical and social underpinnings of ethnic competition by describing the waves of migration from northern Nigeria (Freund, 1981), the establishment of city in 1915 and the segregationist sociospatial organisation of residential settlements by the colonial administration (Plotnicov, 1967). The inflow of migrants from the south intensified economic competition and resulted in one of the earliest violent clashes in Jos, the aforementioned potato market riot.

Another important perspective on ethnic conflict and violence in Jos emerges from colonial legacy. This view stresses the role of the colonial administration in creating social and political structures that were inherently conflict-prone thanks to the 'divide and rule' principle (Plotnicov, 1967: 40). The colonial administration found the Hausa model of chieftaincy better suited for managing large populations than the less sophisticated, decentralised systems of the indigenes. This gave the Hausa political ascendancy in terms of accessing power and resources. However, the creation of the Gbong Gwom chieftaincy stool for the Berom in 1949 reversed the advantage. It caused a major power shift; the Hausa chiefs (Tsarkis), though still coordinating their people, found themselves with less authority than the Gbong Gwom, whose authority spanned districts. The Hausa did not like the development, but their struggles to reverse it proved futile.

Clear connections have been established between these colonial antecedents and regional identity politics in post-colonial Nigeria (Logams, 1985; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). The Hausa forms the majority group in northern Nigeria and is by far the most politically dominant. At the dawn of independence, the minority ethnic groups in north-central Nigeria found themselves under the hegemonic clutch of the Hausa (Logams, 1985). Struggles by the minorities to break free and assert their political autonomy started during colonial rule and continued after its end. The incompatibility of these interests has translated into local power struggles, which have in recent decades become violent in tone (Egwu, 2011). The violent conflict between the indigenous groups of Jos and the Hausa is part of this and is, in essence, a microcosmic expression of these political struggles (see also Best, 2007, 2008).

Ethnic competition has been at the crux of Jos analyses. It is generally accepted that the fall in oil revenue and the implementation of a structural adjustment programme (SAP) in the 1980s intensified competition over dwindling resources among Nigeria's ethnic categories (Jega, 2000; Egwu, 2004). This period of the country's history is hallmarked by a proliferation of ethnic associations established to champion diverse group interests (Osaghae, 1995). The year 1987 saw the creation of the Jasawa Development Association (JDA), the association that pushes Hausa interests in Jos and is a key protagonist in the conflict. Competition for political representation and access to resources continued to fuel the conflict (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002). Positions of power have been intensely contested, leading to the outbreak of violence more than any other singular factor. Three of the four major episodes of violence between 1994 and 2010 were directly related to appointive and elective offices. The general rise in insecurity and the frequency of violent ethnic conflicts has been traced to the harsh economic conditions, unemployment and deprivation catalysed by the SAP (Eze, 2009). It is apparent here how identity politics interweaves with structural factors such as unemployment, poverty and deprivation to foster rivalry and violent conflict. Corruption, in turn, further engenders poverty, deprivation and, by implication, social upheavals. Showing how social history intersects with contemporary urban politics of governance and group rights in the context of the indigene-settler crisis, Higazi (2007: 1) links contemporary Jos' violence to heightening 'corruption and factional divisions' among political elites.

The intense competition among ethnic identities is further compounded by Nigeria's citizenship crisis and ambiguities surrounding indigeneity (Elaigwu, 2001). Nigerian authorities distinguish between indigenes and non-indigenes (or settlers) within states and LGAs (Bach, 1997). All over Nigeria, the constituent states and LGAs assign certain rights and privileges to persons and groups considered indigenes. The constitution, however, only vaguely defines the term, leaving it open to subjective interpretations that are often conflicting (Fourchard, 2015; Ehrhardt, 2017).). While some base indigeneship on autochthony, others see it in terms of long-time residence and aiding an area's development. The indigenous groups of Jos lay their claims of city ownership and consider themselves the only bona fide

indigenes because, they argue, the city was built on land inhabited by their ancestors since time immemorial (Ostien, 2009). The Hausa proclaim they qualify as indigenes because they have been around for an extensive period and contributed to the growth of the city since its formal establishment a century ago (see Best, 2008). What is more, being a Nigerian citizen does not guarantee the privileges that indigene status does, so who qualifies as an indigene has become a pervasive issue.

In all this, religion as a weapon of mass mobilisation has also received ample attention (see Best, 2001; Best and Rakodi, 2011; Tertsakian, 2005; Mwakwon, 2001). Although officially secular, Nigeria is a highly religious society, with most citizens taking their religious identity very seriously (Adogame, 2010). Religion is therefore a readily available platform for mobilising people during conflicts (Ukiwo, 2003). The situation becomes even more volatile when the boundaries between tribal and religious identities overlap, as is the case in Jos (Egwu, 2004). It has been argued, quite persuasively, that the deterioration of group relations in many Nigerian conflict hotspots followed a period that witnessed a politicisation of religion (Egwu, 2004; Osaghae, 1995). This politicisation has been spurred on by the aforementioned competition over scarce resources due to oil prices plummeting and the SAP during the 1980s (Jega, 2000; Egwu, 2004; Osaghae, 1995). Research has viewed cities, mainly because of their diverse makeup, as incubators of social movements that compete in pursuit of group rights and interests that are often incompatible (Nicholls and Vermeulen, 2012; Miller and Nicholls, 2013). Within the context of Nigeria's economic crisis and ethnic competition, social mobilisation had a particular intensity in Jos' hyper-diverse landscape. Competing social categories, driven chiefly by parochial ethno-political interests, have appropriated and deployed religion as the basis for mobilisation because of its wide support bases. The result has been an explosion of Christian-Muslim brutality in Jos and other parts of northern and central Nigeria.

As demonstrated so far, the underlying causes of ethnic conflict and violence have received ample attention. But beyond these structural factors, researchers are becoming increasingly curious about the spatial dimension of ethnic violence (see Krause, 2011, 2017; Scacco, 2012; Nyam and Ayuba, 2016;

Bunte and Vinson, 2016). The growing interest in explaining spatial variations of violence in Jos is consistent with research traditions in violent cities around the world, such as Belfast (Cunningham, 2013; Mesev, Shirlow and Downs. 2009), Jerusalem (Bhavnani, Donnay, Miodownik, Mor, and Helbing, 2014; Benvenisti, 1983) and Beirut (Bou Akar, 2012). India-focused researchers have done extensive work on the spatial distribution of riots (see Varshney, 2001; Brass, 2004; Wilkinson, 2006; Berenschot, 2011). For Jos, discussions on the factors that shape the spatial distribution of violence have surrounded the following variables: poverty, population density, ethnic composition, political power-sharing, and civilian peace-building networks.

Scholars agree on poverty's crucial role in shaping spread of violence across Jos' neighbourhoods. Higazi (2007: 18) notes that violence mainly happened in poor neighbourhoods, while 'wealthier areas such as Rayfield and the GRA where the elite live were unaffected'. Krause (2011) and Scacco (2012) also posit that violence mainly took place in poor and densely populated areas. Scholars, however, differ on how poverty contributes to violence. Krause (2011) attributes the propensity for violence in poor neighbourhoods partly to poor infrastructure, observing how pathways along which rioters travel, behind the main streets are so narrow and how many policemen and soldiers are unwilling to go into these areas for fear of being outnumbered by mobs. Meanwhile, the middle-class areas experience far less violence because they are easier to police thanks to better street infrastructure (Krause, 2011: 33). Scacco (2012), however, finds that deprived areas experience more incidents of violence because poor neighbourhoods are not priority areas for security forces, compelling residents to go out to fight and defend themselves and their families. Both explanatory mechanisms are plausible, and can – and do – work concomitantly.

Apart from poverty, Jos experts consider ethnic composition an important factor for explaining variations in spread of violence. Both Higazi (2007: 17) and Krause (2011: 34) highlight how Christians were attacked and driven out of predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods, the same happened to Muslims in predominantly Christian neighbourhoods and some mixed areas then became battlegrounds. A significant body of work deals with the interrelation between ethnic

composition and ethnic violence (Toft, 2005; Gregory and Pred, 2007; Kaufmann, 1996). Two perspectives dominate the discourse. Emanating from contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Allport, 1954), one maintains that segregation increases susceptibility to violence. Doherty and Poole (1997: 533) describe a cyclic 'persistent mutual impact' between violence and segregation. They submit that segregation contributes to violence and violence, in turn, consolidates segregation, which attracts more violence. This dynamic has a recursive nature, though the undergirding idea is that segregation increases a locality's vulnerability to violence (Doherty and Poole, 1995). The second perspective is of conflict theory and argues that ethnically diverse areas are more violence-prone (Kaufmann, 1996). Accordingly, 'while ethnic segregation may not be desirable, or even stable in the long-term, it may serve as an immediate fix to large-scale bloodshed' (Weidmann and Salehyan, 2013: 54). These divergent views index a longstanding debate on the role of ethnic composition in violence.

More recent work on Jos focuses on civic networks and power-sharing as explanatory factors for spread of violence. Comparing a violent neighbourhood and a non-violent one, Krause (2017) finds that Dadin Kowa managed to remain non-violent because of the firm intervention of individuals and social networks that worked to prevent youth from engaging when riots broke out in 2010. These findings reiterate the relevance of civilian agency in preventing violence. Bunte and Vinson (2016) argue that the likelihood of ethnic violence is significantly lower in areas with power-sharing than those without. Comparing the violent areas of Jos North and the relatively peaceful Chikun area of Kaduna State, they show that the rhetoric of politicians is appeasing in districts with power-sharing and inflammatory in those without it. Further, they posit that power-sharing affects public perception of ethnic tensions, and that 'individuals living in districts with power-sharing institutions are less likely to experience religious diversity as threatening' (Bunte and Vinson, 2016: 49).

So, why did this type of violence erupt? And why did it happen when it did? The Jos-focused literature addresses these questions, though at a more aggregate level and at higher spatial scales, such as the city level. The literature wholly emphasises how the return to a democratic system in 1999 intensified competition

for political representation and distributable resources between indigenes and non-indigenes (Best, 2007; Higazi 2007; Ostien, 2009; Kwaja, 2011; Krause, 2011). However, there is scant, if any, analysis on how political developments and events at national, state and city levels played out at the neighbourhood level. In other words, there is a lacuna of research into how Jos' neighbourhoods transformed from sites of congenial residence to ethnic killing fields. The goal of this dissertation, therefore, is to illustrate just that. The following section defines the various puzzle pieces that help make up the picture.

### **An intriguing puzzle**

Common to the explanatory perspectives thus far discussed is an assumption that a neighbourhood is either violent or nonviolent according to its internal dynamics. Demographically, the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood is often used to explain its vulnerability to violence by contact and conflict theorists alike. Similarly, it is assumed that social networks embedded within the neighbourhood make it violent or nonviolent. Both perspectives consider factors within the neighbourhood, ignoring external forces. Yet, several neighbourhoods in Jos experienced violence not only because of their internal dynamics, but also because of their spatial adjacency to particular areas. For example, observations in the ethnically mixed neighbourhood of Ali Kazaure reveal that even when residents enjoyed a peaceful coexistence and organised joint patrols, external armed mobs from adjoining areas invaded and instigated violence. So regardless of internal dynamics, adjacency to particular areas can contribute to a neighbourhood experiencing violence.

In the same vein, the presence of certain types of social networks that are thought to instigate violence does not directly translate into that locality experiencing violence. To use an example fully analysed in chapters 4 and 5, the neighbourhood of Angwan Rogo reflects a strong presence of networks analogous to Brass' (2004) riot systems, Varshney's (2001) intra-ethnic networks and Berenschot's (2011) patronage networks. The neighbourhood itself, however, stayed calm throughout 2008 and the 2010 because there were no rival group members to attack, since survivors of the 2001 violence had fled the area. That said, Angwan Rogo's violence networks were not idle. These mobs marched into



the nearby ethnically mixed neighbourhood of Ali Kazaure and engaged in large-scale violence in both 2008 (Human Rights Watch, 2009) and 2010 (Krause 2011).

While these scholarly works advance the discourse on the spatial distribution of violence, an important question remains. Why do levels of violence vary across demographically identical neighbourhoods? This question can be further broken to ask: why did some mixed neighbourhoods experience violence while other mixed neighbourhoods remained relatively peaceful? Why did civilian violence prevention networks succeed in some mixed neighbourhoods but fail in others? Why did groups in some segregated neighbourhoods engage in violence while groups in other segregated neighbourhoods did not?

Rather than focusing only on the internal dynamics of a neighbourhood, this study sets itself apart from others by scrutinising 1) location and ethnic composition of a neighbourhood and ethnic composition of its adjoining neighbourhoods; 2) their shared boundaries; and 3) the mobile nature of armed mobs and, with that, a distinguishing between their origins and the destinations of violent events. The dissertation emphasises a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and location over poverty as an explanatory variable because, though all the neighbourhoods that experienced significant levels of violence are poor, some poor neighbourhoods experienced no violence. This shows that while the conditions of poverty may be requisite, poverty alone cannot explain variations in spread and levels of violence across Jos' neighbourhoods. As such, this study acknowledges poverty as an important factor, but only as a control variable. Evidence marshalled in chapter four illustrates that a neighbourhood's ethnic composition in combination with its location explains variations in spread and levels of violence more accurately.

## **Research questions**

### ***Main research question***

How does the ethnic composition and location of neighbourhoods affect the spread, patterns and recurrence of ethnic violence in the riot-prone city?

### ***Sub-questions***

How does ethnic competition at the city level translate into territoriality and violent mobilization at the neighbourhood level? This question focuses on the relationship between struggles for political representation between rivalling ethnic categories and the spread of violence within and across Jos' neighbourhoods. Chapter 2 responds to this question, analysing the role of ethnic associations and neighbourhood networks in fostering territoriality and collective violence.

How do neighbourhoods once peaceable become sites of deadly violence? This question probes into how political developments and events at national, state and city levels translate into violence at the neighbourhood level. Addressed in chapter 3, this question focuses on how Jos' neighbourhoods transformed from mundane residential areas into spaces of ethnic contention and violence. It considers how the independent variable - neighbourhood ethnic composition and location affect the first dependent variable – the spread of violence.

How are a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and location and recurrence of violence interrelated? This question focuses on the overarching relationship between the independent variable – neighbourhood ethnic composition and location – and the second dependent variable – recurrence of violence. The question is touched on partly in chapter 3 and exhaustively in chapter 4.

How does a neighbourhood's ethnic composition in combination with location affect mobilisation and mobility of armed mobs within and across neighbourhood boundaries? This question focuses on the relationship between the independent variable - neighbourhood ethnic composition and location - and the third dependent variable – mobilisation and mobility of armed mobs as central to explaining patterns of violence. Chapter 5 takes up this matter.

### **Research objectives and organisation of dissertation**

The researched was guided by two principal objectives. The first objective was to examine how a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and location interrelate with

ethnic violence. This involved unravelling how such factors work together to affect a locality's susceptibility to violence. To ascertain that, a first step identified distinct neighbourhood characteristics in terms of ethnic composition and location. The second step tallied and compared incidents of violence across different settings and over time.

The second objective was to examine mobilisation and mobility of armed mobs and how they affect spread of violence within and across the distinct sociospatial settings identified under the first objective. This meant disentangling how a neighbourhood's ethnic compositions in combination with its location affect mobilisation and mobility. It gauged how each of the identified sociospatial settings either facilitates or hinders armed mobs within and across different neighbourhood settings. Particular attention was devoted to the nature of the neighbourhoods' shared boundaries (in terms of their contiguity, roads, alleys or other demarcations) and how the boundaries either enhance or impede cross-neighbourhood violence.

The dissertation contains six chapters. The present chapter, the introduction, starts by providing a brief chronological account of violent conflict in Jos within the study period. It then discusses the main explanatory perspectives in existing literature on Jos, thereby uncovering the underlying causes of ethnic conflict and violence. From here, the research problem, questions and objectives are specified. Next, it provides an outline of the dissertation's structure.

Building on the introductory section, chapter 2 discusses Jos' political and social history, politics of identity and how indigene-settler contestations culminated into territoriality and collective violence. The chapter articulates the historical antecedents of ethno-spatial differentiation and territoriality in the city and how they intersected with contemporary ethnic politics in the lead-up to large-scale violence in 2001. It touches on spread and patterns of violence and the role of neighbourhood networks in its production.

Chapter 3 addresses the sub-question that asks how a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and location and violence's spread are interrelated. The chapter explains this interaction, adopting a processual approach to illustrate how these variables interact over time within the broader context of political developments and events at the national and city levels. Drawing empirical evidence from two

neighbourhoods, the chapter examines how these interactions led to the emergence of two types of neighbourhood settings. Determined according to a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and location, neighbourhoods can be categorised as strongholds and frontiers – socio-spatial settings that, as chapter 3 illustrates, are important in shaping patterns of violence.

Chapter 4 addresses the sub-question that asks how a neighbourhood's ethnic composition in combination with its location affects the recurrence of violence. It illustrates why and how ethnically mixed neighbourhoods located between rivalling segregated neighbourhoods experience more recurrent violence than ethnically mixed neighbourhoods that are not similarly located. It also demonstrates how recurrence of violence is fuelled by internal rivalries in combination with struggles by rivalling groups in the adjoining strongholds to extend their political and territorial dominance. The chapter empirically demonstrates how the location of ethnically mixed Ali Kazaure, between rivalling segregated settlements, made it a contested site, where rival political and territorial interests clashed and turned it into a frontier.

Chapter 5 addresses the sub-question that asks how a neighbourhood's ethnic composition in combination with its location affect mobilisation and mobility of armed mobs within and across neighbourhood boundaries thereby shaping patterns of violence. The chapter maps their mobilisation and mobility in neighbourhood settings differentiated according to ethnic composition and location. It shows the difference between the origins of armed mobs and the destinations of violent events, concluding that both ethnically segregated and mixed neighbourhoods contribute to violence. While segregated neighbourhoods provide the suitable setting for mobilising armed, mixed areas sandwiched between segregated ones form the battlegrounds. The chapter also calls attention to how different types of neighbourhood boundaries can either enhance or hinder armed mobs' mobility, thereby shaping spread of violence.

The concluding chapter summarises the study's key findings. It discusses their academic implications, highlighting the ways they deepen scholars' understanding of the relationship between a neighbourhood's ethnic composition and collective violence and the factors that shape spread and patterns of violence

in the divided city. The conclusion also offers practical and policy-relevant implications, notably, how the findings can inform more context-sensitive and effective management strategies and responses to ethnic riots. On a final note, the chapter discusses the limitations of the study and identifies possible directions for further research.

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