CONTESTATION FOR PUBLIC SPACE BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

BY

SOLOMON AYANTAYO OJO
B.Sc. (Calabar), M.Sc., M.A. (Ibadan)
Matric No.: 49897

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ABSTRACT

Public spaces are areas that are collectively owned and accessible to all people. However, the usage of such spaces always attracts conflict among contending users especially religious groups. Scholars have examined the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups from legal, environmental, political and public policy perspectives. However, scanty attention has been paid to the connection between contestation for public space and inter-religious harmony. The contestation for public space by different religious groups, factors responsible for the contestation, its effects and implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State were examined.

Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory provided the framework, while descriptive survey research design was utilised. Copies of a structured questionnaire were administered on 700 purposively selected respondents in Ibadan (250), Ogbomoso (170), Iseyin (150) and Igbo-Ora (130) based on their past experiences of religious conflict resulting from contestation for public space. In-depth interviews were held with 55 respondents as follow: Christians (20), Muslims (20), *Egúngún* and *Orò* worshippers (10), Chairmen of landlord associations (3) and Directors in the State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and the Bureau for Physical Planning and Development Control (2). Non-participant observation of religious activities in public spaces was also carried out in Ibadan. Quantitative data were analysed and interpreted using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were content analysed.

Respondents identified blocking of roads (59.0%); erection of loudspeakers on religious houses (82.9%); and indiscriminate pasting of posters, billboards and banners in public arena such as public buildings and roadsides (80.8%) as the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups. Factors that engendered contestation for public spaces included the need to fulfil religious obligations such as evangelism (Mark 16:15-16), *da'awah* (Qur'an 3:104), and traditional rituals (57.5%); desire to create public awareness and enhance the identity of religious organisations (75.5%); protection of religion against domination by others (50.5%); and exercise of constitutional right to worship in the public (48.0%). Non-participant observation showed that contestation for public space resulted in obstruction of vehicular and pedestrian movement and defacement of public and private places which also resulted in visual pollution. Furthermore, most of the interviewees affirmed that contestation for public space also resulted in disturbance of people through noise pollution. Consequently, the effects of the contestation had negative implications in the sense that they led to unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, latent intra-religious conflicts and the triggering of inter-religious conflicts among adherents of different religions. Therefore, they all undermined efforts at promoting interfaith dialogue and inter-religious harmony in Oyo State.

Contestation for public space by religious groups has negative implications for inter-religious peace and harmony in Oyo State. Therefore, the Oyo State Government should collaborate with leaders of religious bodies to enlighten religious adherents on the need for harmonious use of public spaces; existing laws on the use of public space should be strictly enforced for effective regulations of religious activities in public spaces.

Keywords: Public space contestation, Religious groups in Oyo State, Religious conflicts, Inter-religious harmony.

Word count: 480

CERTIFICATION

I certify that Mr. Solomon AyantayoOjo with Matric No: 49897, carried out this research under my supervision in the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

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Supervisor
PROF. J.K. AYANTAYO (B.A. *(Hons) Ife, M.A., Ph.D, Ibadan)*
Department of Religious Studies,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Nigeria.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Samuel AyantundeOjo who could sacrifice anything for the education of his children. Also, I dedicate this thesis in loving memory of my daughter, Oluwapelumi BlessingAyantayo-Ojo, (1993-2019) (RN, B.NSc. Ife) who is resting in the bosom of her Lord whom she loved so much that her dying words were, **"I will walk with Jesus".**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

Religion has been at the centre of most violent conflicts around the world especially in the past few decades and many of the bloodiest wars in world history have been fought in the name of religion (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Agi, 1978). Notably, it seems that globalisation of religious conflict is on-goingas religion has been at the core of many conflicts across the globe ever since the dawn of the 21st century. As a result, many countries, including Nigeria, have either had a bitter experience of religious conflict or are currently undergoing same. This is perhaps, because societies that are polarised along religious divides are more prone to intense and prolonged conflicts than those divided by political, territorial and ethnic disparities (Samptson, 2012). However, the contribution of religion to global peace and its ability to prevent violence and foster peace-making is acknowledged (Gopin,2000). Hence, the role of religion in global affairs is not completely dysfunctional. Therefore, since our contemporary world is characterised by plurality of ideologies, cultures, and religions, it is imperative to promote inter-religious harmony despite the differences.

The peace and security of Nigeria have been challenged by religiously-induced violence which has plagued the country more than any other threat since independence in 1960 (Samptson, 2012). Despite the fact that the country is a secular state, many lives and properties have been destroyed in crises and violence attributable to religion. Therefore, Nigeria is unarguably a religiously-volatile state, going by the incessant occurrence of violent religious conflicts which have contributed largely to the insecurity in the land (Olu-Adeyemi, 2006). This may be attributed to the fact that religion has been identified as a mechanism for expressing divergent group interests in the country. Besides, religious groups draw attention to issues of identity, recognition, inclusion and exclusion that quickly manifest when religious leaders and their followers evoke behaviour that stir up deeply-held values and opposing sentiments. However, the relationship between religion and conflict in Nigeria is a complex one because a conflict that appearsreligious often conceals other reasons such as ethnic, political and economic factors (Usman, 1987).

It is important to note that attempts to express religious freedom by some groups does infringe on the rights of others in a society. For instance, Paxson (2007) argues that contestation for public space is inevitable in a society where there are many different publics with different interests and needs and, hence, public space is an arena where various publics struggle to exercise control on various turfs. This is because, in a democratic setting, public space provides sites for different types of social interactions whichhave facilitated inter-religious discourse and communication in Nigeria (Akinade, 2013). Hence, Alubo (2011) argues that Nigeria's public space constitutes a terrain for contestation by different publics such as religious and ethnic groups, because it is natural for public spaces to be contested in a pluralistic society.Accordingly, the history and current trends in Nigeria show that some of the public space contestations have triggered violence between groups such as indigenes against settlers, one ethnic group against the other(s), Christians against Muslims, and African Indigenous Religion (AIR) devotees against other religious groups.

In the South-west region of Nigeria, in particular Oyo State, there is the presence of the three major religious groups(i.e. Islam, Christianity and African Indigenous Religion) who have been competing for relevance, promoting their religious identities and consolidating their religious consciousness. This has led to heightened dimension of space contestation by the religious groups who utilise public spaces for their activities in addition to their traditional places of worship. It is observed that the activities of many religious groups in the public space set them on a collision course with other groups and in some cases engenders violent and non-violent conflicts. However, this phenomenon has not received much attention from scholars. Of particular note is the absence of a study that interrogates the inter-religious harmony implications of religious space contestation even though studies that examined its legal, environmental, political and public policy implications exist.

Therefore, the expanding roles of religion in the public space in a multi-religious environment such as Oyo State necessarily raise inter-religious issues and contentions and stimulate the need to answer some vital questions such as: what is responsible for public space contestation among religious groups? What are the effects of public space contestation by religious groups? Hence, this study focused and discovered the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups on

inter-religious harmony. The primary concern of this study is on the claims and denials of the right to use public space such as streets, markets, public institutions and town halls by religious groups and relate it to peace and harmonious interfaith relationship. Therefore, the research seeks to discover how and why religious groups contest or use public space, its effects on the society with a view to establishing its implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State that is characterised by religious pluralism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Previous studies onthe implications of contestation for public space by religious groups have been examined from legal/constitutional (Bhagwati, 2004;Mazur, 2008; Rotrive, 2009), environmental (Ayantayo, 2006; Mepaiyeda, 2011; Abbink, 2011), political (Usman, 1987; Kukah, 1993;Ojo, 2007) and public policy (Mi4nkenberg, 2002;Nolte, Danjibo and Oladeji, 2009; Ayantayo, 2015a) perspectives. However, scholars have paid little attention to the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups on inter-religious harmony and with particular reference to Oyo State. In other words, discourse on the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups on inter-religious harmony is insignificant. Therefore, this study is aimed at examining public space contestation by religious groups and its implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The state is suitable for the study because it possesses certain germane characteristics such as the presence of the three major religions of Christianity, Islam and African Indigenous Religion, high religiosity by all the groups and past cases of religious conflictsresulting from the use of public space for religious activities. In spite of these, little attention has been paid by scholars to the examination of the implications of such contestation on inter-religious harmony. Thus, there is lack of in-depth studies on contestation for public space by religious groups and its implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State and this has denied access to, and acquisition of, much knowledge that could have been derived through such research. This is the gap in academic discourse that this study has filled. Therefore, this research investigated the nature or mode of public space contestation by religious groups, factors responsible for the contestation, effects of the contestation on the society and implications for inter-religious harmony among religious groups.

1.3   Research Questions

In an attempt to examine this problem, some questions became pertinent for effective exploration of the subject matter:

1.   What are the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups in Oyo State?
2.   What are the factors responsible for the contestation?
3.   What are the effects of contestation for public space by religious groups on the society?
4.   What are the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups for inter-religious harmony?

It was in the context of finding answers to these questions that this research was conceived and pursued.

1.4   Aim and Objectives of the Study

The broad aim of this study is the examination of the inter-religious harmony implications of contestation for public space by religious groups. However, to satisfy the general aim, the study focused on the following objectives:

1.   To identify the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups in Oyo State.
2.   To examine the factors responsible for the contestation.
3.   To discuss the effects ofcontestation for public space by religious groups on the society.
4.   To analyse the implications of contestation for public space by religious groups on inter-religious harmony.

1.5   Significance of the Study

A study of this kind underscores the increasing importance of the issue of religion in the public space arising from the current increase in the activities of religious groups than in the past. By this, the understanding of the contexts in which religious activities in the public space has acquired new and increasing importance would be enhanced. Secondly, since the study highlights the experience of contestation

for public space by religious groups in Oyo State, it would assist other states of the federation with similar religious configuration to learn from the state.

Furthermore, the study is set to be of great benefits to the entire religious communities in the area of promoting understanding of a healthy relationship or inter-religious harmony among them. In addition, this study would also be of immense benefit to government on formulation and implementation of policies on regulation of religious activities in the public space which would prevent inter-religious conflict. This is because although Oyo State is not known forrecurring and intractable violent religious conflict, however, research of this kind will reveal its possibility through religious contestation for public space and thereby assist to design a long-term strategy that would enhance inter-religious harmony in the state. Lastly, the study is significant because it would add in details inter-religious harmony dimension or perspective to researches conducted on the issue of contestation for public space by religious groups. Consequently, the research would help to advance the frontiers of knowledge of conflict studies by showing how religion as a value-based issue in the public space could influence contestation among religious organisations and subsequently impact on religious harmony.

1.6   Scope of the Study/Study Area

The study dealt with contestation for public space by religious groups with its implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State. The choice of Oyo State was premised on the fact that the state possesses characteristics germane for the study which are intense religiosity, ample manifestation of religious activities in the public space and the presence of the three major religious groups of Christianity, Islam and African Indigenous Religion. In addition, there are many variants of African Indigenous Religion, but this study limits its scope to only *Egúngún*and *Orò* religious worship because their adherents conduct their activities in the public space which often provoke conflict.

However, the research dwelt on Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Iseyin, and Igbo-Ora as specific study areas. The towns were selected mainly because they have experiences of several inter-religious conflicts occasioned by contestationfor public space by the three religious groups that dominate the religious landscape of Oyo State.

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Public space can be examined from the perspective of political, media, economic, physical and aerial spaces. However, in this study, the scope of public space is limited to physical and aerial spaces. This is because when the spaces are being used, people lack the ability or discretion to reject or prevent their effects on them. For example, a person cannot prevent noise from worship places but can choose to turn off a television as a media space if he dislikes a religious programme being relayed on it.

Oyo State is one of the federating units of Nigeria. It is located in the South-western geo-political zone of the country. It is also located on latitude 8 00'N and longitude 4 00'E. The vegetation pattern is that of rain forest in the South and guinea savannah in the North. The state was formed in 1976 from the former Western State and originally included Osun State, which was split off in 1991. Oyo State is homogenous, mainly inhabited by the Yoruba ethnic group who are primarily agrarian but have a predilection for living in high-density urban centres. The indigenes mainly comprise the Oyo, the Oke-Ogun, the Ibadan and the Ibarapa who speak the same Yoruba language. Ibadan, the state capital is the largest indigenous city in Africa, south of the Sahara. Ibadan has been the centre of administration of the old Western Region of Nigeria since the days of British colonial rule. Other notable cities and towns in Oyo State include Oyo, Ogbomoso, Iseyin, Saki, Kisi, Okeho, Eruwa, Igbo-Ora, and Igbeti. According to the national population census of 2006, Oyo State's population is 5,580,894 with a total land mass of 28,454 square kilometres. The state is bounded in the south by Ogun State and in the north by Kwara State, in the west by the Republic of Benin and, in the east, by Osun State. The state comprises three (3) Senatorial districts, namely: Oyo North, Oyo South and Oyo Central and consists of 33 local government areas.
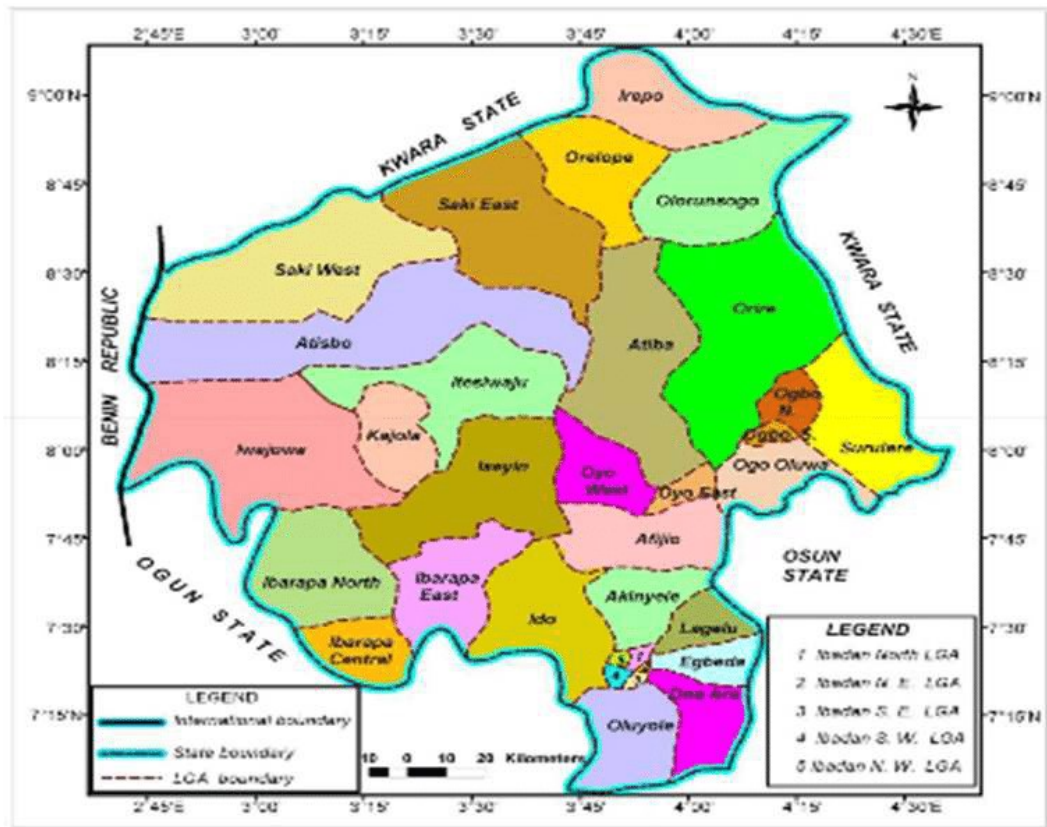
Figure 1. Map of Oyo State, Nigeria

Source: Researchgate.net. November, 2019

1.7   Definition of Terms

The two terms that are given operational definitions in this study arecontestation and inter-religious conflict.

1.7.1   Contestation

Although the term contestation generally connotes struggle, competition, conflict and so on but in this study, contestation means claim and counter-claim that religious groups make on public space which prompts them to use it to promote their divergent identities and interests.

1.7.2   Inter-religious Conflict

In the context of this study, inter-religious conflict is conceptualised as a situation in which the relationship between members of one religious group and another different religious group(s) is characterised by insufficient cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear as well as tendency towards violent or destructive confrontations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is devoted to conceptual clarifications, review of relevant studies on the subject of discourse, gaps identified in the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The aim is to lay a solid conceptual and theoretical platforms on which discussion of the subject matter will proceed. It elucidates scholarly findings and postulates on issues directly or indirectly related to this work.

2.1   Public Space and Society

There is no overriding definition of the concept of public space because the concept is used in many disciplines such as Philosophy, Urban Studies, Visual Arts, Cultural Studies and Social Studies. Therefore, public space is a complex and multi-disciplinary concept that keeps on attracting the attention of scholars from various disciples. For example, more recently, public space has become a focus for sociologists, geographers, political scientists and religious studies scholars interested not only how such places are built and managed, but also in how they function socially, economically, politically and religiously. Consequently, there is a cross-disciplinary connection that enhances understanding of the nature and function of public space.Public space as a concept can be interpreted in many different ways depending on the discipline. Hence, the definition of public space is varied, shifting, imprecise and contradictory (Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011). Consequently, the scholars sum up the different definitions of the concept by several authors and gave a comprehensive definition of public space as:

> Responsive, democratic and meaningful place that protect the rights of user groups. They are accessible to all groupsand provide for freedom of action but also for temporary claim and ownership. A public space can be changed by action, because it is owned by all… (Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011:4).

The way public space is defined by the scholars highlights three characteristics of the concept as rights of groups to use public space; accessibility of public space to all groups and that the ownership of public space is by all. The import of this definition which indicates its relevance to this study is that groups such as religious groups have the right and access to the public space which they can use for their activities as public space is collectively owned. These characteristics are, to a large extent, similar to those identified by Parkinson (2012) which are: unlimited accessibility to places such as public squares and markets, the places are for the benefits of everyone, creation and management of the places is by government and collective ownership. However, it is not in all cases that the use of public spaces benefit everyone like in the situation of been used for religious activities that a person dislike.

To Williams (2006), public space is simply a place that is accessible to everyone and accessibility means that every individual has the equal right to space (Orrico, 2011). This means that everybody living in a society possesses equal opportunity to public space. However, accessibility may be restrictedsometimes by exercising control over public space (Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011). A comprehensive definition of public space that appears to capture many of the features of the concept is posited by Carmona, Magalhaes and Hammondas:

> Public space … relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment, public and private, internal and external, urban and rural, where the public have free, although not necessarily unrestricted access. It encompasses: all the streets, squares and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; the open countryside; the 'public/private' spaces both internal and external where public access is welcome–if controlled –such as private shopping centres or rail and bus stations; and the interiors of key public and civic buildings such as libraries (2008:5)

This all-encompassing definition of public space has the following characteristics embedded in it: public space is a place accessible to all persons; privately-owned properties such as shopping malls, commercial buses which are open to all persons for patronage are also regarded as public space and all built and natural environments in the rural and urban areas are regarded as public space. However, while some scholars such as Lawuyi (2012a) make a distinction between public and private space, Carmona, Magalhaes and Hammond (2008) make no such distinctions.

This is corroborated by Parkinson who declares that there is no such thing as public/private distinction because the distinction dissolves into a number of issues that have relatively little to do with one another (Parkinson, 2012). It is noted that the idea of accessibility where everything that happens can be observed by everyone is fundamental to many definitions of public space (Parkinson, 2012).

In the view of Orum and Neil, public space is defined as "all areas that are open and accessible to all members of the public in a society in principle though not necessarily in practice" (cited in Neil, 2009:2). Thus, as far as the scholars are concerned, the inclusive accessibility may not be realistic at times which supports the position of Shepard and Smithsimon (2011) that sometimes accessibility to public space may be restricted. However, arising from this definition, Neal (2010) identifies three perspectives of public space. They are legal–economic perspective which seeks to answer the questions of what is public space and who pays for it. The second is socio-spatial perspective which addresses the question of what public space looks like and how it is put to use. The third perspective is political perspective and it focuses on the role of public space in democracy, both as site for discursive activities and empowerment. Individually, these perspectives on public space provide key insights into how such places function.

These three perspectives of public space are not mutually exclusive in practice. They overlap but are distinguishable in their origins, assumptions and foci with each of them providing key insights into how such space functions.The social-spatial dimension appears more relevant to this study because it points to the nature, functions and consequences (effects) of the use of public space which largely are in tandem with the research questions that guided this study. However, it does not provide a guide on factors that motivate religious groups' contestation for public space which is the weakness of the perspectives in the context of this study.

Furthermore, making an insightful contribution to the attempt at theorising public space and its relation to the society, Lawuyi (2012a) explains his ideas of "space of society", "society of space", "space of the crowd" and "space of power". He links the ideas together to enrich the discourse on public space as a major concept with particular reference to its nature or features. A space of society is simply a geographic

entity or point which starts as a bush/forest, mountain or any other potentially-habitable place. When such a space of society is developed and transformed to become places of habitable cities like Ibadan, Lagos or Abuja, it becomes a society of space. A space of society, once a society of space has been created from it, can be transformed into a space of the crowd. These are simply places structured to hold several people for an occasion. They may appear empty without the crowd but they would suddenly spring to life as people move in to watch or conduct an event. Typical examples of space of the crowd are sports stadiums, motor parks, recreational parks, markets and public gallery of parliaments. Inadvertently, every space of the crowd within a space of society can become a space of power. This occurs when power is ascribed to the space by the patrons and the power determines the aesthetic and ideological element of the space. In essence, a space of power has an allure and awe due to either its physical characteristics or spiritual endowment. As such, the space can be in the bush such as convent of traditional *Orò* worshippers, or a river bank, the mountain top, the church or the mosque.

The relevance of these concepts to this study is that they provide a conceptual background and understanding to some of the types or nature of public space being examined for religious purposes. These include towns such as Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Iseyin and Igbo-Ora in Oyo State, Nigeria as space of society/society of space; markets, sports stadia, parks and so on as space of the crowd; and religious worship centres such as mosques, churches and shrines in the bush/forest for some African Indigenous Religion practices as space of power. To further demonstrate the relevance of these concepts to this research, with particular reference to the concept of space of power, when a public space is used for a religiously-related activity, that place is assumed to have been ascribed spiritual power and hence to the religious group, it is appropriate. But to the non-adherent of that religion, that space does not have that power and, therefore, the activity of the religious group would be considered an infringement against his right to the space which sets the stage for conflict. For example, when Muslims observe their Friday *Jumat* prayer on the publicly-owned road, it is assumed that they have imputed a sense of spirituality on the road because according to Fleming and O'Hara (1995) religious events should be conducted in sacred buildings and places. But, a non-Muslim frowns at it because of the blockage of

the road which prevents him from accessing it, and is thus seen as denying him his fundamental right which is capable of provoking negative reaction and, hence, conflict. However, despite their importance to this study, the concepts are limited because they do not cover the entire gamut of the types of public space available and examined in this study. Nevertheless, the exposition suggests that conflict may ensue when public space is converted to a religious space by religious groups which can be informed by the way they perceive it.

Therefore, according to Orrico (2011), public space is a site of contestation because of how different groups interpret it. In other words, the way public space is perceived and interpreted affects the way it is put to use which sets the tone for contestation and conflict as averred by Orrico:

> As scholars grapple with debates on public space, they must address the ways in which people understand, use, and identify space. Claims to space are often made on the basis of the meanings that people attach to space, that is, they understand and interprets a given space in some way that is meaningful for their lives and interests. As such, conflicts that arise over space become embedded in larger debates about interpreting the meanings of place (2011:5).

Consequently, in many ways, conflicting and competing interpretations about what constitutes space inform the debates over access and use of public space. It is in the light of this that Mitchell questions the role of public space: "Is public space about order and control, in which the need for safety is prioritised, or is it about free interaction, even if that comes with conflict, violence, and danger?" (cited in Orrico, 2011:4). The foregoing highlights the way the interpretation of public space leads to different processes of conflict, competition, accommodation, and negotiation within that space.

To further deepen our understanding of the nature of public space, from the perspective of individuals' perception, Mitchell (1995) argues that the way public space is put into use is determined by the vision held of public space. The vision may be opposing to two persons or groups. In this vein, two different stakeholders may hold on to two opposed, and perhaps irreconcilable, ideological visions of the nature and purpose of public space. For example, while a group of activists may promote a vision of space marked by free interaction and absence of coercion by powerful institutions,

municipal or state authorities, another group may envision a planned, orderly, and safe public space that would make different users of the space to feel happy and comfortable.

The visions discussed by Mitchell (1995) may not be too different from the way people interpret public space but different because he further relates these two visions of public space to Lefebvre's distinction between representational space (appropriated, lived space; space-in-use) and representations of space (planned, controlled, ordered space) and says that they are similar. However, Mitchell (1995) recognises that there are potentially more than two visions of the nature and purpose of public space and that many people will maintain a middle (and perhaps a wavering) ground. Nevertheless, the opposing visions prescribe the two predominant ways of seeing public space across a variety of societies and historical period.

These two visions of the nature of public space infer that struggles or contestation over public space are nothing but struggles over opposing ideologies; over the ways in which religious groups, members of the society and other stakeholders like government conceptualise public space. This indicates that a group's approach to public space is influenced by the meaning, definition and interpretation of the nature and purpose of public space. Consequently, according to Mitchell(1995), public space is not static but dynamic in conformity with the way it is perceived by the users and comes out more through a continuous struggle. The struggle refers to attempt to use space in the way that a person or group sees it which may be different from the way it is seen by other stakeholders.

This view of dynamism of the definition of public space due to the way it is perceived by individuals and groups is supported by Crawford (1995). The scholar acknowledges Fraser's ideas of multiple publics, contestation and redefinition of public and private spaces, and concludes that:

> Rather than being fixed in time and space, these public spaces are constantlychanging, as users reorganize and reinterpret physical space. Unlike normative public spaces, which simplyreproduce the existing ideology, these spaces, often sites of struggle and contestation, help to overturn it (Crawford 1995:6).

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The implication of this view is that the definition of public space is dynamic based on the interpretation and reorganisation of space by its potential users which in itself suggests contestation and struggle among the different "publics" which Alubo (2011) refers to as social groups such as political groups, religious groups, and ethnic groups.

In addition, Mitchell (1995) develops the idea of spaces for representation which refers to public space as a place with which a social group can stake out the space that allows it to be seen. By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public or known. This space for representation provides opportunity for social groups to be known in the public. The relevance of Mitchell's concept of spaces for representation suggests that social groups such religious groups engage public space for their use with the motive of being known by appealing to large audience which public space offers. Thus, this concept points attention to one of the factors responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups. In a similar vein, Ogungbile (2013) discovers that the reasons for space contestation by Muslim and Christian students in Nigerian universities are all geared towards the question of religious identity. According to the scholar, Christians' new ways of expressing their doctrines and practices in the public space, posed a threat to the identity of Islam. Thus, contestation becomes necessary by the Muslims to avoid loss of identity, visibility, fear of losing members to Christianity and decline in public recognition and by extension, social and political relevance. Consequently, both groups contest public spaces to reinforce and enhance their respective identities.

In furtherance to the discourse on space contestation by Muslim and Christian groups in Nigeria, Gbadegesin (2013) observes that the two faith communities contest space in four different areas which are: political space, economic space, media space and geographic or physical space. According to the scholar, apart from physical space, all the other loci of contestations have the potential of leading Nigeria into national crises if government fails to manage and control them properly. The exposition is relevant to this study because it gives enlightenment on different areas of religious contestation of public space, though limited to only Christian and Islamic groups. However, African Indigenous Religion also contest public space which the scholar did not mention and that is a gap that is covered in this study. Besides, there are evidences

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to prove that physical space contestation by religious groups also provokes conflict and like other studies, this study covered this gap also.

Therefore, there are concerns about the uses of public space. These concerns, among others, are ownership of what constitutes *public* and the nature of participation among various members of the public or various publics. Public spaces are open to many publics, often with each contesting the rules and moral codes in operation as well as more meaningful participation. These contestations can become harbingers for changes as well as conflict. That is why public space is regarded as a terrain or site contested by many publics (Alubo, 2011). Therefore, from the foregoing discourse, public spaces are places that are open and accessible to allpeople as well as collectively owned and can be made to function in many ways by different groups. Therefore, religious groups also engage or contest public space in different forms for various reasons which engender some consequences. Situated in a multi–religious environment, the way religious groups conduct their activities in public spaces should have implications for inter-religious harmony which is what this research is set out to unravel.

2.2   The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a pervasive phenomenon in social relations. It is an integral part of social life. There are many conceptual definitions of conflict in literature. This is perhaps due to the fact that conflict is an inevitable and recurrent phenomenon in life. In analysing these numerous definitions, Schmid (2000) views them as partly overlapping, partly conflicting and observes that scholars conceptualise conflict from the perspectives of causes, manifestation and impact on the social existence.Few definitions are cited to buttress these observations in order to enrich our understanding of the concept of conflict. Coser defines conflict as:

> …struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take between individuals and collectivises. Intergroup as well as intragroup conflicts are perennial features of social life (1968: 85).

This definition points to the nature of conflict, causes and types of conflict, which are relevant to this research because this study seeks to investigate the dynamics of inter-

group conflict arising from the use of public space by three different religious groups.Nwolise (2004) also defines conflict in the same frame with Coser as a clash of interests between one or two parties such as individuals, groups, states or any combination of these.

To Dahrendof, conflict is conceptualised as "contest, competitions, disputes and tensions as well as manifest clashes between social forces" (Quoted in Schmid, 2000:12). This suggests that conflict naturally involves contest, competition, tension, strife, antagonistic or adversarial means of achieving an end at the expense of the other party. Therefore, in social situations, conflict may arise over competition for resources, clashing of values, unfulfilled psychological needs and communication breakdown which are regarded as sources of community conflicts (Albert, 2001). Dahrendof's definition of conflict has a feature similar to the concept of contestation except the dimension of manifest clashes it adds, which suggests violence. Thus, conflict appears synonymous with violence but there are some differences as violence manifests in extreme, consistent and intense level of conflict. Therefore, conflict may not necessarily be destructive, but violence is more often destructive as violence rightly conveys the implication of harm or injury which also reflects in Coser's conceptualisation of conflict. However, violence is both physical and psychological in nature. This is termed structural violence that is commonly attributed to Galtung (1969). Structural violence encapsulates the idea of social and institutional shortcomings that cause harm or injury to people by preventing them from attaining their basic needs. Such social deprivation comprises, among others, restraining peoples' right to free movement and peaceful environment devoid of excessive noise. It is in the light of this that Sulaiman (2016), after examining many scholarly views on the concept of violence, concludes that violence includes any action that infringes upon the rights of citizens.

Zartman (1989), in conceptualising conflict, differentiates between conflict and crisis. According to him, conflict refers to underlying issues in dispute between parties and crisis as the active outbreak of armed hostilities. However, much as the definition is insightful, it leaves one question of when a conflict becomes a crisis. This question can be answered by considering what crisis means. Structurally, crisis goes beyond the occurrence or the manifestation of conflicts as a state of crisis occurs after persistent

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manifestation of conflicts. Therefore, crisis denotes a turning point after series of conflict or violence.

Against this background, to distinguish conflict situation from similar situations, Miall (2007) suggests four useful criteria:

- The existence of a conflict is based on the perception of the conflict actors.
- At the root of a conflict must lay differences in opinion, values, interests, aims, or relations. Notably, it can be viewed that what precipitates conflict is not the mere existence of the differences but it is the desire or resolve to achieve the differences.
- The parties in a conflict may be either states or significant elements of the population within the state.
- The outcome of the conflict must be considered of great importance by the parties involved in the conflict.

Thus, conflict refers to a state of disagreement between individuals or groups. It is a situation of confrontation involving at least two parties resulting from pursuit of opposite or incompatible goals.

Conflict is not completely dysfunctional and destructive in nature. When properly managed, conflict can be constructive to the extent of leading to development and satisfaction of interests of the feuding parties. This is the way the Chinese sees it because, to them, conflict means "an opportunity or chance for change as well as risk or danger" (CRESNET, 2001:2). Burton (1972) also shares this view because, to him, conflict is to be enjoyed like sex because it could serve as a means to change. Hence, conflict situation does not necessarily portend negativities, but it could escalate into violence if not properly managed (Lu et al., 2015). Conflict thrives more in a pluralistic social setting than otherwise. Therefore, conflict can hardly be discussed outside the concept of pluralism (Otite, 1999). Also, Smooha (1995) points out that both pluralism and conflict are related in complex ways. This view is germane to this study because Nigeria is a plural society in terms of ethnic and religious formations and that perhaps partly explains why ethno–religious conflicts are a recurring phenomenon. This is because conflict is naturally present in all kinds of social,

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economic or political settings that are characterised by ethnic, religious and other forms of pluralism (Otite, 1999).

The concept of conflict will be incomplete without discussing stages of conflict. There are three components of conflict analysis. Conflict analysis is a detailed study of any conflict situation using specific framework, paradigms and methods with the aim of having a proper understanding of a conflict to enable adoption of appropriate solution strategy. The three components of conflict analysis are background and context of the conflict, stages of the conflict and timeliness. These three components relate very closely and greatly enhance understanding of conflict within appropriate historical and social contexts (Best, 2006). And of the three components of conflict analysis, stages of conflict are most important for this study because it will help to understand the dynamic nature of conflict that religious contestation for public space generates. Besides, being able to identify the stages in which conflict escalates or deescalates can be useful in gaining insight into the interventions which may be necessary to properly handle and deal with the conflict situation. This is because conflict typically occurs in escalating levels of seriousness. However, conflicts are easily resolved in the early stages than when it has degenerated to a deeply hostile and serious level.

Therefore, according to Lederach conflict is not a static phenomenon, but rather expressive, dynamic and dialectical(Best, 2006). Fisher, et al. (2000)identifies five stages of conflict as follows: pre-conflict stage which is a period of awareness of goals incompatibility between parties or awareness that a problem exists and which is prone to open conflict. Generally, little is said or done about the problem at this stage as it is not considered that any problem actually exists. It is a latent stage of conflict that is not well-known to public view but communication is undermined between the parties. At this stage, if solution is not found, especially because one of the conflicting parties adamantly sticks to his position, the conflict escalates.

The second stage is confrontation which is the point at which conflict becomes open or manifest. This is characterised by many factors such as strained relations and polarisation.The next stage is crisis stage which represents the peak of the conflict. This could be characterised by war and intense fighting culminating in the destruction

of lives and properties. The fourth stage is outcome stage which is the level of reduction in hostilities, paving way for discussion to commence, or alternative means of settling conflict. The last stage is the post-conflict stage in conflict progression. This is the stage where violence has ceased completely or reduced significantly to allow for discussion. It is instructive to note that the five conflict stages are similar to what Oyeshola (2005) terms emerging stage, escalating stage, severe stage, rebuilding stage and reconciliation stage respectively.

From the foregoing, conflict from which contestation is derived, appears to be synonymous concepts as both convey the meaning of struggle and competition between groups and individuals with incompatible interests. Thus, conflict occurs when an individual or group feels negatively affected by the interest of another individual or group. For example, when a religious group is engaging the public space for its activity and members of another religious group feels negative about it, conflict can be said to have occurred whether the reaction is violent or non-violent.

2.3   Causes of Inter-Religious Conflict

Religion is a powerful force in societies around the world and in the lives of people everywhere. Globally, the inclusive influence of religion has long been recognised because it is seen as having the potential to cause instability (Johnson and Sampson, 1994). Religion has the potential to cause conflict because all religions consider themselves superior to others especially by those who are regarded as religious fundamentalists. Furthermore,the world today is marked by religious pluralism and clash of worldviews. Modern world brings individuals and groups with different belief systems into both proximity and potential conflict (Mohler, 2009). In other words, different religions can hardly co-exist without clashes because it is generally acknowledged that conflicts are integral to human society.The religious fundamentalist believes that his own religion is the only right way while others are unfounded. Hence, the fundamentalists provide a religious and moral justification for conflict (Olomojobi, 2013).This provides the plank upon which to base the discussion on factors that instigate inter-religious conflict.

In the view of Gofwen (2004), religious conflict is inevitable in a society that harbours more than one religion which therefore serves as the basis for inter-religious

conflict. The scholar adds that what causes conflict is not the existence of plural religions in a society but the lack of the society's capacity to harmonise conflicting and mutually-intolerant religions. This type of situation makes religion a divisive force.In the light of this, the scholar further identifiesother possible causes of inter-religious conflict to include what he termed the diversity of interpretation of doctrine within the same religion and conversion campaign. On the latter, Ali Mazrui shares similar view in relation to Christianity and Islam which he sees as universalist in aspiration (Chinyere, 2010). That is, they have the goal of worldwide conversion campaign. Conversion campaign, therefore, is one the factors responsible for inter-religious conflict in Nigeria (Adamolekun, 2012). Furthermore, Adamolekunstates that two major issues have succeeded in instigating religious intolerance in the country. They are: secularisation in the Nigerian state and indoctrination of Nigerian citizens. State secularisation asserts the principle of strict separation of the Church and State in governance. However, the cause of conflict is that Christians support this concept whereas Muslims, according to the tenet of their faith, opposes it. This is because to the Muslims, there is no distinction between public and private spheres of life due to the fact that, Islam is a complete way of life in which everything must be considered in accordance with the will of Allah (Kukah and Mcgarvey, 2013). Secondly, the issue of citizens' indoctrination as a cause for religious disharmony is attributable to the utterances of religious leaders while preaching which is often done in ways that present their religion as superior to those of others. Ayantayo (2005) notes that, not only are both the Christian and Islamic preachers fond of making provocative and abusive statements while propagating their faiths, each also claims superiority over the other. It is in the light of this that Babalola opines that:

> No religious harmony can be achieved if we think that othersmust subscribe to our own religion. All religions must be allowed and encouraged to go on with their beliefs and practices. Theremust be no idea that a particular religion must superimpose itstenets on others. However, passionate we may believe in ourfaith, today's trend of events has made us recognise that we shouldnot try to convert others to it. (Babalola, 2002:138).

The inference that can be drawn from this is that conversion campaign or proselytisation drive by religious groups can engender inter-religious disharmony.

Relatedly, contributing on sources and causes of inter-religious conflict in Nigeria, Ayantayo (2008) elaborates on religious ignorance as a weighty factor. He limits his exposition to Christianity and Islam, pointing out that the adherents of the two faiths not only lacks in-depth knowledge of the faith they profess, but are also ignorant of what other faith believe and profess. The ignorance among religious adherents on issues relating to their religions and others make them to think that they possess absolute monopoly of truth regarding belief in the existence of one God, as against others. This is what Suleiman (2016) terms theological factor that triggers religious disharmony among different religious adherents. He states that:

> However, owing to lack of in-depth understanding, outrightignorance, misinterpretation or cheer mischief, scriptural textshave been given whimsical and capricious interpretationstowards predetermined ends. Such actions have often sparkedoff emotional responses and violence among the adherents of various religions in Nigeria. (Suleiman, 2016:4).

Therefore, to the scholar, despite their ignorance, the adherents of the two religions always want to impose their tenets on people of other faith. This situation breeds religious arrogance which serves as seed for religious intolerance and conflict. Furthermore, Suleiman identify other causes of religious disharmony in Nigeria to include: religious intolerance which means inability to recognise and accommodate religious views and opinion of others, religious fanaticism which refers to a show of excessive irrational zeal by faith adherents to defend their religions, and unbridled action of the press towards national issues like Sharia and other sensitive religious issues. Other predisposing factors capable of causing inter-religious conflict that the scholar postulates include wrong religious orientation of religious believers, selfishness on the part of religious personalities, mass poverty, aggressive or militant preaching/evangelism, external influence of religion and literacy level of religious adherents.

In another context, Ayantayo (2005)identifies other causes of inter-religious conflict between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria to include: bad or poor economic situation, government interference in religious activities, sensational media reports on religious conflicts and ignorance on the part of religious adherents about other religions, lust for materialism, worldliness, political instability, political

marginalisation occasioned by religious differences, tribalism and gender discrimination among others. There are so many other causes of inter-religious conflict which many scholars have identified. However, they will be summarised as categorised by Alanamu (2003) with some of them already mentioned as monopoly of religious truths, religious fanaticism, unbridle action of the press, unhealthy rivalry and incitement, aggressive evangelism, indiscriminate acts of the government and external influence. However, these listed causes of religious conflict are not elaborated and do not x-ray their roots which are vital to understanding a value-based conflict such as religious conflict.

It can be observed that most of the factors identified as responsible for religious conflict indicate underlying socio-political, economic and governance factors which ignite not only religious conflict but also violent conflicts generally in Nigeria. However, there is the need to investigate physical and visible factors such as the conduct of religious activities in the public space by religious groups as factors capable of engendering inter-religious conflict. This will provide a departure from existing studies on religious conflict as this study examines the implications of the practice on inter-religious harmony.

2.4   Concept of Religious Interactions

Religious interaction is inevitable in a society where there is more than one common religion. Thus, religious interaction is the encountering of more than one religious belief and practicein any social setting. Hence, religious interaction takes place in a multi-religious society. The hallmark of religious interaction is that different faith adherents cohabit side by side in a society as reflected in the words of Mark Juergensmeyer that "scarcely any region in the globe today is composed solely of members of a single strand of traditional religion" (Juergensmeyer, 2003:4). In religious interaction, there is the tendency for one religion to struggle to outshine or excel the others because different religions uphold different traditions and emphasise different points of view (Adewale, 1988). Therefore, in religious pluralistic context, encountering of different religious adherents present both opportunities and challenges.

The claim to particularity by religious groups has the tendency to provoke conflict among them. Particularity as a concept in religious studies means the claim by

a religion that it is the only way to the salvation of man. It is a claim of self-superiority over other religions. In practice, leaders and followers of religions always attempt to propagate and spread the doctrines of their faith and stress their uniqueness which are not the same and that sets the stage for conflict. According to Adewale(1988), every religion including the three dominant ones in Nigeria makes claim to particularity in one form or the other. For instance, the Christian Bible quotes Jesus saying: "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one cometh to the Father but by me" (John 3:16, KJV). This proclamation deems the significance of other religions and makes Christianity the absolute way to heaven. Islamic teaching also makes claim to particularity by regarding all non-faithful as *kafir,* meaning unbelievers. This suggests that Muslims are the only true worshippers of God. In the same vein, in respect of traditional religion, the *Ifá*priests among the Yoruba describe anyone not versed in traditional religious secrets as*Ògbèrì* (ignoramus or non-initiate). Thus, even though the indigenous religion, that is, the African Indigenous Religion (AIR), which appears accommodating and liberal compared with the other religions which are mission-oriented, also has some elements of particularity claim particularly in practice.

The three religious groups commenced interactions when Islam and Christianity came to Nigeria at different times to meet the African Indigenous Religion (AIR) firmly on the ground. Islam came into Nigeria through the North African traders who came to trade in various wares in northern Nigeria in the 14th century (Fawole, 2002). This made northern Nigeria to be the harbinger of Islam in Nigeria and it was from there that the religion spread to other parts of the country especially Yorubaland. According to Babalola, (Fawole, 2002), Islam reached Yorubaland in the 17[th]century AD. However, by the end of the century, Muslim community had not only spread in many parts of Yorubaland but had also grown considerably both in size and stature even before the introduction of Christianity in the area (Bidmos, 1993).

Christianity, on the other hand, came to Nigeria via Yorubaland especially Badagry in the 1840s. The religion quickly spread to other parts of Yorubaland such as Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oyo, andOgbomoso through missionaries such as Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (Babalola, 2002, Adewale, 1988). Indeed, Christianity was able to grow fast because the Christian missionaries introduced Western education and medical care along with the preaching of the gospel to the

people. These two social services enticed their converts, made up of Muslims and Afrelists(Bidmos, 1993). Thus, it would appear that, because Christianity came after Islam into Yorubaland, the focus of the missionaries was to convert both the Afrelists and Muslims into Christianity which was largely successful because they added Western education and health care to their missionary work.

By and large, Yorubaland and, by implication, Oyo State has been witnessing the coexistence of the three different religions for a long time. These religious groups have been interacting with each other and their relationship can be described as both peaceful and conflictive. With specific reference to Muslim-Christian religions, Aderibigbe (1997) observes that, besides occasional outburst of conflicts perpetrated by religious extremists and fanatics, there has been tolerance and understanding manifesting in peaceful co-existence between the two groups. To Akinade (2013), the Muslim-Christian relationship in Nigeria has been an admixture of meaningful engagement and baffling ambiguities manifesting in constructive dialogue, lethargic encounters, open conflicts, and internecine violence. However, according to Bidmos(1993), the level of relationship among the three religions can be classified as formal and informal. The informal relationship is characterised by mutual interaction through the adherents of different religious groups as they meet at workplaces, political or business environments. At these levels, their interactions are characterised by love, mutual respect and trust (Bidmos, 1993). In Yorubaland, the interaction is further enhanced by the fact that many people who claim to be either Christian or Muslim also practice Yoruba indigenous religion in one way or the other. Besides, hardly does a family compound exist without the members belonging to different religions and jointly celebrate their respective festivals together.

This view is shared by Babalola (2002) who discovers that different individuals belonging to various religious groups cohabit peacefully and by that lay a rich legacy of inter-religious cooperation or dialogue. On the other hand, formal relationship has to do with the way religious groups, as different entities, interact with each other. This is simply a group interaction which seems to be the level at which conflict ensues because of pursuit of group interests. Though, as religious groups, the primary interest should be conversion of people into their respective folds but it often goes beyond that as polarisation, intolerance and misinterpretation characterise their practices. This is

particularly true with Islam and Christianity which are mission religions, but not the same with African Indigenous Religion which is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive and is tolerant of other religions (Alana, 1993). The high tolerance of African faith system is reflected in the way it view other religions. In the words of WandeAbimbola:

> The African point of view is one in which there is respect for all religious tradition of humankind. While we hold steadfastly to our beliefs, we respect the rights of others to practice their own religions in their own ways, provided they do not infringe on the rights of others. (Abimbola, 1990:145)

Consequently, the introduction of Islam and Christianity into the Yoruba society set the motion for religious interactions among the three religious groups and also prepares the ground for conflict and antagonism especially during the period of the European missionaries (Adewale, 1988). Christians condemned Muslims and the African Indigenous Religion followers in their attempt at mass conversion. Muslims, on the other hand, condemned certain Christian teachings and the practices of the indigenous religion. Furthermore, African religion adherents reacted violently against Islam and Christianity when they attempted to destroy their shrines or looked down on their festivals (Odumuyiwa, 1993). This is the pattern of the interaction or encounter among the three religions in the pre-colonial and colonial periods which have continued till today (Fawole, 2002).

As a result, Yorubaland has become a fertile ground for competition among the three religious groups. It is in the light of this that Kalu observes that, despite the incursion of Islam and Christianity into Nigeria, the obstinate persistence of traditional religion has kept it alive and created a three-way competition between traditional religiosity, resurgent Islam and Christianity (Kalu, 1993). Thus, in religious interaction, the relationship among religious groups and practitioners may either be peaceful or otherwise. When religions interact positively, the result is peaceful coexistence and healthy rivalry. However, if in the course of interaction, one religious group attempts to absorb or annihilate the other(s), just like in the case of claim to particularity, there is bound to be conflict. Thus, Islam and Christianity had been in the Yoruba society before the establishment of colonial administration and, at that time,

their focus was primarily to convert the African traditional worshippers (Adamolekun, 2002). Therefore, with the introduction of Islam and Christianity in Yorubaland in general and Oyo State in particular, there has been visible contestation among their adherents and adherents of African Indigenous Religion in a multi-religious environment. Their respective beliefs which defines their identities, accentuates their differences and inspires space contestation which must have impact on inter-religious harmony.

Therefore, the religious landscape of Oyo State is complex, fluid and dynamic, characterized by multiple religious traditions which include various strands of Islam, Christianity, local ethnic-based religions and newer spiritual science movements. However, the most predominant and visible ones are Islam, Christianity and African Indigenous Religion (AIR). While the first two are regarded as foreign religions emanating from outside the shores of Africa, the indigenous or traditional religion is rooted in African culture. Indigenous religions have no historical founders, but are considered as old as the beginning of humanity. They are regarded as local, ethnic-based religions in the sense that they are localised and have no historical origin (Adogame, 2010). Hence, the Yoruba regards their religion as having met it on earth. According to Yoruba belief, some gods had existed before the earth was created. Unlike Islam and Christianity which are monotheistic in nature, Yoruba religion is pantheist. Therefore, different gods are worshipped by the Yoruba ethnic group in Oyo State. These, among others, are *Obàtálá*, *Sango*, *Olósun*, *Ifá, Orò* and *Egúngún*. However, the study is limited to the activities of *Orò* and *Egúngún* worshippers as well as Christians and Muslims in Oyo State with regard to their contestation for publicspace. This is because they make use of public spaces for their activities which often induce conflict. Thus, as far as this study is concerned, the public spaces in Oyo State are predominantly characterised by the activities of Christian, Islamic and African Indigenous Religion (*Egúngún* and *Orò*) religious groups. Furthermore, the religious configuration of the state is such that the population consists of almost equal numbers of Muslims and Christians with a minority of traditional practitioners (Nolte, et al., 2009; Kukah and Mcgarvey, 2013). Consequently, the interaction among the three groups in the religious space of Oyo State presents great challenges and opportunities with implications for inter-religious harmony.

2.5   Implications of Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups

One of the prominent features of religious landscape in many countriesis the competition for public space by religious groups. Despite the fact that the constitutions of many countries are secular in nature, religion has become increasingly important in the public sphere. Therefore, in recent decades, religion has become an important factor in public debate and that is why it has attracted much attention from scholars. Political theorists are concerned with two main issues: the role and scope of religion in public spaces and the legitimacy of state intervention in regulating religious organisations with regard to freedom of association (Gonza, Lozzo, and Pedro, 2009). Following this, two schools of thought have emerged whose positions are diametrically opposed to each other. These are the Liberals and Reformists. The Liberals confine religion to the sphere of the private or ''non-political'' because, to them, religion is irrational and unintelligible. On the other hand, the Reformists accept religion in the public space because they believe that religious organisations can make valuable contributions to the public sphere (Gonza et al., 2009)On the strength of these two positions, many scholars have written extensively on the issue of religious groups and contestation for public space with their implications from diverse perspectives which include legal/constitutionality, environment, politics and influence on public policy though with little said on its implications for inter-religious harmony. These are discussed thematically to indicate the lacuna in scholarship which this research attempts to cover.

2.5.1   Legal/Constitutional implications of contestation for public space by religious groups

Scholars like Mazur (2008) and Rotrive (2009) directs their attention to the legal and constitutional implications for contestation for public space by religious groups because of display of religious symbols in the public spaces. Religious symbolism has to do with symbols such as archetypes, acts, artworks, events, or natural phenomena used by adherents of a religion. Furthermore, religions consider religious texts, rituals, and works of art as symbols of compelling ideas. Symbols are important in religion because they help in creating a resonant mythos that expresses the

moral values of the teachings of the religion, fostering solidarity among religiousadherents and bringing them closer to their object of worship.

Meanwhile,religious symbols in the public places typically raise two sets of conflicts. The first set arises over the extent to which the right to wear religious symbols and clothes can be limited in the name of other rights and principles of equal constitutional value. In principle, this type of conflict may arise both in relation to the denomination of the majority as well to those of religious minorities. The second type of conflict arises when a religious symbol, such as the crucifix, or crèche, is used as a "public language" of identity by state authorities. In this case, unlikethe first conflict, the contested symbol represents the dominant religion and not that of minority groups.The controversial symbols concern the wearing of religious clothing like the Islamic headscarf called *hijab* in public spaces, display of crucifixes and the Ten Commandment monuments in public-owned institutions which are common in the United States of America and some European countries. To this end, Rotrive (2009) avers that the issue of religious symbols in the public space has stirred controversy on the freedom of religion and nations' neutral positions on religion,adding that it has become a source of vigorouslegal/constitutional and political controversy.

Corroborating, Mazur (2008) reports that, in America within a period of about three decades, of the 30 lawsuits filed to remove the Ten Commandment monuments from public buildings, 12 were held to be legal and18 determined to be unconstitutional. This controversy emanates from the provisions of the Constitution which is secular in content and context but subject to divergent interpretations. For example, the First Amendment of the American Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishmentof religion, orprohibiting the free exercise thereof" (cited in Mazur, 2008:6). In the same vein, European Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom has provision similar to that quoted above and any perceived infringement is adjudicated by European Court of Human Rights which is often referred to as Constitutional Court of Europe.

As mentioned earlier, particularly in Europe, the concern is chiefly on the wearing of clothing linked to the religion of immigrants; namely, the Islamic headscarf and the Sikh turban in various places such as schools, workplaces and courtrooms, or

on pictures stamped on official documents.For example, France and Switzerland have laws that ban the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols including the Muslim veils and head coverings known as *hijab*. In France, the government first banned the wearing of *hijab* in public institutions in 2004 followed, in 2010, by what the French call the *berga ban*, outlawing completely full-face covering in all public places. France did this primarily to adhere to a strict form of secularism known as *laicité* which is determined to keep religion out of public life. Inspite of France justification for the ban, the policy is considered to have implications for theconstitutional rights to religious expression. For example, Amnesty International calls the upholding of the French policy on the symbolic religious expression in public spaces by the European Human Rights Court a profound setback for the right to freedom of expression and religion.

Besides the issue of wearing of religious symbols, European countries like Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland as well as the United States of America have faced litigation challenging the presence of crucifixes in schools, courtrooms, and other public buildings.Furthermore, the display of religious symbols such as the Ten Commandments in courthouses or nativity scenes in public parks and public property has continually attracted controversy as its provokes intellectual conflict. Therefore, there are divergent positions by scholars on the issue of religious contestation for public space through religious symbolism with implications for legal/constitutionality. The dispute rages between the secularists and religionists and the battlefield is the law courts. The secularists' position is that display of resligious symbols on public property, rather than in private places, amounts to state endorsement of religion. On the other hand, religionists insist otherwise (Broderick, 2010).

To Beacon (2010), disallowing religious symbols in the public space is an extreme enforcement of the theory of separation of the Church and state. He opines that a state with religious diversity should be religiously neutral in order to promote fairness and equity, but that should not mean total ban on public religious expression. To him, shared public institutions such as law courts and policing must be immune from religion, but shared public spaces like streets, schools and offices should not be immune from religion because that would amount to denying the people constitutional right to genuine freedom of religion. Likewise, he holds that public spaces should not

be rid of religious symbols becausestates that claim religious neutrality must accommodate religious expression in the public space.

Furthermore, in support of the practice of display of religious symbols in the public space, Witte (2011) summarises the familiar arguments that the United States Supreme Court had used for decades to maintain traditional display of crèches, crosses and Decalogue (The Ten Commandments) on government property.While they are not entirely convergent in their religious display symbolism cases, Witte notes that the American and European Human Rights Courts hold six common teachings. Firstly, tradition weighs much in these cases, as the long-standing customary presence of a religious symbol in public life eventually renders it not only acceptable but also indispensable to defining who a people are. Another scholar, Vickery (2007)shares this view by regarding symbols as a reflection of history. To him, the display of the Ten Commandments in court-house, for example, should not be interpreted to mean establishing a religion or promoting one faith over another, but simply an historical fact that it provided the basis for the United States legal system.

Secondly, religious symbols have redeeming cultural value. According to the scholar, the cross is not only a Christian symbol, but also a poignant memorial to military service.Vickeryaffirms this view with his position that religious symbols reflect the culture of the society in which they are found. Therefore, denial of the right to express the symbol publicly is denying a demonstration of a cultural heritage. Thirdly, in a federating state like the United States, local values deserve some respect. Therefore, values that are acceptable in some states largely influence the courts' decisions on religious symbolic displays. Thus, the Supreme Court has used that principle to uphold the passive display of crosses and Decalogues on state capitol grounds.

Fourthly, religious freedom does not require the secularisation of society. This is due to the fact that, over the years, the United States Supreme Court was famous for its image of a high and impregnable wall of separation between Church and state. Today, however, the Court has jettisoned its strict separation and now allows religious and non-religious parties the opportunity to engage in peaceable public activities inplaces like public schools. Fifthly, religious freedom does not give a minority veto

over a policy or practice that majority endorses. For example, in a community where Muslims are in the majority, it would be inappropriate to ban minarets on mosques because of minority complaints when it represents their cherished cultural values, otherwise the majority would feel offended.

Furthermore, on the debate on religious symbolism on public property, Vickery affirms the legitimacy of the practice on some grounds. These include, as earlier stated, that religious symbols reflect the culture and history of society because the Constitution (U.S. Constitution) does not categorically prohibit religious displays on public property and, therefore, censoring symbolism inhibits freedom. In other words, freedom is curtailed when religious symbolism is banned from public places and majority of Americans support the posting of religious symbols in public. This assertion is confirmed by the outcome of opinion poll by Pew Research Centre in 2004. The centre found that 72% of Americans consider a Ten Commandments display in public space to be proper (Mazur, 2008). Consequently, despite decades of legal tussle that shows increasing hostility to the practice, Americans have not abandoned their natural inclination towards recognising religion and its proper place in the public sphere.

However, despite the popular acceptance of display of religious symbols on government-owned property or places, it can argued that the practice is improper. This is because permiting the display of any form of Christian symbol on public property implies official governmental approval of Christianity while relegating other religions to inferior status. Thus, the practice runs counter to the United States Constitution which establishes a secular state that allows free exercise of religion but stamps approval on none. Additionally, for government's action on this issue to be constitutional, it must have a secular purpose; must neither advance nor inhibit religion and must not result in excessive government entanglement with religion.

Therefore, to unequivocally demonstrate that government is not endorsing any single religion, United States courts, as cited by William (2006) have repeatedly concluded that symbols of any religion cannot be placed on public property unless the symbols of other religions are displayed at the same time. Secondly, the display must also include secular symbols to show that the state is not promoting religion over

secularism. As a result, a city or other government entity may allow a nativity scene on court-house lawns, but only if it also includes symbols of other religions and secular symbols.

There are some scholars whose views are in tandem with this position. For example, Hancock (2002) advises that, in a community where religious opinions are divergent, attempt to open up public spaces to religious display must give all religious groups equal opportunity regardless of their message. Bhagwati (2004) also objects to the public display of religious symbols and opines that all religious groups should be given equal opportunity to publicly display their symbols. Furthermore, Bhagwati differentiates between positive and negative religious freedoms. He defines negative religious freedom as free exercise of religion and positive religious freedom as non-favouring of a religion in public space in order not to effectively dominate and marginalise other religions. Thus, while the scholar supports free exercise of religious beliefs, the state should not in any way create the impression of endorsing one religion over others with the permission it gives to religious symbols to be displayed on public property. In the same vein, Kazaure (1988) observes that it is common for some state governments in Nigeria to permit the Christian symbol of the cross in many public institutions while the Muslim crescent is neglected. In addition, public fund is spent to decorate public buildings with Christian symbols during Christmas. Although Kazaure (1988) did not elaborate, it seems to suggest that in Nigeria, some state governments offer both financial support and official approval of the display of Christian symbols on public buildings which imply endorsement of that religion over others. The apparent implication for the Constitution is that some of its provisions are undermined.

Another dimension of the legal/constitutional implications for contestation for public space by religious groups considered in scholarship has to do with regulation of religious activities in the public space. This involves the laws established to guide religious activities in the public space and that has attracted the attention of scholars. Generally, national and local governments worldwide always regulate activities in the public spaces through application of laws and local regulations. This is not unconnected to the fact that government, at all levels, has the legitimate duty to

maintain order in public spaces. Besides, the protection of the public from activities of criminals justifies the imposition of some limitations on access to public space.

In the light of this, it is observed that the activities of religious groups are regulated intwo broad ways. They are: government religious regulations and social religious regulations. The government regulation is defined as restrictions placed on the practice, profession, and selection of religion by official laws, policies or administrative actions of the state. Although the vast majority of countries promise religious freedom in their constitutions, they often support administrative sanctions or open hostilities towards selected groups. These restrictions against religions can come in the form of blatant laws against their existence or a subtler administrative restriction that limits or puts constraints against their operations or activities especially in the public.

In the same vein, Hosu and Frunza (2013) submit that the state as a sum of institutions has a number of approaches to religion and religious organisations. Specifically, they emphasise two of such approaches which are neutrality of the state regarding religion and religious organisations and active intervention in regulating the activities of religious organisations. According to the scholars, these two approaches, to a large extent, influence the behaviour of individuals who are involved in any religious organisation. Social regulation, on the other hand, moves beyond the realm of the state. It refers to the restrictions placed on the practice, profession or selection of religion by other religious groups, associations, or the culture at large. However, this type of regulation might be tolerated by the state or even encouraged by it, but it is not formally endorsed or implemented by government action or agents.

Under the principle of freedom of religion and non-interference in the freedom of others embraced globally, many countries institute legal measures to regulate the activities of religious groups in the public space. Attempts will be made to examine these regulations with reference to some countries, thereby underscoring the attention given to the legal implications for contestation for public space by religious organisations. However, in relation to regulating public religious activities, Jennings (2002) posits that religious activities should not be banned from public places. According to him, banning it entirely is unacceptable to many people because religion

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contributes powerfully to positive aspects of peoples' daily lives. Therefore, to do so would not only be unlawful, it would also be counter-productive (Jennings, 2002). This represents a strong voice against complete ban on religious activities in the public space.

In Singapore, through the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF: 2012), the government acknowledges the need for space for religious activities by religious groups and therefore designates some sites as Place of Worship (PW). However, it has been discovered that religious organisations that were unable to secure places in such areas have been conducting their religious activities in places not designed for religious use such as commercial or industrial buildings. To solve this problem, the government issued a guideline which allows religious activities in the undesignated areas on a non-exclusive and limited basis. The guidelines include limiting the religious use of such premises to certain days; namely, Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and nightsand, notably, occupation of only part of the industrial premises. Other conditions are non-display of signage, advertisement or posters on the premises depicting religious use. Also, the premises should not be furnished to resemble a worship hall and no display of religious icons or any religious paraphernalia at or within the venue when it is not in use by the religious organisation. Above all, the guidelines clearly specify that the religious organisations ensure that their activities do not cause disturbances such as noise, traffic or parking problems to the public.The important lesson to be learned from the Singaporean regulation of religious activities in public spaces is that government regulations should be aimed at preventing the exercise of religious rights from constituting a grave disturbance and discontent to members of the public due to noise and inhibition to free flow of traffic.

While discussing on the regulation of public space with particular reference to municipal laws in Italy,Moroni and Chiodelli (2014) observes that local governments regulate urban lives through application of local regulations. The scholars discover that the municipal regulations on the public space are intended to advance either directly or indirectly the "good" (and a certain lifestyle) independently of actual harm to individuals. What is regarded as "good" is an idea of what renders life pleasant and worth living for individuals in the society. To this end, many of the municipal ordinances are targeted at certain lifestyles and not on tangible harm to others. This

applies, for example, to certain ordinances concerning the consumption of alcohol, sale and consumption of food and beverages, the functioning of places of worship, prayer in public places, camping, leafleting, and banning of homeless people from the streets among others. Many of the ordinances specify rules on access to, and behaviour in, public spaces for general use. The Italian experience shows that there exists local legislation on some religious activities in the public space which signifies legal implications for contestation for public space by religious groups.

In realisation of the negative effect of noise pollution on human health generally, there are institutional and legislative measures in place to regulate noise in public places. For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Federal Ministry of Environment in Nigeria have regulations that stipulate permissible levels of noise in the society to avoid the dangers thathuman beings are exposed to through noise pollution. WHO recommends 60 decibel level of noise (Strecker, 2007). These different noise levels are permitted at daytime and nighttime in industrial and residential areas. For example, Oyo State Environmental (Sanitation and Waste Control) Regulations 2013 prescribes permissible levels of noise for industrial and residential areas for day and night times. Section 58 (b) of the Law states that, for residential areas, the permissible level shall be 60db and 45db for day and night respectively, within a distance of five metres from the source of noise. This is for all types and sources of noise ostensibly including noise from religious centres. Similarly, Lagos State has Environmental Protection Laws 2002 (as amended). The law allows for only 55decibels of noise in residential areas during the day and 45decibels at night. For industrial areas, the law allows for 90decibels and 80decibels during the day and night respectively. To a very large extent, these two states' laws were enacted to control noise pollution.

In addition, there is a Nigerian law known as Public Order Act, Chapter 382 of Laws of the Federation of Nigeria. The Act aims at maintaining public order and prohibits the formation of quasi-military organisations; regulate the use of uniforms and other matters ancillary thereto. In relation to the concern of this research, specifically, it regulates the conduct of public assemblies, meetings, and processions in the public space to which the police must grant permission before they are allowed to hold. The section of the Act which grants the Nigerian Police authorities to grant

permit before public space is used for such activities that involve street procession is in line with the observation of Neil that:

> In some cases, rights of assembly and expression in publicspaces require permits to be secured from local authorities. This has been met with scepticism because it places the legalstatus of such sites in the hands of those bearing guns and handcuffs (Neil, 2009:2).

It is apparent that national and local governments all over have always regulated public spaces through enrolment and application of laws and local regulations. In several countries, many social, economic and political activities occurring in public spaces are enabled or constrained by a variety of laws and regulations that restrict certain conducts and activities in public spaces. It is for this reason that public spaces have the potential to make a city more equal and inclusive. Properly-designed public spaces not only contribute to improve the overall visual character of a city but also stimulate economic activities and enhance the productivity of the city. A properly-designed and regulated public space has the advantage of unlockingopportunities, building vibrant communities and contributing to the economy. However, how their usages are regulated is more crucial and not just how they are designed as regulations should be made against behaviours that disturb or provoke citizens. Therefore, states should ensure that there are regulations that prevent people's rights to peaceful and secured public spaces from being trampled upon through religious activities. To this end, the ordinances or laws are applied to issues concerning the location and functioning of the place of worship and religious activities generally in the public space.

The foregoing has unveiled the legal or constitutional implications of manifesting religious beliefs and practices in public spaces. This is because laws are made to either regulate or ban religious activities and symbols in public spaces to which scholars have argued their desirability or otherwise in relation to peoples' right to freedom of religion with less emphasis on inter-religious harmony. In addition, social control which refers to society's ability to regulate itself is highlighted as a complementary measure to legally control and regulate religious use of public space.

2.5.2 Environmental implications of contestation for public space by religious

groups

Writing on the environmental implications of contestation for public space by religious groups, Ayantayo (2006) analyses how channels of religious communication affect the environment. This is because communication does not take place in a vacuum but in an environment. In addition, every form of communication has effect on the environment. Furthermore, the level of intensity, frequency and nature of communication determines whether it could have positive or negative effect on the environment. According to Max Weber, man is a social being, hence his associational existence (Olomojobi, 2013). Therefore, as social beings, communication is one of the vital ways by which people cohabiting in an environment could relate with one another. Thus, communication is fundamental to the process of socialisation in the environment.

Communication can be referred to as the process by which people transmit information, ideas, attitudes and mental states to one another (Ayantayo, 2006). On the other hand, environment simply refers to the surroundings in which a person, animal or plant lives. In this case, what is done or not done with the environment has implications for those living in the said environment. Religious communication, therefore, refers to gathering, organising, presenting and disseminating information on religious beliefs. This rather simplistic connotation of religious communication suggests that religious speech or communication is something that religious people like Evangelists, Pastors, Imams, and Rabbis does. Secondly, it suggests that religion is expressed as doctrine or belief.

However, Lessl (2015), in attempt to shed more light on what religious communication stands for, identifies three criteria that can used to distinguish religious and non-religious communications. The first is that religious communication is metaphorical; that is, all religious discussions are significantly marked by metaphor. Secondly, religious communications are irreducible to any non-figurative form of expression. Thirdly, religious communication identifies metaphysical connotations. Put differently, religious communications are fundamentally metaphysical in content and meaning. This cannot be far from the truth because, as opined by MorrenMoojan, religion is not a rational thing, but as human phenomenon which is metaphysical in

nature (Olomojobi, 2013). These properties or features of religious communication indicate that non-members of a religious group may not easily comprehend when communication takes place outside the enclave of their worship venues.

On the effect of religious communication on the environment, Macharia J.W. opines that communication should be done in mutually-understandable ways. This perspective of communication and environment suggests that communication is a process of reaching mutual understanding in which participants not only exchange information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. By this, communication is a means of connecting people or places. Therefore, to Macharia, "every communication should show awareness of how, when and where communication could affect targeted and non-targeted audience" (Cited in Ayantayo, 2006: 75). Yogi (2000) sees a link between communication and human thought in a religico-philosophical manner. To him, whether positive or negative, communication has the capacity to affect human thoughts (Ayantayo, 2006). This perspective of communication agrees with Hoben who says that communication "is the verbal interchange of a thought or idea" (Albert, Isola and Oyewo, 2015:1).Roulier F. considers the relationship between environment and communication with special attention on geography of noise. The study sheds light on the issues of space, territory, landscape and milieu among others. Concluding on the power of sound and the degree of its effects on environment, the scholar's position is that noise pollution always carries negative consequences along with it (Ayantayo, 2006). Okema M., specifically relates religious communication to quality of environment with his observation on the rate at which religious centres such as churches and mosques are located in residential areas in Africa. This phenomenon negatively affects the environment through noise pollution generated by such religious centres with the use of loudspeakers(Ayantayo, 2001).

In the same vein, Mepaiyeda (2011) argues that liturgical activities in churches and mosques produce noise pollution that negatively impact on the environment. According to him, the claim of particularity, doctrinal issues and public expression of religious beliefs have characterised the religious horizon in Nigeria. One major effect of this extremism in expressing religious belief is religious noise pollution. Religious centres, in the name of churches and mosques, through their worships generate noisy

environment that cause disturbance and discomfort to others in the society. The scholar asserts that noise pollution constitutes irritant for many people who reside near religious centres because of the noise generated during their worships. He describes noise as an unwanted sound which is generated by both Christian and Islamic organisations in Nigeria. The Christians do that at vigils for prayer and worship while the Muslims often engage in this practice at their prayer times of 5.00a.m, 2.00p.m. 4.00p.m. and 7.00p.m. daily. The Muslim and Christian prayer sessions are always accompanied with loudspeaker noise, which has effect on the people sleeping or observing their siesta in the environment. This assertion replicates Soni-Ehi who had echoed it in his work as follows:

> Residents of our big cities are increasingly going through the gradual process of partial deafness. Their sensitive eardrums are daily being bombarded by a continuous barrage of environmental noise, overflowing ear from shattering, drum–size speakers of mosques and churches (quoted inAyantayo,2006:75).

Soni-Ehi's observation has implications not only for Nigeria but also for other parts of Africa such as Ethiopia which, like Nigeria, is also religiously diversified with Islam and Christianity being dominant. Religious polemics between Muslims and Christians is so pronounced that it amply manifests in several ways such as when and where to build mosques and churches or chapels; self-preservation in the media; public celebrations and religious ''noise'' production by means of loudspeakers (Abbink, 2011). On religious noise pollution, Abbinkstates with regard to Ethiopia:

> A new phenomenon is that of the 'acoustic wars': there is an emerging 'discourse' via massive religious noise production. Microphones attached to every church, mosque, chapel pound out sermons, religious services, calls to prayer, religious songs, enveloping people who may not want or need them. This has become a new battlefront in religious polemics and manifestly encroaches on public space…the religious noise wakes up people in the early morning hours, disturbs the peace, and intimidates the public–which dares not protest. (Abbink, 2011:258).

What is prominent from the foregoing is that religious groups contest public space through the use of loudspeakers erected at worship centres by which noise pollution is generated which constitutes environmental hazards to people living in the

environment. The discourse is important to this study because it further shows that only churches and mosques generate such noisy environmental pollution.

Furthermore, Ayantayo (2009) examines the attitudes of adherents of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria with reference to their religious activities in churchesand mosques and their implications for the environment. The scholar's main concern is the examination of religious activities and its overall implications for the environment through religious definition and redefinition of the space and the environment. He observes that, as social institutions, mosques and churches interact with their environment which either promotes or denigrates the environment. He identifies the religious activities of the two religious groups which can be described as contesting public space and concludes that they are not making good use of the environment. The activities that inform this conclusion are: siting of churches and mosques in resdential areas contrary to the environmental law; littering of the environment by churches with billboards and posters in public spaces like banks, post offices, and motor parks as a means of public invitation which destroys the aesthetic beauty of the environment; deforestation of the enviromenment which results in the loss of valuable services that the forest environment provides; liturgical activities of churches and mosques that are accompanied with the use of drum-size microphones which result in air pollution or disturbing noise, and barricading of major and minor roads for street evangelism.

On the effects of noise pollution associated with religious communication, both Ayantayo (2006) and Mepaiyeda (2011) shares similar views to a large extent. To Mepaiyeda, noisy environment can lead to deafness which Ayantayo allude to as auditory effect. This implies that excessive noise from religious centres has the capacity to damage human ears, thereby exposing a person to the risk of temporary or even permanent deafness. The second effect of noise pollution is what Ayantayo considers non-auditory effects andMepaiyeda terms low level of efficiency on the part of any victim of noise pollution. In other words, religious noise pollution is capable of vitiating workefficiency and work outputs of individuals are directly affected. The third is that both scholars identify physiological, psychological and physical consequences of noise pollution on the human environment. This leads to rise in blood pressure, increasing heartbeat rate and breathing, profuse sweating, insomnia and

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annoyance. The psychological effect or trauma of religious noise pollution is that it is capable of instigating religious conflict because it is one of the many unmet human needs that are active elements in causing religious conflict (Gopin, 2000). In the fourth sense, Mepaiyeda sees that religious noise pollution can cause environmental insecurity in the sense that noisy religious activities in the night may prevent danger alarm coming from neighbours from being heard. Thus, public preaching has become a threat to security. However, Ayantayo considers sociological effects of religious communication as referring to enmity that the practice provokes between religious centres and their immediate environment which can cause religious conflict. The enmity between religious groups is engendered because of aggressive use of loudspeakers by religious groups who compete with each other over influence in the public space (Strecker, 2007).

Ayantayo (2006) makes three inferences from the views of the scholars on the impact of religious communication on the environment. The first is that every form of communication inevitably affects the environment directly or indirectly. Secondly, the use of electronics as a medium of communication produces noise pollution which impacts negatively on the environment. Scholars generally acknowledge that recent innovation in communication technology has strengthened the role of communication on peace and conflict (Albert, Isola and Oyewo, 2015). Thirdly, the concern for the well-being of man should be the focus on discussions on communication and the environment. However, a fourth inference can be added which is that religious communication in residential neighbourhoods has assumed an unprecedented proportion in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Ayantayo (2009) identifies two predisposing factors for the occupation of public space with noise pollution by some religious groups. The first is that churches believe that one of their major missions is evangelism which must be communicated in the manner that everybody would hear. The second is that the Church sees the environment as God's gift to humanity which must be used the way they like, without regard for how it affects other people in the same environment. In proffering solution to this problem, Ayantayo (2009) is of the view that religious groups should be educated to make proper use of the environment in such a way that the rights of others are not affected. For example, he says that street evangelism should be done by

churches with little or bearable noise. As for Mepaiyeda (2011), he advocates that governments at all levels in Nigeria should enact laws that would check the excesses of religious organisations on noise pollution as done by Lagos State Government in 2009. Secondly, that there should be careful planning of Nigerian cities to prevent siting of religious centres in residential districts.

Furthermore, Lawuyi (2012) expounds concepts of the "space of society", "society of space", "space of the crowd" and "space of power" that can be linked together with the environment. In particular, the concept of space of power can be said to be similar to the study of the relationship between religion and geography or environment which analyses the impact of geography on religious beliefs and practices. Every aspect of geography can be regarded as public space and public space thrives in an environment. Therefore, religious geography is concerned with the influence that religion exerts on geographical ideas or environment (Armstrong, 2002).

Traditional approaches to the study of religion seek mainly to determine the impact of religion on the landscape or environment. However, the contemporary approach goes beyond that to address how religious ideology and practice at specific spaces are guided and transformed by their locations. Thus, religious experiences and beliefs transform physical spaces into sacred space or space of power. However, this sacred space goes beyond officially-recognised place of worship to include non-official religious spaces such as homes, schools, roadsides, marketplaces etc. This goes to explain that space contestation in Nigerian communities is rooted in the indigenous religious tradition of Africans. The African conception and construction of place is reflected in Yoruba community and is well encapsulated in the words of Olupona as emanating "from a space, imagination, mythology, and history. Such perception may differ from what we call the secular perception of place" (Olupona, 2003: 92). The African conceives the physical space as sacred because it is believed that all spaces are inhabited by spiritual entities such as gods, ancestors and spirits. That is why to the African, every place is appropriate to be used for religious activities such as rituals and does not see contestation for public space as "confrontation, conflict, or antagonism but as complementary, compromise and cohabitation, which are employed to reinforce communal rather than individual identity" (Ogungbile, 2013:160). Thus, significant attention in the study of sacred places is the politics of identity, belonging and meaning

that are ascribed to sacred places and the constant negotiations for power and legitimacy. In a multi-religious setting, the contestation for legitimacy, public approval, and negotiations for use of particular space is central to determining how communities appreciate, internalise and struggle to compete for the right to practise their religious traditions in public spaces (Kong, 1990).

The saliency of the analysis of the relationship between religion and geography to this study is that it reveals another dimension of religious contestation for public space which is the impact of religion on the environment and vice versa without unveiling in details its implications for of inter-religious harmony. Also, it highlights that space contestation enhances group identity. Furthermore, the other concepts expounded by Lawuyi (2012a) are helpful to this study because they provide a background understanding to some of the types or nature of public spaces being examined for religious purposes. The foregoing discourse also shows that religious contestation for public space through religious communication produces unpleasant effects on the environment which indicates the intellectual concerns of scholars with little focus on its implications for inter-religious harmony. Nevertheless, this reviewed literature has shown some of the factors informing contestation for public space through noisy liturgical activities in churches and mosques or religious communication even though the factors mentioned are not exhaustive.

2.5.3   Political implications of contestation for public space by religious groups

Under this theme, attempt is made to review literature on political implications of contestation for public space by religious groups. Since politics is the quest to acquire, retain, and distribute power, there seems to be much attention by scholars on the political implications of contestation for public space by the religious groups. Religious contestation for public space is a paradigm shift from the fundamental and traditional focus of religious organisations which is the spiritual well-being of their adherents. This is as a result of the growing influence of religion in politics all over the world and, even though ethnicity is another factor in Nigeria, religion appears to be predominant (Adogame, 2009). Little wonder that John Onaiyekan says that the relationship between religion and politics is an inevitable and important one (Kukah, 1993).

Habermas (2006), in further elucidation on the interface between religion and the public sphere, makes two relevant and convincing points which put him on the same page with the Reformists. Firstly, religion has the right to make it heard not only publicly but also politically. Secondly, democracy must listen to this voice for the good of politics. This means that religious groups should feature prominently in politics because it provides the platform to recognise their crucial role in the public sphere and deliberative democracy as a source of values and motivation. To Habermas, allowing churches and religious organisations to flourish in the public space will engender positive influence on politics and democracy. Therefore, politics and democracy stand to benefit immensely when religious groups contest public space which sums up its implications. However, this may be possible in a society that is not multi-religious and perhaps that was why he did not explore the inter-religious harmony implications for this which is a major shortcoming.

In the context of religious plurality, many scholars have written on the political implications of contestation for public space by religious groups in Nigeria. While there are basically three major religions in Nigeria, religious politics revolves largely around the activities of, and the inter-relationship between, Islam and Christianity. It is in the light of this that, after examining the political landscape of Nigeria vis-à-vis the activities of the adherents of Christianity and Islam,Reverend Father Hassan Mathew Kukah concludes:

> Today, both Islam and Christianity are saddled across the Nigerian polity, no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity. In matters of religion and political competition, despite the claims to democratic procedures as spelt out in the legal and political documents, the realities belie this claim. (1993: ix).

What can be inferred from the above excerpt is that Christian and Islamic religious groups are demonstrating serious interests in seeking the political control of the Nigerian state through their activities in the public space. It is the ascendancy of Hausa-Fulani hegemony on one hand and the alienation and marginalisation of non-Muslims in the distribution of resources and political appointments on the other hand that stirred up Christians to seek for political representation in the scheme of things.

The perceived domination of power by Muslims and the inequitable distribution of natural resources have led to the scramble for public space by Christians. Thus Christians use religion for achieving and enhancing their socio-political interests leading to a redefinition of the political process. Much as the scholar's meticulous and lucid work gives insight into the motive for contestation for public space by religious groups, its emphasis has been more on its political implications ratherthan inter-religious harmony. Besides, he concentrated on northern Nigeria and only on two religious groups of Islam and Christianity.

CorroboratingKukah to demonstrate political implications of religious groups' contestation for public space, Enwerem (1995) examines how the two dominant religions in Nigeria-Islam and Christianitystruggle for political power in the country. To him and in concurrence with Adogame (2009), to demonstrate the ascendancy of religion in the country's political terrain, Nigerians no longer look at government policies, actions and motives from the prism of ethnicity, but rather from the perspective of religion. Thus, religious groups and individuals have given clear evidence of the politicisation of religion in Nigeria. In the light of this, Enwerem (1995) primarily examines the causes and consequences of the pervasive politicisation of religion in modern Nigerian politics. Although the study concentrates on the followers of Islam and Christianity and their attitude towards politics, it did not sufficiently link their contestation for public space to inter-religious harmony, but rather to the acquisition of political power. He sees the emergence of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in I976 as the political umbrella to galvanise diverse Christian denominations to attain this non-spiritual objective. To this end, Christian Association of Nigeria emerged as a countering force to the activities of Islamic organisations including the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (Ojo, 2007; Adogame, 2009).

Ojo (2007) analyses the unending contest for public space between the Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. The two groups are represented by the independent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements on one hand, and radical Islamic movements on the other hand in northern Nigeria. He observes that the two dominant groups represent a new dimension in religious fundamentalism in contemporary Nigeria being caused by competition for public space. Although the scholar did not categorically

define the concept of public space, it can be inferred from his work that public space simply means politics, as defined by Philosophers and Political Scientists to mean politicised public debate (Germain, 2011). It is also in conformity with Neal's (2010) political perspective of public space which considers public space more critically as a site of contention on political issues. This perspective is grounded in the philosophical works ofJurgenHabermas who uses the term *public sphere* to describe an abstract discursive forum of public space filled with ideas, opinions, and debates about issues of public interest. Therefore, the public sphere provides individuals an opportunity to engage in political participation through discussion, forming opinions and arriving at consensus.

Consequently, according to the scholar, the public sphere has become an important site for religious competition and contest due to the fact that religion largely defines the existing social and political structures in Nigeria (Ojo, 2007). Thus, it does appear that the contest for public space is the contest for the political soul between the two religious groups for the economic and political interests of the group where each attempts to undermine and eliminate the other. Therefore, the negative relationship between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria as evidence by the frequent and large-scale destructive religious conflicts especially from the early 1980s was significantly informed by the quest to gain the political control of the region. Although, Islam had been in existence as the dominant religion in most part of the region,1980 saw the point of indigenous northern Christian leaders introduction of politics into the group. This was their reaction to the events that were unfolding around them. Among those events were rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism, frequent religious conflict and violence against Christians. These events compelled the leaders of charismatic Christian organisations to enter into the political or public space to protect their rights against Islamic domination of the political arena.

This obsevation is confirmed by Boer (2003) who said that, by 1966, northern Christian community was not only weak and uncertain, but also had little influence in the political arena. However, about 30 years after, the Church had become numerically and politically strong to the point that it could no longer be pushed around by either government or Islam. The reason is because of the Christians' involvement in politics and influence on government public policies which were the concern of scholars rather

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than the analysis of the effects of religious contestation for public space on inter-religious harmony. The analysis by the scholar is beneficial to this research to the extent that it shows religious groups' interest in the public space although with particular attention to its political implications and relativiely little attention to its implications for inter-religious harmony.

Riding on the crest of the theory of political manipulation of religion popularised by Usman (1987), Ayantayo (2012) exemplifies the various ways the Nigerian political elite bestir religious sentiments in the process of interpreting some political policies and government actions. According to him, religion manifests theoritically and practically in the social, economic, technological, business, and political cultures of Nigerians. The scholar notes the exploration of religion as an instrument of influencing politics in various forms. For example, he asserts that the average Nigerian believes strongly that political power is of God and that whoever gets the power must have been given by God. Thus, religion amply manifests in the choice of candidates for elections. Similarly, religion is used by Nigerians as a tool to implement government policies whilst there is also religious colouration of Nigerian national symbols such as currency, statue, tower, the national anthem and national pledge. The import of this discourse is that there is abundant evidence of manifestation of religion in the public space which aligns with the investigative thrust of this research, but limited to the extent that it does not emphasise the inter-religious harmony implications for it. For instance, to the scholar, the consequence of political manipulation of religion is that it has negative implications for democracy and morality in Nigeria:

> This perhaps explains why democracy has not worked to the satisfaction of Nigerians, especially those people who believe that most Nigerian politicians are not mature politically. The practice also has some moral implications because, in our judgement, whipping of religious sentiments to win the sympathy of electorates is a game of deceit because there is relationship between politics and morality. (Ayantayo, 2012: 341).

Similarly to Awoniyi (2013), politicisation of religion has negative impact on democratic process because, once religion is politicised, religious organisations become exclusive political parties whose members may never adhere to, or respect, the

outcome of normal democratic contestation. This position contradicts the stand of Habermas that religious organisatons' participataion in politics and democracy would impact positively on both. Furhermore, Awoniyi asserts that religion has become the platform for socio-political articulation as well as tool for emergence of cross-cutting cleavages today in Nigeria. This situation is informed by the fact that there are major religious groups in Nigeria with numerical strength that can significantly affect the outcomes and direction of a democractic political process.

The scholar's position further confirms the political implications of contestation for public space by religious groups as a common phenomenon in Nigeria. Awoniyi surmises that politicisation of religion result in violent conflict. However, it should be understood that the circumstances that may provoke such violence is derived from the fact that religion is mixed with politics. Nevertheless, the main concern of this research is to investigate whether pure religious activities in the public space by religious groups can instigate negative inter-religious harmony. Therefore, this is a departure from existing studies that discuss conflict outcomes of contestation for public space (political space) by religious groups which have political undertones. This much is referred to by Metuh (1994) when he said that agitation for the creation of more states and local governments often inspires hope in minority ethnic groups with intent to be liberated from either Christian or Muslim domination. He additionally states that this type of struggle often takes on inter-religious overtones.

Ntamu, Abia, Edinyang, and Eneji (2014) also examine the nexus between religion and politics in Nigeria but from the perspective of itsimplication for sustainable national development. They observe that politicians drag religion into politics as a tool for achieving and sustaining political power. The consequence is political violence and destruction of property in the country which aligns with the view of Awoniyi (2013). They conclude that politicisation of religion is detrimental to sustainable national development as no country can develop and prosper technologically, scientifically, socially and economically without peaceful cooperation and coexistence. The work of the scholars considerably suggest that religion is very strong in Nigeria's public space and that it has negative implications for sustainable national development. However, the scholars are silent on inter-religious harmony implications of religion in the the public space or political landscape of Nigeria.

2.5.4 Public policy implications of contestation for public space by religious groups

Scholars also posit that contestation for public space by religious groups has implications for public policy with particular emphasis on attempts by religious groups to influence it to serve their interests. This is closely related to political implications of religious contestation for public space. However, the apparent difference is that politics addresses deliberate competition for political power largely due to the fact that it is elite-driven. In other words, it is the political elites who employ religion as an instrument to acquire and sustain political power, hence the theory of political manipulation of religion (Usman,1987).

Usman defines political manipulation as an act of controlling the action of a person or a group of people without that person or group knowing the goals, purpose and methods of that control and without even being aware that a form of control is being exercised on them to serve political interests. This act of manipulation is done by politicians in their quest for political power and this seems to be pervasive and signifcantly successful in Nigeria's political space because Nigerians and indeed Africans are religious in everything as rhetorically remarked by John Mbiti:

> Africans are notoriously religious and each person has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it (cited in Ayantayo, 2012).

It is in the same way, Ayantayo (2012) asserts that religion manifests theoretically and practically in the social, economic, technological, business and political culture of Nigerians.

On the other hand, influence on public policy is seen as attempts by religious organisations to add their voice on public policy matters that particularly affect them either through representation and/or advocacy. This can be regarded as another form of contestation for public space by religious groups. According to Anna (2016), religious influence on public policy has been extensive, adding that in Europe, Christian churches have successfully spearheaded efforts to ban abortion, offer religious education in schools, limit access to the use of contraceptives, obtain favourable financial exceptions and so on. However, influence on public policy by religious

groups varies across countries that are similar in their profiles of religious denominational affiliation, religious participation and general beliefs. Influence on public policy by religious groups is variously denoted in scholarship as "religious participation and mobilisation", "political parties and religion", "religious nationalism", "church-state relations", and "policy influence" (Anna, 2016).

In this regard, a working paper by Nolte, Danjibo and Oladeji (2009) gives insight into this phenomenon. The paper examines the paricipation of religious groups in governance and development of Nigeria using Anambra, Oyo and Kano States as case studies. Christianity and Islam are the two main religious groups engaged by the study. The study affirms that, despite Nigeria's secular Constitution, religion has become increasingly important in the public sphere because of political liberalisation and the degree of autonomy accorded state governments in a federal system. The study concludes, among others, that Nigerians share similar view on good governance and politics shaped by recourse to biblical and quoranic ideals of justice, equity and ''the fear of God'', however, religious organisations do not often act in the interest of Nigerians despite their common critique of the Nigerian state as a failed state. Moreover, state governments do not support the developmental efforts of religious organisations even though they tend to seek their support for grassroots mobilisation and legitimacy. A major implication of the findings of the study is that the critique of Ngerian state in its failure to provide welfare for its citizens suggests that religious groups could be important participants in a national dialogue on the country's future. The paper is relevant to this study to the extent that it indicates that Christian and Islamic religious groups contest public space by their attempts to exert infuence on public policy and governance to promote their interests and not on the implications for religious harmony.

 Anna (2016) contributes to the debate by identifying strategies employed by religious groups to wield influence on public policy. What motivates the discourse is the realisation that, despite the strident opposition to Church involvement in secular policy making, Christian churches in Western democracies are found to often obtain their preferred policy outcomes. The strategies the scholar identifies are direct institutional access to policy making which involve, among others, the ability to propose and vet policy directly through joint Church-parliamentary commissions,

informal legislative proposals, extensive parliamentary and ministerial consultation, the vetting of state officials, and even control of state sectors such as welfare, health, and education. This strategy is covert, frequently informal, and highly desirable to churches because it maintains influence, over time, at relatively low cost.

However, for the strategy to be effective, churches must have moral authorityhigh enough to be identified in the public mind as protecting and representing the national interest. The second strategy is formation of coalition with sympathetic political parties and, in exchange, obtaining policy concessions. In other words, Church members are mobilised to support a political party in exchange for policy concessions from government parties that the Church supports to win election. However, this second strategy suggests that religious groups are involved directly in seeking political power in alliance with a political party which makes them partisan. That is why politics and public policy implications of contestation for public space are like Siamese twins. Nevertheless, this discourse shows some of the strategies available to religious groups to influence public policy as a form of religious contestation for public space.

Another dimension of religious influence on public policy, as a form of contestation for public space by religious groups, is reflected in the work of Minkenberg (2002) who addressesthe relationship between religion and politics in liberal democracies from a public policy angle. Conclusively, the analysis shows that, contrary to the general secularisation thesis which emphasises strict separation of religion from politics or neutrality of state towards religion, there is a visible religious impact on public policy, which varies according to what measure of secularisation used. Confessional heritage (Catholicism versus Protestantism) and cultural values (levels of religiosity) are better predictors than institutional differentiation or political mobilisation. When confessional heritage is held constant, the institutional impact increases. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catholic countries produce less than fully liberal abortion policies, but the most restrictive abortion policies are found in those Catholic countries where high levels of religiosity persists. Moreover, a strong presence of religious parties is not associated with restrictive abortion policies whereasmoderate or "distress" models of abortion exists in allcountries with moderate to high levels of religiosity and with strong Christian Democratic parties.

As a further indication that faith communities involve in activities in the public space with intent to influence public policy and initiate legislative actions in the process of law making, An-Na'im, strongly argues that, under democracy:

> Muslims and other believers should be able to propose policy and legislativeinitiatives emanating from their religious beliefs, provided that they can supportthem in free and open public debate by reasons that are accessible and convincing to the generality of citizens regardless of their religious and other beliefs (An-Na'im, 2008:29)

It is evident from the above excerpt that religious groups are liken to pressure groups whose interests can be achieved through influence on public policy from the prism of their religious values and practices. In this regard, Kukah and Macgarvey (2013) are of the opinion that it would be far more rewarding if religious issues are initiated and debated by religious groups rather than politicians as was the case of ill-advised adoption of Sharia by Zamfara and other Northern states. The law was purely initiated by politicians and that perhaps informed the reason why former President OlusegunObasanjo described the Sharia debacle as "political sharia" which would die a natural death. From the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the prediction has come to be. However, the view of the scholars on the importance of religious issues that would result in public policy to be handled by religious organisations lend credence to Reformists acceptance that faith organisations in the public space because they are capable of making valuable contributions to it (Gonza et al. 2009). It also supports Habermas' (2006) opinion that allowing faith-based organisations to have a voice in the public sphere and deliberative democracy is valuable because it will engender positive influence.

Another way literature has shown that religion has influence on public policy is in the area of policy implementation. Scholars identify four major steps in public policy process as initiation and definition, formulation and enactment, implementation, and impact and evaluation (Bryner, 2007). Therefore, Ayantayo (2012) observes how religion is used to influence implementation of government policies in Nigeria. He buttresses his observation with the example of Lagos State using religious leaders in paid advertisements to sensitise her citizens to pay tax as a source of internally-generated revenue to raise revenue to finance socio-economic and infrastructural development of the state. Although the impact of this policy-implementation strategy

has not been verified, Ayantayo has helped to show that religious groups contest public space through influence on public policy implementation and the implication is not related to inter-religious harmony.

From the foregoing, it is evident that there are studies that view contestation for public space by religious groups from legal/constitutionality, environment, political and influence on public policy implications but with scanty emphasis on inter-religious harmony implications which is the gap in literature that this study has addressed. Added to this is the analysis of the behaviours of the three major religious groups of Islam, Christianity and *Egúngún* and *Orò* extractions of African Indigenous Religion in public spaces. This is because the existing discourse on contestation for public space by religious groups are mostly centred on Christianity and Islam while significantly leaving out African Indiginous Religion. Furthermore, it is observed that studies on contestation for public space by religious groups (Christianity and Islam) are more concentrated on northern Nigeria with very few that focus on the south-western region of Nigeria. Hence, there is impetus to research into religious contestation of public space in Oyo State to fill the apparent gaps in literature.

Consequently, there are some concluding thoughts that can be made known on the avalanche of literature consulted in this study. Foremost is the fact that studies on contestation for public space by religious groups concentrate on legal or constitutional, environmental, political and influence on public policy implications. However, little is said of its implications for inter-religious harmony which propelled the conduct of this research so as to expand the frontiers of knowledge on religious conflict that has become an endemic and intractable problem in Nigeria.

In addition, literature abounds on several causal diagnoses of religious conflict in Nigeria but most of them pay premium attention to the remote and underlying socio-political, economic and governance factors that triggers violent conflicts generally and religious conflict in particular. However, this study as a departure from the common trend, presents an analytical inquiry into the immediate and visible factors that border on the usage of public space for religious activities. This is another major gap that this research addressed in the area of discourse on religious conflict.

It is observed from the bulk of the literature consulted that discourse on religious groups' contestation for public space is largely concentrated on the roles played by adherents of Christianity and Islam, significantly paying less attention to the roles of traditional religion practitioners. Therefore, focussing on how, why, effects and implications of contestation for public space by *Egúngún* and *Orò* adherents demonstrates that African Indigenous Religion is also relevant in a study of this nature.

Methodologically, most extant literatures relevant to this study are found to have adopted only qualitative mode of analysis and presentation of findings. Much as they were able to successfully make their points, this study has added quantitative dimension to it in order to make the analysis robust and scientific or appear more objective.

2.6   Theoretical Framework:Social Identity Theory

For better understanding of the problem under investigation, this research is situated within a theoretical framework. Since a theoretical framework guides scholarly investigation which helps to situate a research within a scientific analysis, the study adopted Social Identity Theory.

Social Identity Theory was formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s and 1980s as a theory of group membership and behaviour aimed at explaining intergroup behaviour. It can be described as a theory that predicts certain intergroup behaviour on the basis of the perceived status, legitimacy, and permeability of the intergroup environment. In other words, as a social cognition, Social Identity Theory was developed with the purpose of understanding how individuals make sense of themselves and other people in the social environment. The theory states that people tend to classify themselves and others into various categories such as organisational membership, religious affiliation, gender and age cohort (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). As these examples suggest, people may be classified into various categories and different individuals may utilise different categorisation schemas. Social Identity Theory is one of the theories that suggest that prejudice can be explained by the tendency to see oneself as part of a group and others as belonging to another group. Accordingly, people are judged as being "us" and "them". It is seen as part of human

nature to view oneself as part of one or more groups. These are our in-groups and it leads to discrimination against out-groups for no logical reason.

Scholars identify three fundamental psychological mechanisms underpinning the theory (Orebiyi, 2016). The first psychological process is categorisation which has to do with the process whereby objects, events and people are classified into categories. This tends to exaggerate the similarities of members of the same group while overstating the dissimilarities with members ofthe other group. The second psychological process is social comparison which refers to the process of comparing one's own social group with others.This arises because some social groups possess more power, prestige or status than others and, therefore, members of a group will compare their own groups with others and determine the relative status of their group. The consequence is the promotion of the tendency for members to distance themselves from identifying with groups that do not share the same beliefs and ideas with it and further embrace the ideals of their social group. The third psychological process relates to the tendency for people to use group membership as a source of positive self-esteem.

Self-categorisation is an important element in Social Identity Theory and it assumes that individuals vary in their opportunity to join a group as a function of their readiness and fit in addition to group's accessibility.What usually informs individual choice of group to identify with includes a person's history, personality, status, values, beliefs and opportunity. Through self-categorisation and group membership, a person develops a social identity which serves as a social-cognitive schema (norms, values and beliefs) for group-related behaviour. In adopting group identity, individual identity of the person disappears and identity as a member of a group appears. This transformation to a group identity includes corresponding change in motives, expectations, affective connotations, background knowledge, beliefs, norms and values (Turna and Onorato cited in Korte, 2007).

As group members, individuals may not only display motives and behaviours that conflict with their personal identities, but also take or advocate more extreme positions that they might not personally embrace (Korte, 2007). Consequently, and essentially, it is group that ascribes an identity along with behavioural norms, values

and beliefs to their members as well as to other groups. Hence, this transition from individual identity to group identity is one of the major insights of the theory for understanding the distinct behaviour in interrelation groups.

Invariably, this transition makes an individual to depersonalise himself in favour of group identity. Depersonalisation is different from dehumanisation which implies the tendency of the individual to downplay personal attributes in favour of acquiring group attributes. However, this does not mean a loss of personal identity but rather an acquisition of an additional identity.There is a clear need for uniqueness, for being different from others. This expresses itself through the finite ways in which human beings make themselves different, from dress and habits to various formal expressions of allegiance to small, special groups. The latter, paradoxically, often involves a complete submergence of the individual character into the larger whole of the subgroups. Alluding to this thrust of Social Identity Theory, Gopin contends that:

> By and large, social identity theory states emphatically that people come to identify with a group although the interaction of the individual and the group is reciprocal, causing the individual more or less to conform to the group's prototype at the same time, the group more or less to conform to members. Therefore, when an individual is interacting with another person, they act not as an individual but as a representative of a whole group or category of people. This is because individuals derive a portion of their identities from membership and interactions within and among groups. (Gopin, 2000:5).

According to Hogg and Grieve (Korte, 2007), the reason for individuals identifying with a group is for a sense of pride, involvement, stability, and meaning. Additionally, Social Identity Theory functions as a driver of competition among different groups.From this perspective, Abrams and Hogg (Korte, 2007) posits that group behaviour is concerned with the struggle between groups for power, status, superiority and material advantage. Furthermore, the theory encourages group members to see themselves as better in some way than other groups which engenders contestation. Also, according to Tajfel (cited in Korte, 2007), enhancing self-esteem is one of the basic tenets of Social Identity Theory. It is found that the bias of one group (favouritism) and the denigration of others as out-group (discrimination) are pervasive, implicit and easily triggered. In the struggle for power and space, dominant groups

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strive to maintain the status quo while minority groups seek positive identification on attributes differing from the dominant group. Conclusively, the theory helps to explain intergroup conflict in settings where there is no realistic basis for conflict; that is, where there is no competition for resources.

Social Identity Theory, as the adopted theoretical framework for this research, is relevant in many ways. One of these is that, firstly, it points to the fact that people identify with social groups and try to project the ideals, values, beliefs and practices of the group that they chose to identify with. For example, people who identify themselves as members of either Islam or Christianity as religious groups project their belief systems in the public space. Secondly, social groups manifest a feeling of prejudice against other groups because they tend to think that they possess something better which other groups do not have and that sets the stage for rivalry and conflict among them. The prejudice advocated by the theory, is in the context of religious conflict discourse, termed "religious prejudice" by Oladosu and Uthman-Oladosu (2013). According to the scholars, "Religious prejudice or intolerance occurs, in the main, based on the *Self's* refusal to accommodate the *Other* (italics mine)for what they are; the inability of the *Self* to tolerate the *Other's* spiritual-social and political preferences with respect" (2013:36). Thirdly, the theory helps to show that, for many reasons, intergroup struggle, contestation or conflict becomes inevitable because members attempt to prove that their group is better than other similar group(s) while projecting group identity in the public space. The cogent features of Social Identity Theory can be noticed in the words of Kukah and Mcgarvey on their observation of the relationship between Christianity and Islamic faith communities in Nigeria:

> However, although the immediate problem may not be theological, it is ourposition that the way people view their own religion and the way they are taught to view the religion of the Other necessarily has implications on how they relate to the Other and life itself. The predominant exclusivist approaches to the religion, its sources and its teachings, as found among the majority of both Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, a country… (Kukah and Mcgarvey, 2013:23).

In summary, the emphasis of Social Identity Theory is that people identify with groups of their choice to project groups' identity, beliefs, norms values, and practices and consider other groups with prejudice which, therefore, precipitates inter-group

rivalry, competition and conflict. This is because to promote religious harmony, people must appreciate that no religion is superior or better than others. Therefore, to promote religious harmony, there must be respect for other religions by religious adherents.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the techniques and procedure adopted for data collection and analysis which helped to provide answers to the research questions and the attainment of research objectives.

3.1   Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is primarily concerned with finding out "what is" and it is appropriate for this study because it helps to determine, describe or explain what is going on about a phenomenon. Thus, descriptive research design was adopted because the study is aimed at examining and describing contestation for public space by religious groups with a view to establishing its implications for inter-religious harmony. Descriptive survey research design includes both quantitative and qualitative data and uses these data to describe the study population. Therefore, within the context of this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed which helped to accomplish the research objectives. While the quantitative data concerned itself with objective measurement of variables, qualitative method dealt with narration of the issues interrogated in the study. Hence, quantitative data enabled numerical expression of findings from survey questionnaire on respondentspredominantly in percentages. Qualitative data, complementarily, provided descriptive information on the study population obtained through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation data-gathering techniques.

Two main factors made descriptive research design advantageous and relevant to this study. First is that the description helps to discover certain facts that are not noticed which, in this context, could refer to religious groups being unaware of the negative implications of their activities in the public space. Secondly, descriptive research can yield data that can lead to important recommendations such as how to prevent inter-religious conflict caused by contestation for public space by religious groups as well as promote inter-religious peace and harmony.

3.2   Study Population

The study involved leaders and members of Christian and Islamic groups as well as *Egúngún* and *Orò* deities in Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Iseyin and Igbo-Ora. The respondents were purposively selected based on the following factors: age (adults of 18 years and above); male and female gender; knowledgeable about the use of public space for religious activities and its attendant effects, and direct or indirect experience of the conflict it generates. Furthermore, Oyo State government officials of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and Bureau for Physical Planning and Development Control were purposively selected because of their relevance to the study with particular respect to noise pollution. In addition, three landlords/residents association chairmen were purposively engaged because of their involvement in preventing and resolving disputes arising from conflicts that particularly involves residents and religious organisations. Generally, a total of seven hundred respondents across the study areas considered to meet the criteria above provided the data through the survey questionnaire, while fifty-five respondents were involved in the in-depth interview in this study.

3.3   Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted throughout the sampling procedure. The population was determined by situational analysis using the frequency of conflict related to contestation for public space by religious groups. This was what informed the use of purposive sampling technique (Owoeye, 2015). In the first stage, the following towns were purposively selected because they had experienced several conflicts as a result of the use of public space for religious activities: Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Iseyin and Igbo-Ora.

In the second stage, Local Government Areas (LGAs) where the towns are situated were selected. Therefore, the towns and the LGAs affected are:

(1)   Ibadan-Ibadan North, Ibadan South East, Ibadan South West, Ibadan North West and Ibadan North East LGAs;

(2)   Ogbomoso-Ogbomoso North and Ogbomoso South LGAs;

(3)   Iseyin-Iseyin LGA;

(4)   Igbo-Ora-Ibarapa Central LGA.

In the third stage, in order to achieve unbiased sampling adequacy, according to Saunders (2018), a proportional sampling technique is appropriate due to its statistical significance. Therefore, 25% of the wards in the LGAs were selected to obtain a true representation from the population in a situation whereby the population (N) is known. This is to allow for effective coverage and concentrate on areas where conflicts have occurred as a result of contestation for public space by religious groups. Therefore, the wards were purposively selected because they represent the areas which have marked history of such conflict. However, for Ibadan, 25% of the number of wards was approximated to 15; also those of Iseyin and Igbo-Ora were approximated to 3 respectively to maximise the sample size.

In the fourth stage, copies of questionnaire were administered purposively on male and female adults in the selected wards who were knowledgeable and have been affected directly or indirectly with the effects of contestation for public space by religious groups in the wards where they resided. Furthermore, according to Saunders (2018), where the accurate figure of occurrence of a phenomenon and size of a population are not known, a researcher can use his discretion to determine the sample size. Therefore, based on the pilot study, the target sample size for the survey was 600 plus 10% attrition or non-response rate of 60 which is approximately 700 in order to maximize sampling adequacy for the study.

Consequently, 700 copies of structured questionnaire were administered on purposively-selected respondents as follows: Ibadan (250), Ogbomoso (170), Iseyin (150) and Igbo-Ora (130) based on the number of wards that make up the LGAs where the towns are situated. The sample size was estimated using probability functions as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample size estimation

S/N	Name of Town	No. of Local Govt. Area	No. of Wards in the LGA	No. of Wards Sampled (25%)	Expected Sample
1	Ibadan	5	59	Approx.15	250
2	Ogbomoso	2	20	5	170
3	Iseyin	1	11	Approx.3	150
4	Igbo-Ora	1	10	Approx.3	130
	Total	**9**	**110**	**26**	**700**

Source: Fieldwork 2016

The survey was complemented with 55 interview sessions with Christians (20), Muslims (20) and Traditional belief system adherents: *Egúngún*(5), *Orò* (5) purposively selected in the study areas based on their encounter with religious contestation for public space; chairmen of landlords' association (3) and Directors of Oyo State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and Bureau for Physical Planning and Development Control (2). Furthermore, for the interview, the number allotted the religious groups was based on the religious configuration of the state which, according to some scholars, consists of almost equal numbers of Muslims and Christians with a minority of traditional faith as adherents (Nolte, et al., 2009).

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) approaches to generate data to accomplish the set objectives. This is also known as triangulation technique which means the use of multiple data gathering methods in one single study. In social science research, triangulation is used to describe multiple data-collection techniques to address a single phenomenon and seeks to tackle a research problem from different methodological perspectives. Besides, triangulation helps to make up for the weakness of one research method used through the application of other method(s). For example, to a large extent, the quantitative method played a counter-balancing function (Onabanjo, 2015), strengthened and validated the data collected using qualitative instruments in this study.

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

Both secondary and primary data were accessed in this study. The secondary data were sourced from books, journals, newspapers, magazines, web sites and unpublished works germane to the researchtopic. On the other hand, primary data were collected through sources that are typical of both qualitative and quantitative researches. Therefore, the primary data gathering methods adopted for this study include in-depth interview, survey questionnaire, and non-participant observation.

3.6   Research Instrument

3.6.1   In-depth Interviews

Series of organized in-depth interviews were held with leaders and members of the three religious groups, chairmen of landlords' associations and public officials of government agencies who were all purposively selected. The nature of the interview was semi-structured because of the different characteristics of the study population. For example, while some of the interviewees were literate, many others were not. The interview was conducted both in English and Yoruba languages. This coupled with different religious persuasions, meant that different approaches were used which assisted in discussing pertinent issues, observing reactions and debating issues that are germane to the study objectives. To assist in documenting the information gathered, voice recorder, jotters and writing materials (pen) were used. An interview guide was used which was designed to obtain information on all the research questions. In the processes, 55 participants actively participated in the interview.

3.6.2   Non-participant Observation

For better understanding of the context of the phenomenon under study, the researcher also used a non-participant observation data-gathering method. To this end, many religious activities that took place in the public space were observed in Ibadan for convenience sake and they are similar to what obtains in the other towns. For example, Muslims were observed during their Friday and *Eid* (festival) prayers; Christians were observed preaching by the roadside, distributing gospel tracts and during worship sessions in their churches which generated loud noise; and *Egúngún*Oloolu's outing was also observed.

3.6.3   Survey Questionnaire

The use of questionnaire to collect a wide range of information from a large number of respondents on the research topic was considered appropriate. A Likert scale format structured questionnaire was used in providing quantitative data and thereby elicited opinion statements as a means of exploring respondents' perceptions on the research questions. A total of 700 copies of questionnaire were distributed across the study areas and 462 (66%) were retrieved for analysis. The respondents comprised adherents and non-adherents of the three religious groups and a few

religious leaders. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and the items were close-ended responses. 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree; Agree; Strongly Disagree; and Disagree was also used. Questionnaire items were carefully selected to address the thematic preoccupation of the first and second objectives of the research in a way that face validity was accorded the instrument. The issues emphasised are similar to those highlighted under in-depth interview method.

Therefore, the questionnaire was structured into three different sections. The first section contains items meant to reveal socio-demographic data of the respondents. These comprised sex, age, occupation, level of education, and religious affiliation/level of commitment in the religious group. The second set of questions examined the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups aimed at identifying the ways religious groups contest public space as seen by the respondents. The third and last section borders on factors that spur religious groups to contest public space.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The content validity of the instrument which implies the extent, to which an instrument measures all aspects of a given construct, was donewith the assistance of experts in the field including my Supervisor before the final draft was administered. To ensure reliability, the instrument was administered to thirty respondents across the religious groups in Ibadan and in areas outside the wards selected for the administration of the questionnaire. A reliability co-efficient of 0.9 (α=.92) Cronbach's Alpha through the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was obtained. This implies that the instrument was at least 92% reliable for data collection.

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected from the various sources were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data were analysed with the use of frequency distribution, percentages, charts and Chi-Square Test to draw inferences for research objectives 1 and 2 only. However, the survey results were corroborated or refuted with the outcomes from observations and in-depth interviews. While qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and non-participant observations were content-analysed through narration of opinions, views, and observation thematically to address research

objectives 3 and 4 because of the nature of the objectives. The results were complemented with photographs taken during the fieldwork.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In the course of conducting this research, care was taken to ensure that the rights and freedom of all the respondents were observed and protected. No respondent was made to respond under duress, intimidation or undue favour. Their consent were sought and obtained before they volunteered information. Secrecy and integrity of information given were assured and kept.

3.10 Limitations to theStudy

The researcher encountered some problems in the process of collecting data. These include demand for money from some *Egúngún* and *Orò* adherents before they consented to be interviewed, which was granted. Another problem encountered was that most of the interviews were conducted in Yoruba language with its burden of accurate interpretation to English language. However, since the researcher conducted the interview himself and, being a Yoruba language speaker, he was able to cope with it.

Similarly, the Research Assistant engaged by the researcher to administer the questionnaire in Ogbomoso died before he could complete the assignment and that meant reproducing another batch of questionnaire for redistribution which caused delay in getting the questionnaire completed and returned. Furthermore, of all the religious practices in the public space, it was only the *Orò* public outing that the researcher could not observe because this is conducted mostly in the night coupled with the fear and life-threatening dangers associated with it. These limitations, notwithstanding, all findings were true representation of the study population.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with presentation, analysis and discussion of data obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data used in this presentation and analysis consisted of copies of questionnaire administered on the adherents of the three religious groups in Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Iseyin and Igbo-Ora and the questionnaire instrument provided the quantitative data presented in tables and charts with statistical values allotted to them. Other primary source of data included information from in-depth interviews and non-participant observation which were presented in narrative form to corroborate or refute findings from questionnaire items. In addition, secondary source of data involved findings from existing works, books, journals and thesis which were used to validate or invalidate the research findings. They also formed the basis for supporting or rejecting existing theories, and in developing new ones. Presentation, analysis and discussion of findings were done on thematic categorisation.

4.1   Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

From the quesionnaire distributed, the following results revealed the distribution of the respondents according to their sex, town, religion, location, years of religion membership, religious leadership role, age, occupation and educational attainment. In all, 462 respondents responded to the questionnaire in Ibadan, Iseyin, Ogbomoso, and Igbo-Ora.

4.1.1   Location of Respondents

In all, 462 persons across four locations responded to the survey. The distribution of the location of the respondents is shown Table 2. Majority which comprised 146 (32%) were from Ibadan, followed by 119 (26%) from Iseyin, 100 (22%) and 97 (21%) from Igbo-Ora and Ogbomoso respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of location of respondents

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ibadan	146	31.6%
Iseyin	119	25.8%
Ogbomoso	97	21.0%
Igbo-Ora	100	21.6%
Total	462	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork 2016

4.1.1   Distribution of respondents by sex,age, occupation and level of education

Table 3 below shows the distribution of the background information of the respondents. Of the 462 of respondents, 292 (63%) were male while 170 (37%) were female. Furthermore, 154 (33%) were age 31-40 years, 125 (27%) were 18-30 years, 102 (22%) were 41-50 years and 48 (10%) were above 50 years old. This showed that more than half of the respondents were aged 31-50 years which implies that majority of the respondents were mature enough to provide independent responses.

Almost half, 255 (49%), of the respondents were employed in the civil service; 96 (21%) were unemployed, 67 (15%) were self-employed, 46 (10%) were employed in private organisations and 7 (2%) were clergy. With regard to education, most, 256 (55%), had higher degrees, 110 (24%) had NCE/Diploma certificates, 73 (16%) had SSCE/Grade II certificates, and 9 (2%) had primary education. The result showed that most of the respondents were well-educated with more than 95% having minimum education which must have assisted them to complete the questionnaire on their own.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by sex, age, occupation and level of education (N = 462)

Background characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	292	63.2%
	Female	170	36.8%
	Total	462	100.0%
Age	Below 18- 30 years	125	27.1%
	31 - 40 years	154	33.3%
	41 - 50 years	102	22.1%
	51 years and above	48	10.4%
	Declined to indicate	33	7.1%
	Total	462	100.0%
Occupation	Civil Servant	225	48.8%
	Private	46	10.0%
	Self-employed	67	14.5%
	Clergy	7	1.5%
	Unemployed	96	20.8%
	Declined to indicate	20	4.3%
	Total	461	100.0%
Level of Education	None	3	0.6%
	HND/B.Sc	256	55.4%
	NCE/Diploma	110	23.8%
	SSCE/Grade II	73	15.8%
	Primary	9	1.9%
	No response	11	2.4%
	Total	462	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2016

4.1.2 Distribution of the respondents by religious belief

This section provides insight into the nature of persons who responded to the survey and could be used to measure the level of bias their responses might have expressed. Table 4 below shows the distribution of religious groups of the respondents by the town they live in. Most of the respondents across the four study areas were Christians, an average of 56% across the study sites, followed byMuslims (42%) while the traditional worshippers had the least (2.4%).

Table 4:Distribution of the respondents by religious belief frequency (N=462)

Location	Religion			Location Total
	Christian	**Islam**	**Traditional**	
Ibadan	80 (54.8%)	65 (44.5%)	1 (0.7%)	146 (100%)
Iseyin	68 (57.1%)	45 (37.8%)	6 (5.0%)	119 (100%)
Ogbomoso	53 (54.6.0%)	41 (42.3%)	3 (3.1%)	97(100%)
Igbo-Ora	56 (56.0%)	43 (43.0%)	1 (1.0%)	100 (100%)
Total	**258 (55.6%)**	**193 (42.0%)**	**11 (2.4%)**	**462 (100%)**

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

4.1.3 Distribution of respondents by years of religious belief

Distribution of the years the respondents had used in their various religious groups is as shown in Table 5. Most, 182 (39%), had been practising their religion from birth, followed by 68 (15%) that had been in their religion for 11-20 years, followed by 54 (12%) that had been there for 21-30 years, and others with varying periods as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by years of religious belief (N=462)

Years of Membership (Years)	Frequency	Percent
From birth	182	39.4
<=5	32	6.9
6 – 10	23	5.0
11 – 20	68	14.7
21 – 30	54	11.7
31 – 40	29	6.3
41 – 50	17	3.7
51+	4	0.9
Declined to respond	53	11.5
Total	462	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

4.1.4 Distribution of respondents by period of membership of religion according to religion

This section evaluates the level of commitment of the respondents to their various religions using the years of membership in their respective religions as a proxy for measuring commitment. Table 6 showed that, of the of the 409 who had indicated the years of participation in their religion, more than half, 88 (52%), of the Muslims indicated they were born into the religion and 6 (67%) of those in Traditional religion were also born into it and only 88 (38%) of the Christians had been in the religion from birth. Also, 48 (21%) of the Christians compared to 20 (12%) of the Muslims had been in their religion for 11-20 years. For those who had been practising the religion for a short period, 7 (3%) of the Christians, 24 (14%) of the Muslims, and 1 (11%) of the Traditional religion had been in their respective religions for less than 5 years as shown on Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by period of membership of religion according to religion (N=409)

Period of Membership	Religion			Period Total
	Christian	Islam	Traditional	
From birth	88 (37.9%)	88 (52.4%)	6 (66.7%)	182 (44.5%)
<=5	7 (3.0%)	24 (14.3%)	1 (11.1%)	32 (7.8%)
6 – 10	10 (4.3%)	13 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (5.6%)
11 – 20	48 (20.7%)	20 (11.9%)	0 (0.0%)	68 (16.6%)
21 – 30	40 (17.2%)	13 (7.7%)	1 (11.1%)	54 (13.2%)
31 – 40	25 (10.8%)	4 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (7.1%)
41 – 50	12 (5.2%)	4 (2.4%)	1 (11.1%)	17 (4.2%)
51+	2 (0.9%)	2 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.0%)
Religion Total	232 (100%)	168 (100%)	9 (100%)	409 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

4.1.5   Distribution of respondents by leadership position held

This section seeks to measure the level of commitment the respondents have had in their respective religions based on their involvement in leadership position. This study showed that most, 273 (59.1%) of the respondents had occupied one leadership position or the other in their respective religions, as shown on Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by leadership position held (N=462)

Have You Ever Held Leadership Position	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	273	59.1
No	181	39.2
Declined to respond	8	1.7
Total	462	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

4.1.6   Distribution of respondents by leadership position according to religion

This section measured the level of commitment of the respondents to their religion based on whether or not they have been involved in leadership in their respective religious groups. The results showed that 166 (65%) of the Christians had been involved in leadership, followed by half, 97 (50%), of the Muslims while almost all, 10 (91%), of the respondents affirming traditional religion had been involved in leadership in their religions (Table 8). This high level of involvement in the leadership of the different religions indicated that most of the respondents had participated in some measure of decision-making and influence of their religious groups and, hence, could provide responses that were representative of the members of their groups.

Table 8:Distribution of respondents by leadership position according to religion (N=462)

Ever held leadership position	Religion			Period Total
	Christian	**Islam**	**Traditional**	
Yes	166 (64.6%)	97 (50.0%)	10 (90.9%)	273 (59.1%)
No	86 (33.5%)	94 (48.5%)	1 (9.1%)	181 (39.2%)
Declined to indicate	5 (1.9%)	3 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (1.7%)
Total	257 (100.0%)	194 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)	462 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2016

4.2   The Modes of Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups

This section is devoted to reseach objective one which seeks to identify the ways religious groups promote their identities in the public space through different activities in a multi-religious environment. In view of this, this study examined the perceptions of 462 respondents on the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups in their locations. The results were complemented with observations of the researcher and in-depth interviews conducted with respondents. This section revealed results that best align with respondents' views on the ways religious groups contest or use public space for their activities. Responses rangedbetween Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree.
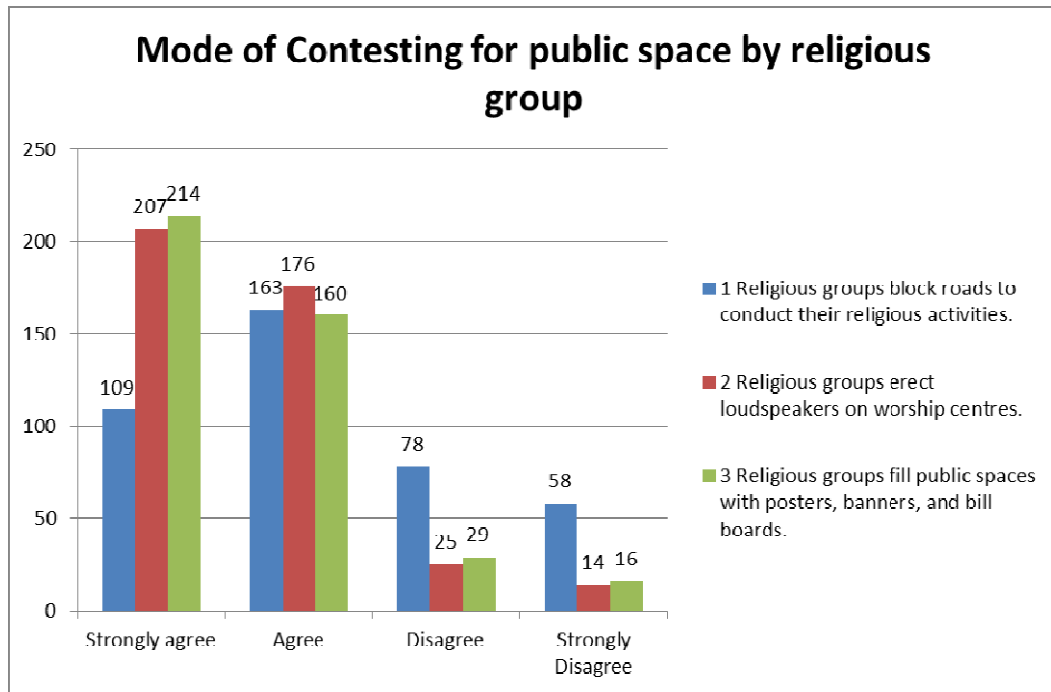
Figure 4.1: Modes of contestation for public space by religious groups

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 9a:Distribution of the respondents by their views on modes of contestation for public space (N=462)

S/N	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Religious groups block roads to conduct their religious activities.	109 (23.5%)	163 (35.3%)	78 (16.9%)	58 (12.6%)
2	Religious groups erect loudspeakers on worship centres.	207 (44.8%)	176 (38.1%)	25 (5.4%)	14 (3%)
3	Religious groups fill public spaces with posters, banners, and billboards.	214 (46.3%)	160 (34.5%)	29 (6.3%)	16 (3.50%)

Source: Field Survey, 2016
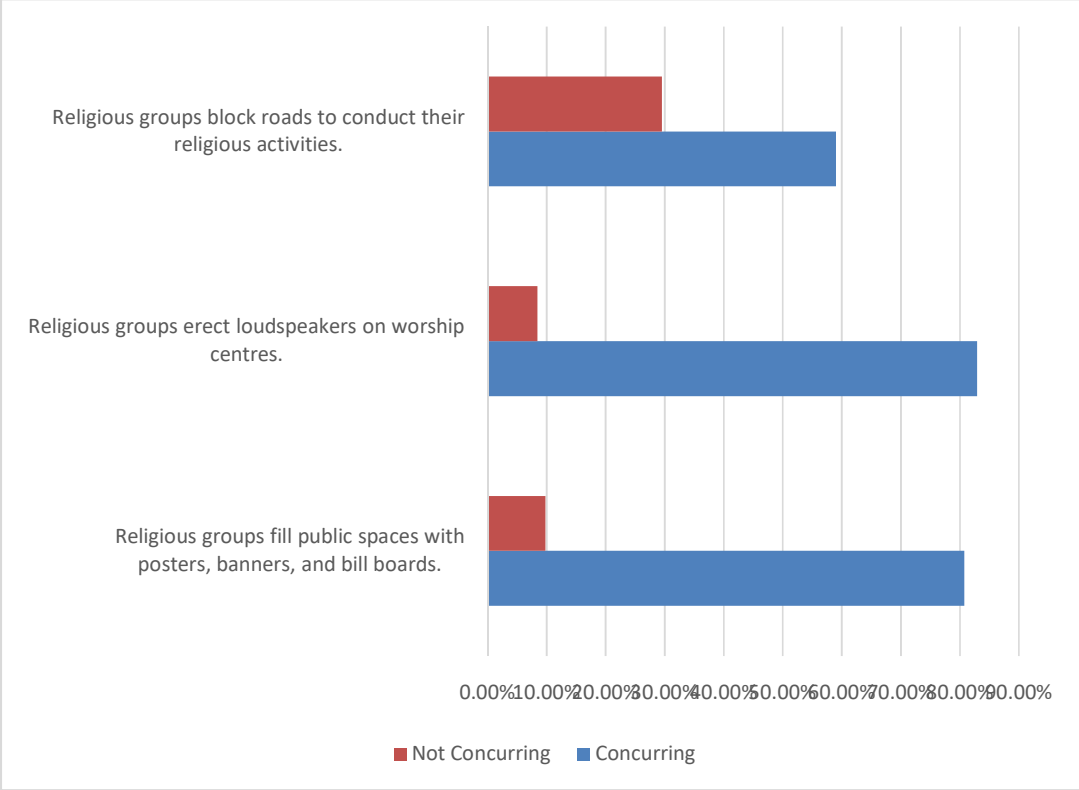
Figure 4.2:Perception of respondents on modes of contestation for public space by religious bodies

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The research objective was also addressed using Chi-Square Test and the results presented in Table 9a 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 92.4.

Table 9b: Chi-Square test analysis showing the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups

	Religious groups block roads to conduct their religious activities	Religious groups erect loudspeakerson worship centres	Religious groups fill public spaces with posters, banners, and billboards
Chi-Square(a)	87.935	363.173	342.567
Df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The results presented in Table 9b revealed that the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups are quite significant at p<.001. It shows that religious groups erect loudspeakers on worship centres more often at (Chi-Square Value= 363.173;df(4),p<.001). Similarly, findings showed that religious groups fill public spaces with banners, posters and billboards which is also significant at (Chi-Square Value= 342.567;df(4), p<.001). However, further result implies that the less frequently observed among religious group is that of blockage of roads to conduct their religious activities at (Chi-Square Value= 87.935;df(4), p<.001). Thus, the overall Chi-Square inferential Statistics indicate that religious groups are actively involving in the use of public spaces in our society. For further descriptive explanations, Table 9a has been presented for clarity and direction.

However, the statistical results derived with the use of simple percentages and Chi-Square Test are confirmed through observation. Blocking of roads as a mode of contestation for public space is lowest among the three modes because the act is not done frequently unlike the two other modes. For instance, street procession by *Egúngún* devotees comes up yearly during their festivals, Muslims does it more only on Fridays during their *Jumat* and yearly festival prayers, while Christians' occupation of public roads could be during a crusade programme or procession which are not frequent. This explain why the response rate is lowest at 59% and (Chi-Square Value= 87.935;df(4), p<.001) of the sample population. Nonetheless, it is significant which indicate that all the religious groups actively use roads for their activities.

The use of posters, banners and billboards to contest public space by religious groups comes second among the three modes is also confirmed through observation. This is because public spaces are replete with these advertising instruments especially in cities and the religious groups, especially Christians and Muslims, are actively involved. However,*Orò* devotees do not involve in this mode of contestation and *Egúngún* adherents use it on a minimal scale. Nevertheless, this mode of contetstation is significantly high at 80.8% and (Chi-Square Value= 342.567;df(4), p<.001). This showed that the religious bodies appreciate the need to show their identity in the public and attract people into their folds, hence, massive publicity through these means.

Public space contestation through erecting loudspeakers on religious houses received the highest response rate at 82.9% and (Chi-Square Value= 363.173;df(4), p<.001). From observation, hardly is there a church or mosque that does not have this

acoustic instrument conspicuously mounted on it in our society. The response rate attest to the extent by which religious groups contest aerial space through the use of loudspeakers. By and large, it is clear from the results that, the modes of religious contestation for public space is significant, implying that religious groups actively use public spaces for their religious activities. The results are further discussed thematically.

4.2.1 Contestation for public space byblocking roads

Findings of this research showed that blocking of roads is one of the ways religious groups contest public space and all the religious groups are involved. Blocking of roads entails the conduct of religious activities on public roads.This is affirmed by the survey result and supported by observation and in-dept interview. Table 9aabove revealed that majority, 109 (24%), strongly agreed and 163 (35%) agreed that religious groups block roads to conduct their religious activities while 78 (17%) disagreed and 58 (13%) strongly disagreed with this notion. With this, more than half of the respondents (59%) concurred that religious groups block roads as a form of contestation for public space (Figure 4.2).

In this instance, blockage of roads as a mode of contetstation for public space by religious groups, as observed by the researcher, manifest in different ways by different groups. Muslims were seen praying on the road during *Jumat* service and *Eid* (Festival) prayers. The observance of *Jumat* prayer takes place every Friday in the afternoon and it is compulsory for every Muslim to participate. The Muslim prayer session holds in the mosque and usually in the place designated as Central Mosque which in many Yoruba cities is located near the king's palace. However, with expansion in geo-spaces along with population increase, many other mosques are built to serve the purposes of *Jumat* prayer centres. However, most of the mosques are located in conspicous areas and along many busy roads which compels barricading such roads to accommodate the teeming population of worshippers. For example, there is a central mosque at Sabo area of Ibadan metropolis where the Friday prayer is associated with blocking the road between Mokola overhead bridge and Adamasingba Stadium which is a distance of about half a kilometre. In most places where this type of contestation for public space manifests, "NO ROAD" signposts are mounted at both

ends to prevent vehicular movement throughout the period of the worship. Many Muslim respondents disclosed that blocking road for prayer is not intentional but circumstantial due to the fact that the prayer session attracts many participants which mosques cannot contain, hence the overflow to any available space which most often is a public road.

Plate 1: Road Barricade during Islamic worship service at Mokola, Ibadan.

Besides occupying public roads during Friday *Jumat* service, another occasion that Muslims do the same is during the *Eid-Fitr* and *Eid-Kabir* prayers which comes up once a year and in places designated as *Eid* praying ground traditionally located in outskirts of the town. The *Eid-Fitr* is the festival that follows Ramadan fast, while *Eid-Kabir* is the festival that signifies the sacrifice by Prophet Ibrahim to Allah. But as noted by a respondent, the development in many towns has caught up with the praying grounds, thereby placing them in the midst of such towns. For example, the Ibadan *Eid* praying ground is at Agodi which was at the outskirt of the city in the olden days. However, today it is in the midst of the town due to development and, because of the large congregation that the festival prayer attracts, it becomes imperative for them to spill over to, and occupy, public roads for the religious activity. The consequence of the development is that many *Eid* praying grounds have been set up across cities which implies that many roads are taken over by Muslims during this activity. It was observed that public school premises, as some interviewees corroborated, are used for the festival and Friday prayers. An example is D.C. Primary School, Akobo, Ibadan. The conversion of such public facility into a religious space underscores the penchant of religious groups for contesting public space.

In addition, some Muslim respondents disclosed that Islamic faithful also block roads during *Thajud* programme which is an all-night programme similar to Christian vigil prayer sessions in churches. Similarly, they also occupy roads/streets when organising *Malud* and *Dawah* programmes. While the former programme is conducted in celebration of the birth of Prophet Mohammed, the latter involves public preaching or propagation of Islamic beliefs to enlighten and invite people to the religion of Islam.

The Christian group contests public space by blocking roads in a slightly different way from the way Muslims does. While the Muslims literally block main roads for prayer, the Christians more often occupy road setbacks for the propagation of their faith with a view to converting people from other faith. In the course of this research, many instances of such activity were sighted which prevented pedestrian movements. Street procession is another way by which some Christian organisations occupy roads while performing a religious obligation. This is common on Easter Palm Sunday which is the last Sunday preceding Easter to mark the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. The Easter festival is the second most

important festival after Christmas for the Christian religious group world-wide and is accorded due +

importance. During the Palm Sunday procession, different Christian denominations move in procession in large number on main roads singing and clapping while waving palm fronts.

However, sometimes Christian procession is conducted to invite people to an upcoming programme such as crusade and retreat. It is found that, while this mode of contestation for public space does not prevent total vehicular movement, it does often engender traffic gridlock. Similar to this is the observation that traffic gridlocks mounts in places where a Christian event of great magnitude, such as crusade, is held due to large number of attendees. While the roads may not be intentionally blocked due to the fact that they are not directly being used for the religious activity, it generates negative side effect for road users. However, an uncommon situation was discovered in this study where a church named Christ Apostolic Church, Revival Centre, Kuola, Apata, Ibadan placed a signpost with the inscription "No Road Service is in Progress" at both ends of the road in front of the church building any time it is holding its service. This also prevents vehicular movement.

Plate 2: "No Road" sign post mounted by a Church at Kuola, Apata, Ibadan to prevent vehicular movement during it service.

Like the Christian group, *Egúngún* adherents' method of contesting public space through road blockage is by their procession on the road. In the same way that churches and mosques serve as worship centres for Christians and Muslims respectively, *Egúngún* believers have their sacred spots where they congregate to offer sacrifices though not on regular basis like the two other religions. However, as part of their religious obligation, *Egúngún* masquerades make public appearances which occur in the form of procession on the road and, by that, contest public space with citizens who are entitled to use the road for their legitimate interests. A respondent who is not a member of the group made the following comment which largely supports the observation of the researcher:

> *Egúngún*masquerades use the road during their festival. They move in procession along the road in the course of which they terrorise passers-by and even motorists. They extort money from people, snatch bags, loot shops, cause traffic gridlock, pandemonium in market or congested places, flog people with whip etc. These atrocities are most times committed by the large crowd that throng behind them (IDI with Idowu Hassan at Ibadan on November 7, 2015).

The comment above is corroborated by an interviewee who shared his experience thus:

> One day, while trekking home from work around Odinjo area, I suddenly ran into an *Egúngún* masquerade's procession and before I knew it they flogged me without knowing the reason. (IDI with Mr.Tajudeen at Ibadan onDecember 20, 2014).

The observation and experience expressed above shows that *Egúngún* devotees contest public spaces such as road and block it through procession. However, their conduct not only leads to road blockage but also exposes members of the public to molestation which stirs up displeasure. Thus, public showing or manifestation of *Egúngún*belief causes apprehension in people which naturally has the tendency to provoke resentment and religious conflict. The findings supports Babayemi as captured below:

> Such *Egúngún* is to be followed by all the able bodied youthsin his quarter or the whole community. These youths carry whips, and at specific places, the *Egúngún*initiates flogging. By flogging the people around him, the whole place is immediately turned into a battle ground. The war-like nature of the music and the inciting

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messages sent by the talking drums to both the *Egúngún* and his followers spur them to aggressive and uncontrollable actions. (Babayemi, 1980:43).

This type of aggressive and unprovoked assault on innocent people was denied by Head*(Alagbaa)* of *Egúngún* devotees of Ibadanland, Chief Ojetunde Asunleke when interviewed. He blamed it on some miscreants who throng behind the masquerades with intent to loot shops and thereby discredit and undermine the sanctity of the festival. This aligns with the assertion of Oyebode:

> Terror hoodlums have also hijacked *Egúngún*ceremonies to unleash on the populace. Many of them have vandalised and stolen goods from market women. Some *Egúngún* ceremonies ended upbeing an opportunity to revenge over an opposing lineage wrongdoing.Such *Egúngún* groups have caused disturbance to the public peace (Oyebode, 2012:149).

This position also concurs with Ulli Beier who observes that:

> Unfortunately the *Egúngún* society has been much maligned and misinterpreted by the younger, westernized generation. They tend to consider the society as a mere fraud, a clever device of an unscrupulous clique of priests to strike terror into women and to extort money from an overcredulous community. (Beier, 1959:26)

However, the general impression that people have of the *Egúngún* traditional worship which this study confirms is that of fear arising from the way they contest the public space which refutes the defence put up by *Egúngún* followers and Beier, but supports the claim by Babayemi.

Plate 3: Egúngún masquerades demonstrating their ritual through a procession on the public road in Ibadan.

This study found that the way *Orò* adherents take over sovereignty of public roads is more serious than others. Although they do not literally block roads in the observance of their rituals, their activity literally takes many people, most especially women, off the roads. This is because they largely operate in the night and, when they appear in the day time, women are forbidden from seeing them. This is reflected in the observation of an octogenarian respondent, Reverend Dr S.T. Ola Akande:

> With the worshippers of *Orò*, the town was open to them during the night. Women were not expected to be around but hidden in their houses. But the seventh day of the *Orò*celebration was always crucial for them. They held to the control of the whole town or village and nobody dared trespassed when they were gathered. They possessed the whole town or village and all the land belong to them. Even Christians will not come out to challenge or interfere with them (IDI at Ibadan on April 18, 2015).

Thus *Orò*traditionalists' way of contesting public space is not an outright and physical road blockage as such but their mode of usage of public space leads to total barring of movement of people of the town or areas of their coverage. However, due to civilisation and modernisation, total domination of the entire town by *Orò* activities no longer takes place. For example, most interviewees at Iseyin agreed that *Orò* cult is no longer as serious and severe as it used to be and that its observance does not extend to modern and developed areas of the town occupied mostly by non-indigenes. The area largely affected is called Itan which is where most of the family compounds devoted to *Orò* worship are located in Iseyin. Similarly, residents in modern places in Ibadan such as Bodija, Ashi, Mokola, Akobo, and Apata do not have a feel of *Orò* activities, unlike residents of places like Ayeye, Popoyeosa, Ode-oolo, Oranyan and Aremo. Pastor Joshua Agbolamagbe who was interviewed in Iseyin throws more light on this issue:

> When it was speculated that Oke-Ogun State might be created with Iseyin as State capital, the people of the town reasoned that it would be improper for a whole State capital to be brought to its knees for seven days due to *Orò*festival, they began to mellow down the activities of *Orò*cult. So they decided at the King's palace that instead of the ritual being observed in the daytime, it should be in the night but on the seventh day, which is the day they move to the palace, it will not be total but restricted to certain streets especially along Itan to the palace. That reduced the

tension but for the age-long fear of *Orò*, people and especially women restricts their moments (IDI at Iseyin on January 23, 2015).

The remarks above attest to the fact that though *Orò* religious festival do not entail literal and physical road blockage, but it causes grave fear and apprehension in peopleand they literally avoid being on the road. This is restricting people to the public space which can also be described as road blockage because the religious activity bars people from freely accessing public roads.

It is, therefore, confirmed in this study that all the three religious groups block public roads while performing their respective religious obligations even though it is a less frequently observed mode. However, this mode of contestation for public space by religious groups portends danger for inter-religious harmony. These findings affirm Christians' "allegation that during *Jumat* prayers, Muslim worshippers block roads to the inconvenience of motorists"(Kazaure, 1988:11). According to him, this is one of the grievances that Christians have against Muslims which promotes intolerance between members of the two religious groups. The findings also partially corroborate the observation of Ayantayo that "some Churches and Mosques in the name of street evangelism are fond of barricading major and minor streets"(2009:123). This suggests that only believers in Islam and Christianity are the ones whose religious activities leads to road blockage. However, findings in this study debunks that claim to establish that *Egúngún* and *Orò*worshippers which are variants of African Indigenous Religion also barricade roads directly and indirectly in observance of their rituals.

4.2.2 Contestation for public space through erection of loudspeakers on religious houses

One other mode of contestation for public space by religious groups is the erection of loudspeakers on top of worship centres and sometimes on vehicles. As earlier mentioned, this study recognises two main types of public space which are physical and aerial spaces. Aerial space has to do with the atmosphere and sound waves that move through the air or atmosphere as far as the sound can go. One major instrument that helps to amplify sound is public address system mounted on many religious houses. Religious groups often use public address systems to project their preaching, music, call to prayer, and prayer as well as some other programmes. It is

observed that this aerial space contestation is wholly associated with Christian and Islamic groups whose churches and mosques are sited mostly in residential areas. African Indigenous Religion of *Egúngún* and *Orò* extractions also have sacred spots, but they are often located in places far away from human habitation. Besides, unlike the two other groups who often congregate in their mosques and churches, the traditional religious adherents do not congregate as such and,when they do, their meeting is often without the use of loudspeakers mounted on their places of meeting.

Results in Table 9a revealed that most 207 (44.8%) of the respondents for the study disclosed that they strongly agreed and 176 (38.1%) agreed that Christians and Muslims erect loudspeakers on their respective places of worship. Only 39(8.4%) of the respondents did not agree.Thus, 82 respondents constituting 82.9% of the study population considered erection of loudspeakers on churches and mosques, which facilitates loud worship sessions, as a form of contestation for public space by religious groups.

It is observed that many churches erect loudspeakers on their buildings to amplify their activites. The worship sessions of praying, singing, trumpeting, drumming, clapping, announcement-making and preaching with the aid of loudspeakers are conducted with frenzied sound that most often envelop the neighbourhood where the churches are located. A discussant corroborated this observation thus:

> There is a church opposite this church that organises its programmes which goes with deafening noise and nobody dare challenge them probably because many landlords are members of that church. They mount large size loudspeakers on their church building. Neighbours could do nothing because if they complain, they respond that after all they are on their own premises and have not trespassed into anybody's house or premises. Afterall, everybody has the right to do whatever they like in his house. To them they are worshipping God on their property and there is nothing anybody can do about it. And if anybody feels disturbed by their noise, the person can either join them in worship or pull a wool on his ears or close his door (IDI with Prophetess O. Taiwo at Ibadan on August 20, 2015).

This comment suggests that churches use loudspeakers during worship to claim their right to the use of public space without reckoning with its effects on non-members.

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The defeaning mode of worship, it is observed, is a departure from quiet and contemplative worship style of churches in the past. Incidentally, it is discovered that this behaviour is not limited to Pentecostal churches as even orthodox churches that are known for quiet contemplative worship styles are also involved. An interviewee, who is a Baptist Church member in his mid-seventies, confirmed this:

> Mainstream Protestant churches such as Baptist over the years from the missionary period did not organise their activities in such ways as to generate noise that disturb people especially in vigil programmes. Why is it that some Pentecostal churches use drums, trumpets blowing, singing during their night programmes and in the process make people in their neighbourhood angry because of disturbance? (IDI withPa Agbo Areo at Ibadan on June 19, 2015).

The comment indicates that Christian groups' contestation of public space with the instrumentality of loudspeakers mounted on Church buildings appears to be a novel phenomenon in religious activites.

Plate 4: AChurch building with loudspeaker mounted on it in a residential area at Adeoyo, Ibadan**.**

There is no significant difference with the Islamic faith. One major religious activity which attracts the use of loudspeakers in Islamic worship is in the call to prayer. The *Salat* (observance of prayer), as one of the five pillars of Islam, requires that Muslims pray five times daily in the morning, at noon, late afternoon, just after sunset and later in the evening. Prior to the commencement of the prayer, the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer from minarets. An informant, Imam Musbaudeen Aremu, disclosed that prior to the invention of modern technology which gave birth to microphones and loudspeakers, the muezzin's call from the minaret was the only channel by which the faithful were invited to congregatefor prayer in the mosque. He added that it was effective because of the small Muslim population.

However, with increase in population and probably competition from other sources of noise in the environment such as noise from automobiles, household power generating set, and industrial noise, the need to use loudspeakers to call to prayer became imperative. Therefore, in order to extend the call to others, loudspeakers are used. However, most times, the loudspeakers are tuned high and produce loud sound that encapsulates the entire environment. In addition to call to prayer, sometimes Islamic music and sermons are blared from mosques before or after the early morning prayer or late at night which amounts to contesting public space through Islamic mode of worship. An interviewed respondent confirmed this mode of public space contestation with its effects on people:

> Of course they do especially with the use of loudspeakers mounted on their mosques. There is a mosque near this Seminary and every morning when they make call to prayerand preach, their noise disturbs us in the school, but we tolerate them. Sometimes, they disturb us in the night by playing Islamic music and preaching but we try to bear with them without complaining (IDI with Evangelist Segun Joe at Ibadan on December 21, 2015).

It is obvious that, like churches, loudspeakers are mounted on mosques which affirm contestation for public space.

Plate 5: A Mosque showing loudspeakers mounted on its top located in residential area, Sharp Corner, Apata, Ibadan**.**

The study attests that many churches and mosques in Oyo State have outdoor loudspeakers mounted on them as a way of contesting public space. In addition, loudspeakers are seen mounted on moving vehicles like buses or cars to propagate religious beliefs. The religious sound coming through loudspeakers differ from other environmental sound in that it is directed, addressed and intentional. The loudspeakers are mounted to transmit sound. The sound coming from loudspeakers deliberately mounted outside and on top of religious houses and vehicles are not neutral like the manifold unintentional sounds created in the bustle of everyday life like factory, traffic noise and so on. On the contrary, the sounds they emit are usually religiously partisan, purposeful and deliberate. They carry meaning and are aimed at persuasion but sometimes become nuisance that affects some peoples' mental and emotional sensitivity. It, therefore, suggests that the sound instrument constitutes a menace.

Thus religious groups, especially Christians and Muslims, contest public space (aerial space) by deliberately mounting external loudspeakers on their worship centres. This study has shown that the phenomenon is rampant in the society and is capable of instigating inter-religious acrimony. This finding corroborates Kazaure's assertion that one of the complaints Christians have against Muslims which upsets their relationship is the "condonation of provocative use of loudspeakers in mosques and near the location of churches" (1988:11). However, as obsrved in this study, Christians' liturgical acivities in churches also involve "provocative use of loudspeakers" and Muslims also complain. Perhaps, at the time Kazaure made the observation, churches were not involved in loud mode of worship as it is common today. Therefore, there is a paradigm shift because this study has confirmed that both Christian and Islamic groups erect loudspeakers on their churches and mosques as a way of contesting public space. Thus, religious activities in mosques and churches are conducted in loud sound through the instrumentality of public address system with large loudspeakers mounted outside the building of the worship centres. This confirms the findings of Ivo Strecker (2007) that religious groupsaggressively use loudspeakers to compete with each other over influence in the public space.

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4.2.3 Contestation for public space through erection of billboards, posters and banners

Another nature of contestation for public space associated with religious groups found in this research is the massive and indiscriminate use of advertisement instruments such as posters, banners and billboards. It was observed that streets are filled with posters, banners and billboards bearing religious inscriptions and in most cases, invitations to religious services. These instruments are common communication channels through which religious groups get across to others of same faith or of different belief. Billboards are large outdoor structure mounted on high traffic areas that are typically busy with movement of pedestrians and motorists. It has the advantage of presenting bold advertisement messages to passing pedestrians and motorists. Posters are the other common form of billboard advertising pasted mostly along primary and secondary arterial roads. They are smaller in size than billboards. Banners are typically a large piece of silk or cloth and, in this context, with a religious message inscribed on it placed or suspended in a conspicuous place.

Findings of this study (Table9a) revealed that there is excessive proliferation of posters, banners and billboards by religious groups in the public space as 214 (46%) strongly agreed and 160 (35%) agreed to this perception among the survey respondents. Only 16 (4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 26 (6%) disagreed. This implies that 80.8% of the people engaged in this study stated that religious groups contest public space with the use of the road side advertisement media (Figure 4.2).

From observation, this means of religious communication is pervasive and are found virtually everywhere along major streets, public buildings, round-about, walls of private buildings and others. They are mostly used to invite members of the public to attend programmes such as crusades, retreats, camping, seminars, and location of church or mosque. Notably, billboards and posters, in addition to the messages on them, often bear the photographs of the founder of a Church or Islamic organisation, their spouses and invited ministers or speakers at the event. The study found thatcloth or flex banners are used for different purposes such as evangelism. For example, one was noticed with a message: JESUS IS GOD'S SON MARK 9:2-13 and placed conspicuously on a fence proximatetoa thoroughfare.

Plate6: A cloth banner pasted on a wall to propagate Christian gospel, Kuola, Apata, Ibadan.

It is also used to issue warning. Notably, a cloth banner mounted across a street at Falade Street, Adesola, Ibadan bears this message in Yoruba language: *ÀKÍYÈSÍ PÀTÀKÌ! DÁKẸ́ ARIWO TÀBÍ ÌLÚ. ÌKÉDE YÌÍ WÁYÉ LÁTI Ọ́WỌ́ ÀWỌN ELÉTÒ MỌ́SÁLÁSÍ ÌRẸ́PỌ̀DÙN.*This is interpreted as follows: IMPORTANT NOTICE! STOP NOISE OR DRUMMING. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS FROM THE ORGANISERS OF IREPODUN MOSQUE. According to the Imam of the mosque, Idris Arowojede, what informed the notice was that members of a Christian denomination often undertake street evangelism accompanied with noisy singing, drumming, ringing of bell, clapping and use of microphone to the extent that Muslims tend to be disturbed and offended while praying in their mosque. Therefore, the leadership of the mosque decided to use the cloth banner to pass the restriction message. An informant added that, prior to the restriction by the Muslims, a serious clash occurred between the two groups while the Christians were on evangelism along the street. The conflict was prevented from escalating due to the intervention ofAdesola Oniyere Landlords' Association. The aftermath of the mediation was that the Christians were directed to suspend their usual street evangelism in the entire neighbourhood in the interest of peace. This incident suggests that religious activities in the public space provokes inter-religious conflict in a multi-religious environment.

Plate 7**:**A cloth banner mounted by a Mosque across a street at Falade Street, Adesola, Ibadan to warn against noise making or beating of drum.

In comparison, it was observed that Christian posters, billboards and banners cover public space more than those of Muslims and this appears consistent with the opinion of a Christian leader, Pastor Yemi Aladare:

> If people can be advertising what they sell on the streets and in public space so that people can come to buy, there is no reason why Jesus Christ tooshould not be advertised in public spaces (IDI at Ibadan on 5 December, 2015).

This opinion suggests that Christians emulate the marketing style of business enterprises to publicise their beliefs and practices in the public space.

It was also discovered during the fieldwork that *Egúngún* adherents make use of posters to announce to members of the public that *Egúngún*festival was underway. However, while those of Muslims and Christians are designed to invite people, theirs is meant to serve as warning. According to Oloye Fasakin Agbotifayo, Head (*Alagbaa*) Oke-Ofa, Oluyoro Babasale, Ibadan:

> We *Egúngún*worshippers ensure that we paste posters to announce the coming of *Egúngún* festival and warn people against interference as we don't interfere or disrupt any Christian or Muslims events in public spaces or anywhere (IDI at Ibadan, July 6, 2015).

The comment suggests that there is always interference from non-members of their group while observing their festival in the public space which was one of the reasons they make use of posters.

Thus, all religious groups, as a mode of contestation for public space indiscriminately mount these communicative religious symbols in public spaces and by that contest physical space to create awareness, invite people to their programmes and warn the public.

Plate 8: The use of poster by Egúngún adherents on the commencement of Egúngún festival and warning against interference.

The above findings indicate that all religious groups in various ways contest public space in various forms which vary from proselytising to religious gatherings and festivals. Some of the places used for religious activities include portion of roads, markets, open-fields, publicly-owned buildings such as stadia, town halls, government offices, and educational institutions and, sometimes, religious houses built in residential areas.The study has, therefore, been able to identify three major ways religious groups contest public space. These are blocking of roads for religious activity; mounting of loudspeakers in worship places and sometimes on moving vehicles; and indiscriminate pasting of religious posters, billboards and banners. In other words, these are the ways by which religious groups contest public space in Oyo State.

Consequently, the study found through survey and observation that contestation for public space by religious groups is profuse and widespread which was confirmed by the comments of interview respondents many of who are leaders of the religious groups. For instance, A Christian leader, Evangelist Segun Joe, declared in an interview:

> Firstly, as the Chaplain of this Seminary where we train pastors, we do street to street evangelism during which we invite people to Christ. When we go out, we ring bells, beat drums and use megaphone to sing along the street. By this people are attracted to hear our messages. Secondly, we go to some markets to evangelise. We mount loudspeakers and preach to people that come to the market to buy or sell. We also pray for the marketers (IDI at Ibadan on December 21, 2015).

The comment above shows that Christians perceive streets and market places as public places they can use for preaching their faith, worship and prayers with the use of loudspeakers, besides the church buildings which are sacred places for such religious activities.

In the same vein, a Muslim respondent, Alfa Wahabstated that:

> Since Prophet Mohammed allowed Jewish leaders to worship near the mosque and he too prayed near their place of worship, it shows us that every place can be used for religious purposes. In terms of public spaces like roads, schools, markets etc. there is nothing wrong to use them for religious purposes. Prophet

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Mohammed said every portion of land can be used for religious purposes (IDI at Ibadan on September 8, 2015).

The respondent's view suggests that Muslims also consider public space as appropriate for religious activities which informs its prolific and extensive contestation through Islamic religious activities such as praying on the road and in other public spaces other than mosques which are the designated prayer houses.

With respect to *Egúngún* traditional belief, the *Alagbaa* (Head of *Egúngún*) of Ibadanland, Chief Ojetunde Asunleke confirmed the use of public space by the group as a necessity during *Egúngún* festival:

> Among all the idols that *Eledumare* (God) sent to the world, *Egúngún*was one of them. One of the things that informed the worship of *Egúngún* is the remembrance of the departed souls. *Egúngún*was sent to the world to put the world in order. During the *Egúngún*festival, all the dead gather at the festival during which *Egúngún* is expected to move round the town before returning home (IDI at Ibadan on July 6, 2016).

The comment clearly indicates that *Egúngún* traditional festival entails occupation of public space as the masquerade is required to parade the entire town as part of the open ritual, besides the covert ritual which often involves sacrifice of animals. This act clearly indicates that the *Egúngún* adherents consider the entire town as a public space the masquerade must parade.

On the part of *Orò* worshippers, they also take possession of the public space, especially streets, during their activities as attested by Pa Bolanle Adeoti, a devotee: "Every ward in the town must be visited during the *Orò*celebration" (Oral interview at Iseyin, 23 January, 2015). This claim implies that *Orò*adherents regard public space as an extension of their sacred groves to appease the gods during the *Orò* festivals.

Thus, the modes of contestation for public space by religious groups can be described as domination or occupation of spaces that are not originally designed for such use. The religious groups allow their activities to transcend the confines of their private space into public space, both physical and aerial. Public spaces are not originally designed for religious purposes but, as social spaces, are generally accessible to people of all kinds which helps to promote social interaction and sense of community. However, this study has affirmed that religious groups contest public

space and, in the process, affect its use by other people who equally have legitimate claims over it. Therefore, the ways religious actors claim or contest public7 space suggest a change in the meaning, definition and interpretation of public space from their perspectives. To them, public space conjures a different meaning, definition and interpretation. Therefore, the modes of religious contestation for public space suggests that religious groups consider public space as an extension of their worship centres and that is why there is a high prevalence of contestation for public space by religious groups. This is noticeable as almost all available space that members of the public have access to are used for one religious activity or the other.

Beside places recognised as public spaces, privately-owned facilities but which are open to members of the public are treated as appropriate for religious activities. For example, it was observed that events halls are rented for Christian and Islamic gatherings, some petrol stations have adjourning mosques and chapels built in their premises, residential buildings are converted to worship houses, commercial buses and walls of privately-owned buildings are defaced with religious posters. These clearly exemplify the ubiquitous nature of contestation for public space by religious groups. It is noteworthy that private spaces are non-government-owned facilities with the appearance of public space. The massive incursion of religion into private space by religious groups underpins the theory of public space which makes a distinction between public space and private space and firmly indicates that religious activities can also manifest in the latter. Thus, both public and private spaces are contested by religious groups which points at pervasive manifestation of religious activities beyond the confines of designated religious centres. The implication is struggle for public space between them and people in the society who are not members of the religious groups.

Plate 9: Religious posters on the wall of a privately-owned petrol stationat Yawiri Road, Akobo, Ibadan.

Therefore, the meaning, definition, and interpretation religious group adduce to public space is consistent with the views of some scholarswho said that the activities of religious groups in the public space suggest that religious groups have redefined the concept of public space (Mitchell,1995; Crowford, 1995; and Ayantayo, 2009). Likewise, these findings, for example, the practice of blocking of roads for religious activity, confirms the concept of space of power by Lawuyi (2012a). Space of power is any space that religious actors ascribe spiritual power to which, besides their worship arenas, includes anywhere that religious activity is conducted. In essence, space of power has allure and awe due to either its physical characteristics or spiritual endowment as seen and interpreted by religious adherents. That is why Muslims feel offended if, while using a public road for their prayer, a non-participant passes through the place at that time. In the same way, *Orò* adherents consider it a sacrilege to see a woman in the public space at the time of their rituals which is visited with severe consequences as it happened in Iseyin. This underscores the meaning, definition and interpretation that religious groups impute on public space as a space of power.

Consequently, the study has revealed that the way religious groups interpret public space is what induces conflict with other users of public space who perceive it differently. This agrees with the views of Laura Orrico that public space is a site of contestation because of how different groups interpret it. According to the scholar :

> As scholars grapple with debates on public space, they must address the ways in which people understand, use, and identify space. Claims to space are often made on the basis of the meanings that people attach to space, that is, they understand and interprets a given space in some way that is meaningful for their lives and interests. As such, conflicts that arise over space become embedded in larger debates about interpreting the meanings of place (Orrico, 2011:5).

Linares (2006) concludes similarly that the way public space is perceived and interpreted affects the way it is used which induces contestation and conflict because of the differences in interpretation as affirmed by this study.

However, the prevalence of manifestation of religious activities in public spaces as findings of this research have shown, negates the views of some scholars that religion should be practised in *sacred place*. For instance, Kimball says that religion

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entails "sacred stories, sacred people and sacred space" (2002:21). In the same vein, Fleming and O'Hara opines that faith should be expressed "in worship and celebration, in sacred guildings and places" (1995:6). However, the findings suppport the view of Annick Germain (2011) that the conduct of religious rituals can spill over the boundaries of private space into the public space, and the observation of Alubo (2011) that, in addition to the traditional places of worship, religious groups often make use of open air spaces for various religious activities.

4.3 The Factors Responsible for Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups

The focus of this section of the research is the examination of the factors that accounts for the usage of public space for religious activities in a society that has different religious groups. Religion is often considered as private and voluntary. Due to several reasons, religious faithful may not agree with the notion of religion as a private and voluntary practice, or may be altogether indifferent, especially when use of public space is in their favour at a particular time. In other words, religious groups have different reasons why they contest public space and this may be determined by how they define religion in the context of public/private space. Having examined how religious goups contest public space, probing into the reason is equally important. In this section, factors responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups are discussedthematically from both quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Distribution of respondents by their views on factors responsible for use of public space by religious groups (N=462)

Legend:
- To fulfilreligious obligations such as evangelism, dawah and traditional festivals motivate the use of public space.
- The fear of domination by rival religious groups drives them to use public spaces for their activities.
- Religious groups carry out their activities in the public space to promote their identity.

Figure 4:3: Respondents' views of the factors responsible for contestation for public space.

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 10a: Distribution of respondents by their views on factors responsible for use of public space by religious groups (N=462)

S/N	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	To fulfill religious obligations such as evangelism, *da'wah* and traditional festivals motivate the use of public space.	53 (14.3)	160 (43.2)	34 (9.2)	2 (0.5)
2	The fear of domination by rival religious groups drives them to use public spaces for their activities.	89 (19.3)	144 (31.2)	86 (18.6)	34 (7.39)
3	Religious groups carry out their activities in the public space to promote their identity.	164 (35.5)	185 (40)	21 (4.5)	15 (3.2)
4	Religious groups use public space in exercise of right to worship in the public.	97 (21)	123 (26.6)	86 (18.6)	45 (9.70)

Source: Field Survey, 2016
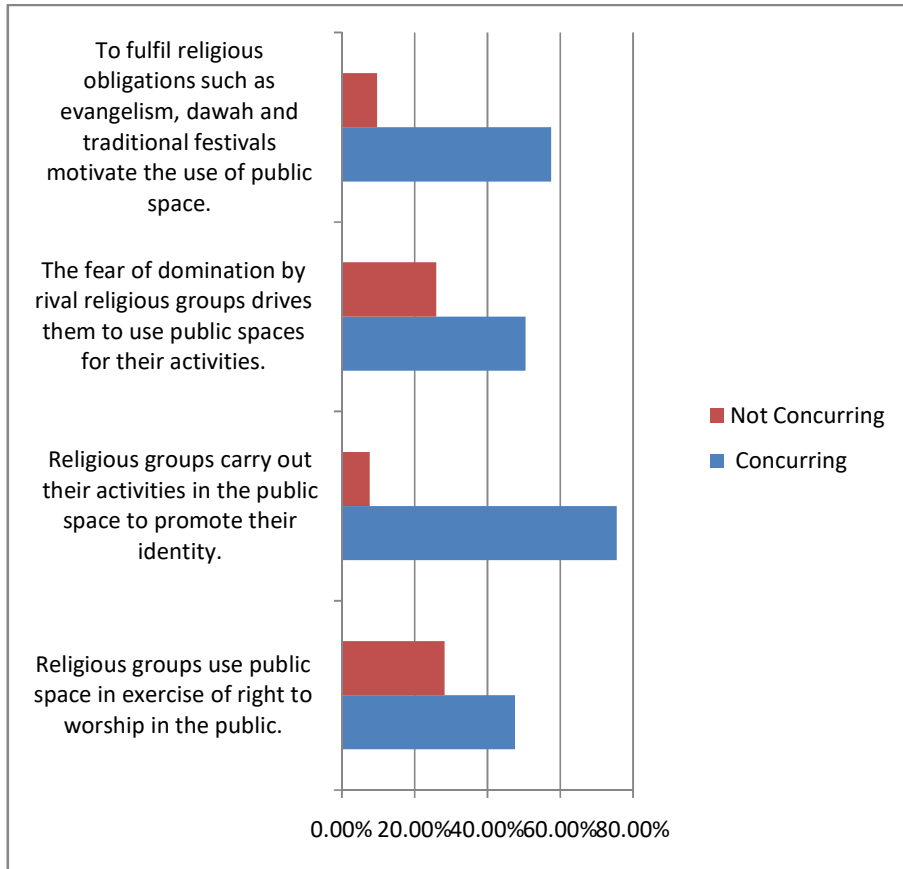
Figure 4.4: Perception of respondents on factors responsible for the use of public space by religious bodies.

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The research objective was further addressed and validated by using Chi-Square Test and the results are presented in Table 10b 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 92.4.

Table 10b: Chi-Square test analysis showing the factors responsible for contestation f‛or public space by religious groups

	To fulfil religious obligations such as evangelism, *da'wah* and traditional festivals motivate the use of public space.	The fear of domination by rival religious groups drives them to use public spaces for their activities.	Religious groups carry out their activities in the public space to promote their identity.	Religious groups use public space in exercise of right to worship in the public.
Chi-Square(a)	112.048	69.277	270.857	37.459
Df	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The results presented in Table 10bindicate that the factors responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups are statistically significant at p<.001. It showed that the most pressing factor is the concern for the religious groups to carry out their activities in the public space for promoting their identity and showcase their relevance to the society at (Chi-square Value= 270.86;df(4), p<.001). Secondly, to fulfil religious obligations such as evangelism, *da'wah*and observance of traditional festival at(Chi-Square Value=112.048;df(4), p<.001). Thirdly,religious groups have the fear of been dominated by rival religious groups and use public space to increase awareness of their existence at (Chi-Square Value= 69.277;df(4), p<.001) while the least reason for contesting public space is in exercise of right to worship in the public at (Chi-Square Value=37.456;df(4), p<.001). Thus, it has been confirmed that religious groups used public space for several reasons.

The most considered factor for contestation for public space by religious groups which is promotion of religious identity in the public implies that all the modes of religious contestation for public space are aimed at achieving this objective. However, promoting the identity in the public has some advantatges to religious groups which include, projecting ideals and values of the group in the public to be better than other rival groups, perhaps with a view to attracting more members. This promotion of identity factor lend credence to Social Identity Theory as theoretical framework that was used to drive this study. The several factors responsible for the use of public space by religious groups are discussed thematically, using questionnaire survey, in-depth interview and non-participant observation research instruments

4.3.1 Fulfillment of religious obligations

Majority of the survey respondents, 160 (43.2%), agreed that the need to fulfil religious obligations motivate religious groups to contest public space. Also, 53 (14.3%) strongly agreed with this notion while 34 (9%) disagreed and less than one per cent strongly disagreed. Thus, majority of the survey population (57.5%) affirmed that religious groups contest public space with a view to performing religious duties. Fulfilment of religious obligations in this context refers to some activities or duties which religious groups consider bindingto conduct in the public space in obedience to divine instructions which align with their beliefs and traditions. The three different

religious groups have different forms of obligations they fulfil which propels them to contest public space as deduced from the comments of many of the respondents which confirm the result of the survey.

To *Orò* adherents, warding off evil, promotion of peace and prosperity of the society and prevention of calamities make it obligatory for them to contest public space by the devotees parading through the streets of the town during which those not involved are expected to stay off the streets. According to PaAderoju Ojewumi of Aaba Compound, Iseyin:

> The *Orò* ritual is mandatory to prevent the occurrence of strange happenings such as women giving birth to animals like goats. The *Orò* festival is conducted on the streets to prevent the outbreak of calamities and help to promote peace and progress of the town. The *Orò*sound must be herald through the length and breadth of the town to prevent outbreak of calamities such as measles (IDI at Iseyin on November 15, 2014).

In the same vein, Oloròde Ifadare of Ogbomoso said that it is imperative to observe the *Orò* ritual by moving round the streets of the town so that the town might experience abundance of peace, comfort and prosperity for the people residing in it. He added that, while parading the length and breath of the town, the *Orò* priest performs what in Yoruba is called *Ìwúre,* meaning prayer for blessings and against occurrence of evil on the town. Thus, coming to the public space to perform this ritual complements or completes the covert ritual performed at the *Orò*sacred spot or "cultic shrine" which, according to Ayantayo, is where traditional religious adherents mostly meet (Ayantayo, 2018:26). The implication of the responses above is that, if *Orò* traditional festival is not observed in the public space, it is an invitation to calamities and other strange happenings in the town. Hence, the *Orò* adherents consider it a divine obligation to conduct the ritual which involves moving from street to street fiercely whirling a metal or stick with a string attached to produce a shrill sound.

Thus, the research has revealed that the observance of *Orò* festival in the public space is a necessary religious obligation which must be performed in the interest of the town. According to *Orò*respondents, it is meant to ward off evil and promote prosperity in the town. This research finding affirms the report by Omofoye (2015) that *Orò* festival in Yorubaland is usually held by traditionalists to appease the gods to

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help ward off evil and usher in an era of prosperity. However, the believed positive effect of the performance of *Orò* festival seems insignificant compared with the dangers associated with it which is that any woman that breaks its taboo will be punished with death.

In the same way, *Egúngún* devotees believe that it is obligatory to conduct their rituals in the public space. The *Alagbaa* (Head) *Egúngún* of Ibadanland rendered it thus:

> This is the reason why *Egúngún* must move round the town as a sacrifice or ritual for the good of the town. If *Egúngún*festival did not hold in a year, the Olubadan himself know that calamity would strike. So *Egúngún* moves round the town to ward off evils or calamities from the town and at the same time bring good into town and that is why the commencement of *Egúngún* festival comes with rainfall and in the process of which evil departs and good comes in. The commencement of *Egúngún* festival brings respite and succour to people in the town (IDI at Ibadan on July 6, 2015).

The respondent further revealed that there is a story or belief in *Ifá* divination *(Odù-Ifá)* which underlines the establishment and benefits of *Egúngún* cult. In other words, it is hinged on an*Ifá*corpus (*Odù-Ifá*) which he quoted:

> Ayegoro the son of Oje had a father who worshipped Oje.However, he inherited *Egúngún*from his forefather as an idol that must be worshipped. One particular year, a great calamity through a host of demons struck the town. The demons refused to leave despite efforts to drive them away. God *(Olódùmarè)* was consulted for help and he told them that there is an *Egúngún* in the house that should take its garment to sweep the house and in the process, all the demons will depart. However, it is because of the demons inside the house that prevented blessings from outside to come in because an evil stranger cannot be in the house while good or benevolent visitor come in. Therefore, necessary ritual was performed before *Egúngún* came out and his garment was used to sweep the ground with pronouncements such as "It will be well with you" "It will be well with you".Then *Èsù* (Devil) commanded the demons to be attaching themselves to the *Egúngún's* garments until the *Egúngún* swept the house, compound and ward through swirling fanwise his garment while dancing. Then *Èsù* told the *Egúngún*that the sweeping was enough but before going back into his house, he should shake off his garment and while he did that the demons left him one after the

other, some into the bush, some into the river so all the demons were stripped off the *Egúngún*. And as he was coming back home he was sweeping into the house different kinds of good things. Hence when *Egúngún* sweeps the groundwith his garment by swirling round fanwise in a dancing posture, evil departs and at the same time he sweeps the ground, good things are gathered into the house. Hence the saying that 'Ayegoro sweep the ground with his garment, evil leaves the town and when Ayegoro sweeps the ground with his garment, good is brought in'. This is the reason why *Egúngún* must move round the town as a sacrifice or ritual for the good of the town (IDI at Ibadan on July 6, 2015).

These comments show that *Egúngún*festival goes far beyond entertainment and that it carries with it deep supernatural meaning which compels the devotees to perform, failure of which people would be visited with evil and also denied blessings. Therefore, like the *Orò* festival, *Egúngún* festival is conducted in the form that necessitates occupying the public space as an obligatory ritual to ward off evil and usher in prosperity for the town.

Other *Egúngún* respondents agreed with this claim which indicates that it is part of Yoruba cultural beliefs which may not be empirically verified. Nevertheless, this study has affirmed the work of Olaoye (2010) that *Egúngún*masquerades' public appearances are:

Serving the purpose of entertainment, preservation of cultural values and ritual acts. As a spiritual being, they are capable of sanitising the earthly affairs of man. Worshippers use the occasion to perform rituals for peace and stability of the society (Olaoye, 2010:315).

Thus, the activities of *Orò*and *Egúngún* adherents in the public space during their festivals are performance of traditional religious obligations not held as ordinary festivals. In other words, they convey deep supernatural implications and serious consequences if violated or not performed in the public space. This finding unveil one of the factors responsible for contestation of public space by the traditionalists or adherents of *Orò*and *Egúngún* versions of African traditional belief systems.

For the Christians, a majorreligious obligation that must be fulfilled is evangelism geared towards converting people to Christianity. From field observation, preaching or proselyting comes in different forms in the public space. This

includes*morning cry* which could involve the use of megaphone to preach in the early hours of the day in residential neighbourhoods, preaching to passengers in commercial buses or taxi cabs, distribution of gospel tracts along streets and workplaces like government offices or commercial outfits, open-air crusades in public places such as stadia, towns halls, and educational institutions.

Most of the interviewees agreed and corroborated the survey findings that Christians consider preaching in the public space as an obligation commanded by God. Pastor Jonatex, a founding member of Christian Market Fellowship, Ibadan said:

> Jesus Christ gave Christians the commission to win converts into His kingdom. And we know that there are people in the market who cannot go to church. They are so committed to their businesses that attending church is difficult for them. For such people, we try to reach them with the gospel of Christ. So we preach about to people in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ to convert them. I personally go from street to street with megaphone in the morning hours preaching the gospel (IDI at Ibadan onDecember 11, 2015).

Another respondent, Pastor Joshua Agbolamagbe cofirmed that evangelism is a Christian obligation that must be performed in the public space:

> It is because that is one of the assignments that Jesus gaveHis disciples (i.e Church) in Mark 16. He said that the Church should go into the world (i.e public space) to makedisciples and some people will never come into the Church so they have to be reached right where they are (IDI at Iseyin on 23 January, 2015).

It can beinferred from the responses that membership drive is inherent in the Christians' obligation to evangelise in the public space which includes places such as markets, streets, town halls, schools and stadia. The implication is that, if this obligation is not undertaken, membership drive would be negatively affected because Christianity is a mission-oriented religion. Therefore, it can be inferred that drive for memebership is one of the factors that impel contestation for public space by the adherents of Christianity. This inferrence is supported by the response of a Christian leader in an interview:

> Firstly, I do this because I have the mandate to preach toat least one hundred people daily. Therefore, I preach at public areas such

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as Molete Garage, Efusetan Garage, Orita-Garage and Moble Ring Road area, every day…the gospel is a vehicle or tool or means of changing the lives of wicked peoplewho hear the gospel in public spaces (IDI with Rev. Ajikigbe at Ibadan onNovember 5, 2014).

To further establish that membership drive is inherent in Christrians' obligation to contest public space through evangelism, another Christian cleric who also had the mandate to preach everday by roadsides, Evangelist Samuel, said:

It allows people who are non-members of the church to hear thegospel of Jesus Christ. Another reason is that it is a way by whichChristians can be increased in membership. It is also in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ (IDI at Ibadan onMay 20, 2016).

Thus, the finding made in this study is that Christian religious group contest public space through evangelism conducted in the public space as an obligation to fulfil the commandment of Jesus Christ with a view to enhancing their membership strength. Hence, this study has corroborated Ayantayo's (2009) assertion that Christians contest aerial space (a type of public space) through loudspeaker noise from churches in order to fulfil Jesus Christ's command that Christians should evangelise the entire world which includes their neighbours.

Just like the Christians, the Muslims also have a religious obligation to fulfil through efforts at conducting *da'wah* in public spaces.*Da'wah*means teaching in Islam and Muslims engage in this exercise as an obligation which like the Christian group is also aimed at membership drive. To confirm that Islamic religious group propagates its belief in the public space through teaching which is one of the reasons for contesting it, a Muslim cleric, Imam Habeebdeclared:

In the olden days when there were no loudspeakers, ourforefathers used public space for lecture. The Clerics use such places to attract people who gather to listen to them and the crowd get swell up little and by little. Since theinception of Islam, there used to be *asalatu* in Mosques that is gathering within the mosque. But when the youths in Islam observed that limiting *asalatu* within the mosque cannot expose the programme to the public, they started introducing that *asalatu* to the public and that make it easier for non-Muslims to associate themselves with Islamic culture (IDI at Ibadan on November 5, 2014).

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In the same vein, another Muslim respondent, Nurudeen Abiodunstated that:

> It is to instil the fear of God in members of the public which can
> happen through the *da'wah* conducted by the road side or anywhere
> (IDI at Ibadan on Septenber 3, 2015).

It can be deduced from the foregoing that membership drive is also inherent in the motive to spread the Islamic teachings in public spaces. Islamic clerics see the public spaces as veritable sites to propagate their belief to members of the public with a view to converting non-Muslims to the religion of Islam.

Another Islamic obligation which manifests in the public space is observance of *Jumat* prayers on Fridays and annual ceremonial prayers at *Eid-Kabir* and *Eid-Fitr* celebrations. The worshippers congregate at their designated places of worship but spill over to public roads to observe these religious obligations because of inadequacy of space in the mosques and praying grounds as confirmed by an interviewee, Nurudeen Abiodun who claimed that:

> *Jumat* service is celebration for Muslims on weekly basis that
> must be observed in a mosque. The mosque is the house of God.
> The central mosque can be one in a single town where every
> worshipper is expected to go because there are special rewards for
> trekking to the place designated as central mosque. That is the
> motivation for people to go there. As that attracts many to go
> there and the population becomes too many for the mosque to
> contain them. Hence, they spill over to any available space nearby
> which maybe on the road. Yes, the *Eid* prayers are also for
> celebration which must be held outside the town. But
> development has caught up with the *Eid* praying grounds.
> Secondly, because it is a celebration prayer, all Muslims sees it as
> a must to attend because of the covenant and reward attached to it.
> The space is reduced because of development, and hence spill
> over to use available space for the prayer which affects nearby
> residents and passers-by (IDI at Ibadan onSeptember 3, 2015).

As earliar findings revealed, Muslims praying on the roads and in the process blocking same roads is not divinely instructed. Nonetheless, they perform this obligation on public roads because of inadequacy of the size of the space designated for the praying ritual.

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Findings from the above shows that religious groups contest public spaces as a result of their religious obligations which they all deem compulsory and beneficial to their respective faithful and the society at large. The quest to fulfil the various obligations in the public space is derived from their beliefs and traditions. While Christians are motivated to contest public space for evangelism, Muslims contest it to perform *da'wah* obligation and congregational prayers mostly on Fridays and during festivals. *Orò* and *Egúngún* worshippers mandatorily contest public space for annual festivals purposely to perform rituals to attract blessing and ward off evil for the community.

4.3.2 Protection of religion against domination by others

Religious groups contest public space to compete and try to outperform one another and, in the process, protect their groups against domination by rivals. As a factor responsible for contestation for public space, result from the sampled population indicates that almost a third; that is, 144 (31%) agreed, and 89 (19%) strongly agreed that the desire to outdo and be protected against domination is a strong motivation for contestation for public space in religious circles, whereas 86 (19%) disagreed and 34 (7%) strongly disagreed. The result posted above clearly confirms that majority of the respondents (50.5%) believe that religious groups contest public space to protect them from being dominated.

Public space, by its nature as a social space, always attracts large audience at a point in time. This is in line with Lawuyi's (2012a) concept of space of the crowd. Public space therefore provides opportunity for different groups to showcase and pursue their values, beliefs, interests, positions and so on. Hence, since different religious groups contest public space to enhance their interests, inevitably, attempt to outdo each other ensues which informs the need for protection against domination by rival groups. It is observed that the fear of religious domination occurs within and between religious groups. A good example is in respect of mounting of loudspeakers on worship centres as a mode of religious contestation for public space. In the light of this, a respondent, Prophetess O. Taiwo, commented as follows:

> For example, a religious centre may not have more than three
> persons but through the loudspeaker noise making, people

around would think that it is a large congregation. So that people might know that the religious centre is in a place is the reason for the loud sound. Another reason is that church leaders don't want the sound of another church to drown their own. This is a sort of competition among them (IDI in Ibadan on August 20, 2015).

The above aligns with the observation of another discussant who said that there are eight different churches located on a street adjacent Sekengbede street, Sunsun area, where he lives in Ogbomoso. According to him, the large volume of sound generated by the churches clearly demonstrates that they are competing with each other for attention and not wanting their individual Church activities to be overwhelmed by the noise of other churches nearby. He captures it as follows:

One disturbing thing about these churches is that they seems to be competing with each other with the way they air their worships activities through loudspeakers mounted conspicuously on their church buildings. For us residing in the neighbourhood, we find it irritating and disturbing (IDI with Sadiq Alarape on September 9, 2015).

It can be inferred from the above comments that some Christian denominations compete with each other through such means as loudspeaker noise generated during worship sessions.

In the same vein, a Muslim respondent, Aremu Muideen stated reasons why public space is contested by religious groups for religious purposes to include desire by "leaders of religious organisations to outshine themselves over other groups." (IDI at Ibadan on 15 October, 2015). In consonance with this, another interviewee, Mrs Bola Oniwinde, informed the researcher that achurch and mosque are situated on the same street at Holy Trinity area, Old Ife Road, Ibadan where there appears to be a sort of competition between them. The leader of the church named Spiritual Jesus Christ Apostolic Church, preaches through loudspeaker almost every morning and, as soon as she ends, Islamic preaching comes over the loudspeakersof Halulai Mosque. The behaviour of the leaders of the two religious houses exemplify religious competition and attempt to protect against domination using the public space. Otherwise, they should have limitedthe sound of their sermonisation to their respective audiences inside their worship centres. In the same vein, another interviewee, Mrs Abisoye Ojo, narrated her experiencein a commercial vehicle where there was a competition

between a Christian and Muslim faithful. She said that, as soon as a Christian passenger started preaching, another passenger who is a Muslim, also embarked on similar mission without any giving breathing space to the other. The action of the two passengers suggests that none of them wished to be suppressed by the other which portends inter-religious conflict. Thus, the desire to outdo one another in a form of competition and protect against domination is a strong motivating factor informing contestation for public space by religious actors.

4.3.3   Creation of public awareness and identity enhancement

Religious groups carry out their activities in the public space to create awareness of their existence and in the process, promote their identities. This notion had 164 (36%) that strongly agreed and 185 (40%) that agreed while 21 (5%) disagreed and 15 (3%) strongly disagreed. It is obvious from the responses that the respondents consider contestation for public space by the religious groups a means of creating awareness or enhancement of religious identity in their areas of existence and operation. More than three-quarters (75.5%) believe this to be true.

This survey result strongly suggests that no religious organisation wants its identity obliterated, but rather to be known and enhanced. As such, contestation for public space is one of the possible means of ensuring that this goal is achieved which accounts for one of the reasons why religious groups contest public space. This is corroborated by the views expressed by some of the in-depth interview respondents. Indeed, in response to why Christians engage public space for their activities,a Christian leader, Evangelist Joe Segun, asserted as follows:

> We do that first in fulfilment of the command of Jesus Christ that we should go and make disciples of people. It is the mandate and duty of every Christian to win souls for Christ. Secondly, we do this so that people around can know that we are located where we are. That is to create awareness of the existence of our church and to increase our membership (IDI in Ibadan on December 21, 2015).

Another Christian respondent, Idowu Hassan, re-echoed the position:

> In my opinion and from my observations, Christians use public space for religious activities for the reasons such as to create awareness for a newly established church; to win converts for

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Christ; and to enable more people to benefit from the grace and power of God in the life of the minister of God (IDI in Ibadan on November 7, 2015).

Thus awareness creation or identity promotion through religious activities in the public space by Christians also go with evangelism. This suggests that, while evangelism is ongoing, religious actors are simulteneously enhancing the identity of their religion to members of the public.

In the opinion of a Muslim leader, Aremu Muideen, Muslims use public space to, among others, "instil the fear of God in members of the public, generate revenue for the organisation and popularise the religion of Islam."(IDI at Ibadan on 15 October, 2015). Popularising Islam or any religion can be regarded as attempt at creating awareness in the members of the public that the religion thrives and dominates a place. To further affirm that religious actors seek to promote their religious identity in the public space which spurs them to contest it, another Islamic cleric, Alhaji Oyeyemi declared:

> The public space is always full of people. Therefore, religiousclerics make use of public space to draw theattention of peopleto God. It is to gain the attention of people and draw them to the religion of Islam (IDI at Ibadan on April 1, 2016).

As for the traditional religionists, it seems that their attempt to enhance their identity through appearances in the public space is often marred by the hostilities they encounter from Christians and Muslims. According to Chief Ojetunde Asunleke:

> ...in case of *Egúngún*, Muslims and Christians don't like their existence and hence they follow the masquerade to cause trouble. It is these people that want *Egúngún* worship dead that try to disrupt our peaceful worship (IDI at Ibadan on July 6, 2015).

It can be deduced that, conscious of the fact that other religious groups wish that the traditional religion ceases to exist, traditional religion practitioners in addition to other reasons, zealously propagate their identity in the public space.

Thus, the quest to create public awareness for religious organisation and enhance group identity amply is one of the factors that informs contestation for public space by religious groups as evidenced from the above quantitative and qualitative findings in this study. Therefore, the study affirms Mitchell's (1995) concept of space

for representation because religious groups make use of public space to make their existence publicly known. Similarly, the quest to promote and enhance group identity as a factor responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups confirms the assertion by Ogungbile (2013) that religious groups contest public space to create, express and reinforce their religious identity.

4.3.4   Exercise of constitutional rights to worship in public

Apart from the religious beliefs which influence contestation for public space by religious bodies as findings in this research has shown, people also believe that using the public space for religious activities is a right to be exercised. Findings presented in Table 10ashow that a fair number of the respondents, 97 (21%), strongly agreed and 123 (27%) agreed that religious groups contest public space because they believe that it is their right while 86 (19%) and 45 (10%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This goes to show that, apart from religious beliefs, quest to exercise constitutional rights to worship in the public also influences contestation for public space by religious organisations, as 48% of the respondents affirmed this while 28% reacted otherwise *(*Figure 4.2*)*.

In consonance with the survey result, verbal views expressed by many respondents and the way they were expressed clearly suggest that religious groups, aside religious inclinations, are emboldened to contest public space for their activities because they consider it as exercising their fundamental right. To corroborate this, a Muslim cleric said that "religion is meant for people and religious right exist in the Nigerian Constitution." (IDI with Alhaji Oyeyemi on 1 April, 2016). While highlighting the way *Orò* members were often disturbed by Muslims in the cause of performing their rituals on the streets, Pa Bolanle Adeoti, an *Orò* apologist in Iseyin,asserted:

> When the *Orò* followers are moving on the street to the King's palace and a Muslim group intercept them, whatever ensued cannot be blamed on the *Orò* people because they have the right to move on the road or street and perform their activities without hindrance (IDI at Iseyin on January 23, 2015).

The comment, though borne out of frustration, suggests that *Orò* adherents are conscious of their constitutional right to worship in the public which spurs them to

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perform the religious ritual from street to street across the town. In the same way, Ojelabi Aladesunwa, *Alagbaa* (Head) *Egúngún* of Idi Aro, Ibadan wondered why other religious groups want traditional religion wiped out which precipitates clashes:

> The government should intervene by appealing to people of other religions to desist from interfering with the worship of *Egúngún*. The government should instil in people that everybody has freedom of religion or right to practice his religion and to that extent, nobody should be forced to accept a religion against his wish (IDI at Ibadan, July 6, 2015).

Similarly, the opinion of the respondent is also indicative of the conviction that *Egúngún*adherents contest public space in exercise of their fundamental right to religion which can be expressed in the public space. Thus, it is apparent from this study that religious groups contest public space in exercise of their freedom of worship as guaranteed in Section 38 of 1999 Nigerian Constitution.

From the findings of this research, the three religious groups contest public space for four major reasons which have been discussed and these reasons can be variously described as divine, human and secular. Fulfillment of religious obligations arising from divine demands of their individual belief and tradition can be regarded as divine factor. The protection against domination spurred by desire to outdo one another in a competitive spirit and identity enhancement or awareness creation are considered human factor while religious contestation of public space based on exercise of constitutional right to worship can be regarded as secular factor.

However, much as these factors are intertwined, it is noticed that identity enhancement is foremost from the survey which has 75.5% respondents concurringwith 8% dissenting. The plausible reason for this is that there is increasing wave of religious activities in the public space which many repondents perceive as attempt to enhance religious groups' identity in the public. There is a subtle competition beneath the quest to enhance identity of religious groups and it is not only inter-religious, but also intra-religious. For example, there are some religious activities that were formerly exclusively associated with Christianity but which are now practised by Muslims. This development further accounts for the reason for the intensity of religious activities in public spaces. Some of these activities include holding of vigil prayers in mosques, sermon delivery in mosques over loudspeakers,

organising crusade in places like stadia, and camping or retreat such as *asalatu*programme often held in public places such as schools. To confirm this observation, a Muslim respondent, Nurudeen Abiodun, said:

> *Asalatu* means praise in remembrance of Allah and are conducted in public schools mostly on Sundays e.g. IslamicHigh School, Basorun and Muslim Grammar School, Odinjo. However, *asalatu* is not known in the pristine teaching of Islam because there they chant praises, recite Quranic verses, preaching/teaching *(Da'wah)*, exhortation and what I called 'fabricated prayers' which are prayers like that of the prayers raised in Christian churches these days (IDI at Ibadan on September 3, 2015).

The view expressed above points to a shift from traditional Islamic practices to what appears to have been emulated from Christians. Therefore, many Muslims do not identify with *asalatu* activities, which is being promoted by a popular Islamic sect known as Nasru-Lahil-Faith Society (NASFAT), because they see them as modern forms of Islam being organised in ways similar to some Christian practices. Many Muslim respondents asserted that it is organised to discourage Muslim youths from being attracted to the way Christians conduct some of their activities. This finding corroborates the observation by Ogungbile who noted that Muslims patterning of Islamic activities after their Christian counterpart was a necessary response against loss of identity, visibility, decline of public recognition and losing of members to the Christian faith, adding that "Muslims contest spaces to reinforce their religious identity while Christians agitate to remain more relevant" (Ogungbile, 2013: 164). The import of all this is that religious contestation for public space is being accentuated because of desire to promote group identity and protection against domination by rival religious groups which, in the process, engenders inter-group competition and conflicts.

Consequently, the factors responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups in Oyo State can be better explained or situated in Social Identity Theory which is the theoretical framework employed to drive this research. In consonance with the theory, people identify as members of the three religious groups respectively because they accept and consider the beliefs, values, interests, and opinions of their chosen group as better than others. In addition, they imbibe the values of their respective groups and always seek to promote and enhance the identity of the

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group in the public space. This is what significantly drives all the religious groups to contest public spaces.

Accordingly, while the two causal factors of enhancement of group identity and the desire by religious groups to outdo one another as well as safeguard against domination clearly stands out to illustrate Social Identity Theory, fulfillment of religious obligation and exercise of fundamental right also help to confirm the relevance of the theory to this research because like in the words of Ogungbile, "all these reasons are directed towards the question of identity" (Ogungbile,2013:164). Therefore, a major finding of the research which is that the most pressing factor which influences contestation for public space by religious groups is group identity enhancement underscores the relevance of Social Identity Theory for this research. Thus, contestation for public space by religious groups in essentially contestation for identity.

4.4   The Effects of Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups on the Society

The result presented and discussed under this session revealed the effects of contestation over public space by religious groups on the society. As established in the preceding session, religious groups contest public space in different ways and are motivated to do so for various reasons. However, since public space is not created primarily for religious purposes, there is a good cause to unravel the effects of its use by religious groups on the society before establishing its implications for inter-religious harmony in a society that is multi-religious. In other words, what are the consequences of religious contestation for public space on the society? Importantly, because of the sensitivity and particularity of the nature of religion, what consequences does the conduct of religious activities in the public space have on a society? This is the main task of this session of the study which was accomplished with the use of in-depth interview and non-participant's obsevation methods.

4.4.1   Obstruction of vehicular and pedestrian movements

Ideally, religious activities are supposed to take place in sacred places originally designed and built for such. However, it has been established in this study that religious groups, for certain reasons, often conduct some of their solemn activities

in public spaces which involves blocking public roads. Consequently, one of the effects of appropriating public space for religious activities on the people living in the society, as observed by the researcher, is that it results in obstruction of vehicular and pedestrian movements. However, in-depth interview corroborates the observation that contestation for public space by reigious groups leads to obstruction of movements of people and vehicles.

While Muslims are praying on public roads on Fridays and during festival prayers, it prevents vehicular and pedesrian movements. It was noticed that people who encounter them are forced to seek alternative routes throughout the period if they cannot afford to wait till the end of the programme. In a veiled reference to restriction of movement as the effect of this mode of public space contestation, a Muslim leader attested:

> I don't think so because the passers-by who are conversant with the place should know that at a certain time on Fridays, *Jumat* service takes place which entails occupying the road and that is why there are alternative roads everywhere whereby if there are emergency situations, they will make use of the alternative roads (IDI with Imam Habeeb at Ibadan onNovember 5, 2014).

The comment indicatesacknowledgement that blockage of public roads for prayer has the negative effect on members of the society by obstructing vehicular and pedestrian movement and could be more dangerous in emergency. The view of the respondent, which is shared by many Islamic followers, suggests that alternative roads should be used if there in emergency. Perhaps in support of this, the researcher witnessed a situation at Mokola area of Ibadan during a *Jumat* service and, as usual, the main road adjacent the mosque was blocked for prayer. Just then, a bullion van emerged to pass through the road in front of the mosque but was prevented. Instantly the van and the security details attached to it followed a nearby alternative road. Arising from that incident, the researcher observed that, apart from an emergency, congregants are exposed to dangers of reckless driving from motorists.

Plate 10: Blocking of public road during *Eid-Kabir* prayer by Muslims which obstruct vehicular and pedestrian movement at Agodi, Ibadan.

On the part of the Christian group, it was observed that obstruction of movement occurs when there is mass congregational procession on the road. This was seen occurring when a Christian organisation is publicising its crusade programme to members of the public or during Palm Sunday programme. Such events were observed to cause traffic gridlock which forced motorists to seek alternative routes to their destinations.

However, this effect of contestation for public space appears more pronounced with the traditional religious practices in this respect. This is because their religious obligation requires them to move round the town in appeasement of the gods for the benefits of the society as earlier found in this study. Besides, the conduct of rituals in public space goes with fear of evil repercussion for anyone who defies their warning. For example, in Ibadan, women are forbidden from seeing *Egúngún* (masquerade) Oloolu when he goes round some parts of the town. Prior to his outing, a public announcement is made, stating his routes with a strict warning to women. The researcher got a copy of the public notice issued in the Yoruba language containing the masquerade's itinerary along with warning:

> This is to inform everyone that women are forbidden to set their eyes on *Egúngún*Oloolu. Therefore, Oloolu appeal to all motorists and especially commercial bus transport operators not to carry any woman passenger to come in contact with *Egúngún* Oloolu, because the masquerade will be peeping into motor vehicles. Anyone that a woman is found in his vehicle would pay dearly for it. (Issued by Oloolu of Ibadanland in 2006 at Ibadan. See Appendix V).

The strong warning from Oloolu masquerade placed a restriction on the movement of people especially women. To corroborate this, the researcher observed the trepidation with which female civil servants in Ibadan were rushing home before the close of work for fear of running into the Oloolu masquerade. Also, the researcher, as a non-participant observer was among the crowd that followed the masquerade and observed that female shopowners along the routes of the masquerade locked up their shops to avoid sighting Oloolu. Besides, commercial motorcyclists carefully avoided conveying female passengers to cross the path of the masquerade who was utilising the public space for his religious activity. The import of this is that the masquerade was contesting public space with citizens who also had the right to same space at the same

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time and thereby restricted their movements. However, in this contest, the masquerade had upper hand because of the belief that he possessed dangerous magical powers capable of harming people especially people who breach the taboo associated with it. Consequently, people generally and, especially women, have their movements curtailed and impaired because of a religious activity in the public space by *Egúngún* adherents.

Similarly, women are barred from coming out in public spaces during the celebration of *Orò* festival. This is because, in Yoruba culture, it is also a serious taboo for women to sight *Orò* worshippers while the ritual is being performed; hence, the popular saying among the Yoruba that: *"Obìnrintóbáfojúboròe, orò yóó gbée,"* meaning that any woman who sets her eyes on *Orò* will be consumed by *Orò*. This was confirmed by many of the respondents, and rendered succinctly by one of them, Pa Bolanle Adeoti:

> It is a great secret. It is believed that the rituals will have adverse effects on women. Women who had attempted to watch *Orò* had died (IDI at Iseyin on January23, 2015).

As a further confirmation of restriction placed on the movement of people generally and, especially women, during *Orò* activities, *Soun* of Ogbomosoland issued public notice as follows:

> Please note that during this period, women are forbidden from moving about in the streets within Ogbomoso township between the hours of 11.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m. (Issued on May 22, 2006. See Appendix V)

Also, Baale Ijeru of Ijeru, a suburb of Ogbomoso issued public notice titled NOTICE OF *ORÒ* FESTIVAL with this information:

> Everybody should be inside as from 11.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. every day. There should be no drumming during the period.(Issued at Ijeru on 15 May, 2006. See Appendix V).

These notices convey the message of obstruction of movement on public road because of observance of a religious festival which is considered mandatory to be conducted in the public space.

To further establish that the way this religious group contests public space restricts movement of people, a respondent of Iseyin observes:

> As an Health Records Officer in this hospital, attendance to the hospital by women reduces during *Orò* celebrations in Iseyin. I think this is because of the fear of coming in contact with the *Orò* "ritualists" during their celebration (IDI with Miss Busayo at Iseyin on 18 May, 2015).

Further observation showed that restriction or obstruction of movement during *Orò* religious activity is pervasive, cutting across time and space. A respondent who resides inIgbo-Ora and who is a Civil Servant buttresses this observation:

> Women are forbidden from seeing *Orò* and so during the festival, we generally live in fear. I observe that social and economic activities are near comatose during the *Orò*festival in Igbo-Ora. Banks don't operate fully, schools and government offices don't operate fully as expected. I recall that in a particular year that I had to travel to Lagos with my husband, we left early in his car and when we returned in the evening, I had to cover myself up at the back of the car for fear of sighting *Orò*. It was really traumatic and inconveniencing a great deal (IDI with Mrs Akintola on June 10, 2015).

This means that mercantile activities plummet significantly due to restriction of movement that the traditional*Orò* festival imposes on it in the public space. For example, commercial motorcycle operations are equally affected and it impinges on their livelihood. A respondent in that business in Iseyin shared his experience:

> When *Orò* festival begins, people are mostly scanty on the roads and that affects our business as *"Okada"* commercial motorcycle operators. My daily income always go down because only few people at particular period of the day move about (IDI with Baba Mary at Iseyin on May 18, 2015).

In the same vein, a respondent who is a trader in Iseyin market confirmed that sales drop significantly during *Orò* festivals because of the restriction placed on the movement of people. This indicates that, as the traditional festival affects free movement of people, social and economic activities are also adversely affected.In other words, the means of livelihood of people in the society are affected.

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Like the *Egúngún* cult, what makes the restriction effective is the fear of the consequence of disregarding the warningwhich could be inexplicable death. Further to this, the Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria of Iseyin Local Government Area, acknowledges that attendance at early morning prayers in churches dropsduring *Orò* festival, adding that concerted efforts are being made to erase the fear of *Orò*. He said that many of the Christian and Muslim leaders disabuse the minds of their members against the anticipated negative effects of the *Orò* on women, hence providing counter-information against the general belief that sighting *Orò,*especially for women, is disastrous. Thus, activities of religious groups that involve using roads or streets amply obstruct movement of people to a point that it poses danger on lives especially with regard to *Egúngún* and *Orò* traditional worship.

4.4.2   Environmental or visual pollution

In contesting public space, religious groups flood public areas with posters, billboards and cloth banners. Much as they do this to advertise themselves and thereby create awareness of their existence and activities, the action leads to environmental or visual pollution in the society. Thus, the effect of contesting public space with posters, banners and billboards is that it leads to visual pollution which is a form of environmental pollution. As an aesthetic issue, visual pollution affects peoples' visual enviroment negatively. Largely through observation, it is seen that indiscriminate mounting of posters, banners and billboards by regious groups diminishes or destroys the aesthetic beauty of towns. For example, religious poster are commonly pasted at the bottom of the overhead bridge at Iwo Road interchange junction at Ibadan. Observation showed that the environment is made unsightly through the indiscriminte pasting of posters there. The way they are done leaves no one in doubt that this is environmentally-visual pollution. The same is observed in many public spaces such as roundabout junctions in the city of Ibadan. Thus, as observed, religious posters has the effect of defacement of public and private places. This is corroborated by some interview discussants.

An interviewee, Mrs Abisoye Ojo, commented:

You see religious posters and billboards in almost everywhere you turn to in this city of Ibadan. You can see them in many

public places as well as on the fence or wall of private buildings. To me, it is so much that it affect whatever is left of the beauty of the town. Also, the caption of the posters and billboards are capable of distracting the attention of drivers. Government should do something about it (Interview at Ibadan on February 3, 2016).

The remarks, which represent the perception of many people, suggests that people are bothered by the sight of indiscriminate pasting of religious posters and erection of billboards in towns which diminishes their aesthetic beauty and that government lacks control over what is built and assembled in public spaces.

Many other respondents shared similar position and some of them also added that billboards, banners and posters can be hazardous to automobile drivers, because of the tendency to cause distraction for them while driving which can lead to accident on the highways. In addition to this, some of the respondents are of the opinion that, as a result of much use of posters by religious groups, before the information conveyed expired (and sometimes not) they are removed indecently or destroyed in annoyance from where they are placedand they litter the ground and create dirt in the environment. This adds to the environmental problem of deteriorating, contaminating and littering the earth.

Plate 11: Billboard space contestation samples by Christian and Muslim Groups in various locatons in Ibadan.

This research finding corroborates the study by Ayantayo (2009) where he concludes that posters and billboards are used by churches and mosques to litter public space which consequently destroys the aesthetics of the environment. However, it is discovered in this research that the Afican Indigenous Religion practioners (particularly *Egúngún* adherents) that were omitted in Ayantayo's work also use posters, albeit on a limited scale. This is so because they use it to make announcement of their impending festival and warn people against interference. The festival holds annually which unlike the Christian and Islamic faithful use these channels at any point in time for public invitation because of the drive for membership. This explains the reason for the massive contestation for public space by religious groups through these advertising tools by Christian and Islamic groups and much less by the African Indigenous group. In addition, the findings confirm the description of noise and visual pollutions as "irritants" by Gehl and Gemzoe because they impoverish cities and make life unbearable for citizens (cited in Carmona, Magalhaes, and Hammond, 2008).

4.4.3 Religious noise pollution

Another accompanying effect of religious contestation for public space on the society is noise pollution. It has been discovered in this study that one of the ways by which religious groups contest public space is by erection of loudspeakers on worship places which facilitates loud worship sessions. What accentuates this effect is the residential patterns in many Nigerian towns and the lack of acoustic instruments in the worship houses. The building pattern in the study areas is such that permits location of religious houses to be in close proximity with peoples' residences. Besides, there are cases of residential buildings that are converted to Christian places of worship and there are some that are being used for the dual purposes. The implication of this is proliferation of churches which, according to a Christian leader, is because of expansion and accelerated development in towns due to increase in population. This implies that, as the population increases, so also does emergence of churches.

With regard to Muslims' worship centres, it was observed that apart from buildings specifically designated as mosques, there are private apartments belonging to Muslim faithful with mosques inside them and some have loudspeakers mounted on

them. In attempt to explain the rationale for sprawling of mosques in residential areas, a Muslim leader said:

> The mosque which is the holy place of worship for Muslims is to be located near the worshippers and to make it easy for worshippers when they want to pray because it is the principal duty of every Muslim to pray five times daily and the nearness of the mosque makes it easy for them(IDI with Imam Habeeb at Ibadan on November 5, 2014).

Thus, Muslims have their mosques in residential areas to facilitate easy access to the place of worship.

It is to be noted further that, according to a Director at the Oyo Bureau for Physical Planning and Development Control, the State Town Planning regulation permits construction and operation of worship centres in residential areas on the conditions that the religious house has enough parking space for vehicles and does not allow its activities to create noise that would invade the privacy of their neighbours. However, these conditions are seen to be met largely in the breach because many buildings approved as places of abode are later partly or completely converted into church buildings. All these happen in the name of church planting which, as earlier mentioned, has resulted in what scholars call proliferation of churches (Ayantayo, 2009). This finding confirms the observation byAyantayo that churches and mosques are springing up on a large scale in residential areas in towns like Ibadan (Ayantayo, 2009:121). Thus, churches and mosques are increasingly springing up in residential areas in contemporary times.

From observation and, as earlier said, this type of religious use of aerial public space is associated more with Christian and Islamic religious groups in their churches and mosques respectively. It is observed that loudspeakers are attached to many churches and mosques which largely amplify their religious services and envelop people who may or may not need to hear them. This practice manifestly encroaches on public space.The important question is how do peopleperceive the loud worship sessions?

Most interview respondents who cut across religious divides perceive the loud religious activities as noise pollution because it wakes them up in the early hours of the

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day, disturbs them, and even intimidates the public as well as undermines security of the neighbourhood.

In support of this, a respondent narrated her experience:

There is a mosque nearby that by 3:30 a.m. everyday they will start to preach and play Islamic music with the aim of waking people. This they do until 5:30 a.m. when they will observe morning prayers. Thereafter, they will continue with the preaching. Most times, it is this that wake us up and it inconvenient us much. But there is nothing we can do about it because if we react against it, it can lead to quarrel and the Bible says that we should live in peace with our neighbours and we accept them as our brothers. Therefore, we decided to be tolerating them (IDI with Prophetess Taiwo at Ibadan August 20, 2015).

From the above comment, there is no gainsaying the fact that the noise generated during religious activities in mosques disturbs people whose houses are located nearby.

Plate12: A residential building containing a Mosque with loudspeaker mounted on it at Orogun, Ibadan.

On the other hand, a Muslim discussant whose remarks reflect the experience and position of a large spectrum of Muslims interviewedcommented on the noise emanating from churches:

> As a Muslim, I consider noise from churches as disturbance. It disturbs sleep and health. For example, there is church near my house which organises vigil from 12.00 a.m.-5.00 a.m. and many of us in the neighbourhood are not pleased with the way the church disturbs us. Also, ringing of bell while preaching early in the mornings by Christians disturbs Muslims especially during our morning prayers. Some will not stop ringing the bell even when they get close to a mosque but some suspend that until they pass the mosque. The noise affects meditation during the time of prayers (IDI with Imam Mubaudeen at Ibadan on January 6, 2017).

It can be inferred from the comment that early morning preaching in residential neighbourhood by Christians which is regarded as "Morning Cry" is also a source of noise pollution in addition to noise generated in churches. To confirm this, Iman Idris Arowojede of Ilupeju Mosque, Adesola Area, Ibadan, disclosed that Christians are in the habit of conducting street preaching along Falade Street where his mosque is located. The "morning cry" is accompanied by singing, drumming, ringing of bell and use of microphone. While doing that, Muslims feel disturbed and offended as well as when the Christians come near the mosque while muslims are observing their early morning prayer. According to the respondent, they feel annoyed not only because they are disturbed by the noise generated, but also infuriated because they consider the behaviour of the Christians as insulting their sensibilities. Besides, the Christians conduct indicates that they have no regard for the right of the Muslims to private contemplative worship. An informant disclosed that the Muslims did not take it kindly and that their reaction almost led to physical violence with threats to the lives of the Christians, but for the intervention of the Landlords' Association and other well-meaning stakeholders.

Plate 13: Samples of residential buildings used for Church services at Akobo, Ibadan.

Besides constituting public disturbance as attested by most respondents, it is observed that noise pollution emanating from religious activities amounts to infringing peoples' rights to quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their property and environment and can be described as a violent violation of a right to domestic tranquillity. The way many respondents complained about religious noise pollution shows their deep displeasure for what tends to deny them their legitimate right to peaceful environment, devoid of disturbance from neighbouring religious houses. Pa Agbo Areo affirmed it thus:

> The one (all-night prayer) they did last which started around 10.00p.m. And by 2.00a.m., the noise was so much and some of us in the neighbourhood started phoning one another. At around 3.00a.m.when the noise became unbearable, I went to turn on the T.V. (IDI at Ibadan on June 19, 2015).

The comment shows that peoples' right to peaceful night rest is breached due to the church's night programme which promotes both physical and psychological stress and which can engender conflict.

However, some people do not consider the loud sound from religious houses as noise but as beneficial to people especially those around the religious houses. For example, a Muslim leader in Oyo State, Professor Sabitu Olagoke, was heard on Broadcasting Television of Oyo State (BCOS) during a Yoruba programme tagged "*Gbe e yewo*" on the 27th September, 2017, saying that the high decibel sound generated from churches and mosques should not be regarded as "noise" because such programme as *Thajud* or vigil prayers, are beneficial to people spiritually. In the same vein, a Christian respondent, Evangelist Zacharia, revealed that a man who had the intention to undertake rituals for money making, changed his mind when he heard sermons from his church during one of their night programmes in his house. Also, an informant, Mrs Ogunkanbi, reported that a sick woman laying in her house miraculously recovered as she listened to an all-night prayer programme of a church. Similarly, some respondents argued that they may not attend a church night programme, but while in their houses, they diligently participate in the prayer sessions which would have not been possible if such churches did not amplify their services through the use of loudspeakers. All these intances imply that some people see religious noise as a blessing and therefore chose to deny its existence.

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The denial of the problem that is caused through loudspeaker noise by churches and mosques by some people is evident in their attitude to government's efforts at eradicating it. According to the informant in the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, oftentimes when they are investigating allegation of noise pollution against a church or mosque, people living around the worship centres are unwilling to volunteer necessary information. Therefore, they deny knowledge of the existence of the problem which sometimes make their assignment difficult to accomplish. According to the respondent, this may be attributed to fear of being considered as fighting against God and the repercussion it could attract. The informant cited the case of someone who was protesting against the noise from a church and suddenly took ill. The man did not recover, despite medications, until he was takento the same church forprayer. After the healing, he was warned never to complain against the noisy activities of the church again. In the same vein, the Commissioner for the Ministry in charge of Oyo State Environmental Law, Chief Isaac Isola, reported that a pastor warned him against attempt to seal his church and that doing it would mean that he had closed his destiny for life. Incidents like this are capable of scaring people from challenging the excesses of religious groups in the public space. This is consistent with the observation made by Ayantayo:

> It is ironic that people, who are affected by the noise, do not complain.They suffer in silence; they complain to themselves and others but are not ready to effect a change, and quite often this is because they have mystified or deified the religious leaders who produce the noise pollution. The leaders are considered as super beings, who should not be questioned. (Ayantayo, 2006:81).

The findings on the negative effects of noise pollution associated with religious activities in the public space as revealed in this study affirms the four identified principal effectsof religious communication (Ayantayo, 2006). The first is auditory effect which is stimulated by the excessive noise generated in worship centres and has the capacity to damage human ears. The second incorporates physiological and psychological effects with debilitating impact on the health of people. The third is non-auditory effect which provokes annoyance and distraction and reduces working efficiency and work output. The last effect is termed sociological effect which

manifests in enmity and conflict between the religious centres and the people in the environment who are affected by the noise as shown later in the research.

Furthermore, the findings confirm a newspaper report on Oyo State as quoted below:

> Going by official statistics, religious organisations, especiallychurches and mosques, top the list of perpetractors of dangerousand intolerable levels of noise as they reportedly account for 70%of noise pollution in the state. (*Nigerian Tribune*, Editorial, August 22, 2017).

The research findings also corroborate the works of Ayantayo (2009) and Mepayida (2011) who both found that religious noise pollution is more associated with the liturgical activities of Christians and Muslims in their designated places of worship.

4.5   The Implications of Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups on Inter-religious Harmony

Having investigated and discussed the effects of contestation for public space by religious groups on the society in the preceding section, the study proceeds with the analysis of the implications of religious contestation of public space on inter-religious harmony. Under this section, the study significantly relied on data obtained through in-dept interview and non-participant observation.

4.5.1   Promotion of unhealthy rivalry among religious groups

Since factors that engender contestation for public space by religious groups include enhancement of religious' group identity as well as protection of religion against domination by others, it stands to reason that rivalry may characterise the relationship among religious groups. Therefore, the basis of competition and rivalry is inherent in the differences in text, doctrines and the belief system that define each of these religions. The incompatibility in what each religions represents informs the inevitability of rivalry among the three religious groups studied. Each religion makes its own distinctive-truthclaims and these are claims that logically contradicts those of other religions. Therefore, rivalry is inevitable, but the study discovered unhealthy rivalry which makes contestation for public space by religious groups to culminates in negative implications for inter-religious harmony.

From observation, unhealthy rivalry and competition among the religious groups manifest in many areas such as doctrinal belief which often is fuelled by claim to particularity of truth. Due to lack of in-depth understanding, outright ignorance and mischief, scriptural texts are often given whimsical and capricious interpretations by other rival religious groups. For example, it is common to hear Yoruba Muslim clerics preaching in public spaces that:*" Ọlọrun kò bímọ, enìkan kò bí"*. This means, "God was neither born nor did He give birth to anyone". This is against the Christian belief that God is the Father of Jesus Christ who is His Son. However, it was observed that the Islamic clerics' assertion of their monotheistic belief of God is often done in a way and manner that denigrates the Christian belief of Holy Trinity. In addition, many Christians sees it as provocative which for their tolerance could had led to clashes. The view of many Christians is that Muslims deliberately make this proclamation to invite them to a needless debate on it. It is probably in reaction to this that a cloth banner that bears the message: JESUS IS GOD'S SON was seen pasted publicly on a fence wall where many people passing by can see it. Therefore, the inscription can be said to mean efforts at countering Muslims' rebuttal that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This can be described as doctrinal rivalry between the two religions or what Ayantayo (2012) describes as monotheistic debate. However, the debate demostrates unhealthy rivalry between the adherents of the two religions because the sarcastic preaching diminishes the essence of harmony between them.

Therefore, this study affirmed the theological factor as a cause for religious violence in Nigeria (Suleiman, 2016). This is because, according to the scholar, such theological polemics often sparked off negative emotional responses and violence among different religious adherents in Nigeria. The essence of Social Identity Theory manifest here because one of the features of the theory is that group members denigrates members of other groups fuelled by a sense of self-esteem and superiority over (others) them.

Another way unhealthy rivalry manifests among religious groups through religious contestation for public space is when there is struggle for physical space by two different groups. When that happens, there is often a demonstration of power as to which group is superior and that negatively affects harmonious relationship among religious bodies. To butress this, a respondent, Architect Obatade, narrated how some years back such a clash occurred between *Orò* adherents and Muslims in Igbo-Ora.

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The *Orò* festival of that year was to be rounded off in the main market of the town. It was while the ritual was being performed that some Muslims came in large number reciting verses of Quran apparently to demonstrate the superiority of Allah over what they considered fetish. The *Orò* adherents reacted also by chanting incantations and physical violence was averted through the timely intervention of the officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force. It is apparent that the deliberate confrontation by the Muslims accentuated unhealthy rivalry between them and the *Orò*adherents in the town as a result of contestation for public space by the two religious groups. It is most likely that this would have been avoided if the *Orò* ritual was performed at the*Orò* sacred forest or *Orò* groove which is their recognised convent and is private to them and not the market place which is a public space. The usage of the market place for the traditional religious activity was what probably emboldened the Muslims to also lay claim to it and insistedon using it for their activity. However, prior to the incident, both Muslim and Christian groups had expressed great grievances against the *Orò* cult group for their insistence that people, espeically women, should comply with total curfew on the last day of the *Orò* festival, on the grounds that their own annual festivals of Christimas, Easter*, Eid-Fitr* and *Eid-Kabir* never interfered with the right of people of other faith to move freely.

A similar incident happened in Ogbomoso way back in 1957 as narrated by a respondent who is a retired Christian clergy, Reverend Dr S. T. Ola Akande. According to him, *Orò* worshippers in Ogbomoso always took control of every space in Ogbomoso any time they observed*Orò*rites whereby nobody could go to church or market during the *Orò* festival especially if it was on the seventh day. The same thing with *Egúngún.*Both the *Egúngún* and *Orò* worshippers always take over ownership of public space in the observance of their ceremonies. The incident further proves that contestation for public space by religious groups result in unhealthy rivalry principally, because the way*Orò* adherents use public space obstruct unfettered movements by non members on public roads. Acccording to Reverend Dr S.T. Ola Akande:

> There is one late Rev. Ige who told me about an incident involving the *Orò* in Ogbomoso. This happened in 1957. Rev. Ige decidedto challenge the *Orò*by calling the women of hisChurch, Ijeru Baptist Church to gather at his house early in the morning of the seventh day. From there, they danced through the town tothe

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Soun's palace. As they were marching on and dancing, one woman fell down and people thought that *Orò*'s repercussion had comeon the woman for daring the god. But that was not the case as shewas discovered to be hungry, not having taken breakfast. The Chiefs of the town felt that Rev. Ige had insulted the traditional and religious belief of the town and told him that, if herepeated the sacrilege, he would die. Ige responded that, for being threatened, none of the Chiefs would be alive before the next *Orò* festival when he would repeat what he did. True to his words,beforethe next *Orò*festival, all the Chiefs, including the King, had died (IDI at Ibadan on April 18, 2015).

Obviously, for Rev.Ige, every space in the city belongs to all Ogbomoso people andno group of people should arrogate it to themselves in the name ofreligion. The incident can clearly be interpreted as evidence of unhealthy rivalry for supremacy between the Christians and *Orò* adherents which was precipitated because the conduct of *Orò* festival shut people out of their legitimate right to public space by restricting their movement and imposing other limitations. A similar incident in Ibadan was orchestrated by a late popular Muslim cleric by name Alhaji Abdulazeez Arikewusola popularly known as "Ajagbemokeferi" (He who shouts down the unbeliever). He also mobilised women from his Islamic organisation to confront and defy the most dreaded and age-long*Egúngún* Ololu whose belief is that it is a taboo for him to set his eyes on a female gender while he was parading the streets of Ibadan.The incident led to a serious clash between the two groups as recalled in oral interview by Chief Fasakin Agbotifayo at Ibadan, on July 6, 2015. The reported incidents demonstrate unhealthy rivalry and cutthroat religious competition between different religious groups over physical public space arising from obstruction of movement which inevitably results in disharmonous relationship.

As a confirmation that contestation for public space by religious groups result in unhealthy rivalry among them, Egúngún devotees complained bitterly that other religious groups are habitually intolerant of them, hence their frosty relationship. They observe that it is members of the other religious groups who deliberately interfere with their activities and not the other way round. One of the leaders of *Egúngún* cult reflected this in an interviewby saying:

The Government should intervene by appealing to people of other religions to desist from interfering with the worship of

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Egúngún(IDI with Ojelabi Aladesunwa at Ibadan on July 6, 2015).

Another respondent appealed:

> King and Government own the town and when it is the periodof Muslim and Christian festivals, you cannot see *Egúngún* being organised at the same time. But when *Egúngún* festival is to come up in the month of June, that is the time Muslims will organise their open-air programme along the road they know that the *Egúngún*masquerade will certainly pass through. Therefore, let Government or *Ọba*(King) of the town direct that throughout the period of *Egúngún* festival in Ibadanland, other religious groups should not organise programmes like "*Tasir*" for Muslims or Christian open-air crusade (IDI with Ojetunde Asunleke at Ibadan on July 6, 2015).

The remarks that other religious groups are not tolerant of traditional worship and festivals which engenders religious disharmony is consistent with the claim by Baba Awo Awogbemiga Bogunbe who is the Public Relations Officer of the International Council for *Ifá*Religion, Oyo State Chapter. According to him, traditional religion worshippers do not disrupt activities of adherents of other religions and called on the Alaafin of Oyo, Ọba Lamidi Adeyemi III, to use his position and influence to liberate traditional religion from perpetual oppression by adherents of "foreign religions" (*Daily Post*, May 4, 2017). These comments indicate that indigenous religious adherents have regards for other religions but do not command such respect from them. For example, to promote religious harmony between Christians and Muslims in Iseyin, they set up an association of the leaders of the two religious communities called Muslim and Christian Association (MUCAS). When asked why *Orò* and *Egúngún* worshippers were excluded from membership of the association, the Iseyin Local Government Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria responded that they (Christian and Muslims) cannot be sitting down with idol worshippers to discuss. The response reflects arrogance and poor attitude of the Christian and Muslim leaders to the indigenous religion followers and perhaps that explain why there have been perennial clashes between them and *Orò* faithful in Iseyin over the years and hardly do you hear of one between Christians and Muslims in that town. The attitude is obviously borne out of their sense of superiority which negates the principle of religious peace and harmony.

In addition, the attitude of African Indigenous Religion practioners as deduced from the comments above affirmed the words of Wande Abimbola that:

> The African point of view is one in which there is respect for all religioustraditions of mankind. While we hold steadfastly to our beliefs, we respect the rights of others to practice their own religion in their own ways, providedthey do not infringe on the rights of others (Wande Abimbola, 1990:145).

Another way by which contestation for public space leads to unhealthy rivalry among religious groups is in the use of religious symbols in public places. Religious symbol is an iconic representation intended to represent a specific religion. Religious symbols are means of promoting group identity. Every religious group is associated with one symbol or the other. For Christianity, the symbol is the Cross which could come as a crucifix with Jesus Christ nailed on it, a crown of thorns over His head and the Latin INRI letters which means "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews" on the top of the cross. The Islamic faith symbol is the Crescent and Star. While for the African Indigenous Religion (AIR), different objects are used to symbolise different types of the religion because, unlike Christianity and Islam, the AIR is pantheist in nature. However, the symbol for *Egúngún* is '*atori*' meaning whip and that of *Orò* is a small piece of wood with a metal object attached to it.

There was a religious crisis in the University of Ibadan in 1985 and 1986 between the Muslims and Christians over the site of a cross in front of the Chapel of the Resurrection but in close proximity to the University Central Mosque. The controversy centred on the cross erected in the 1950s to denote places of worship in the University. The church was said to be the first to be built and the mosque came much later. However, in 1985, the Muslims complained that the location of the cross which stood as a symbol for Christians in front of the eastern side of their mosque contravenes the Islamic requirement that Muslims are not to see a cross, idol or effigy during worship. Therefore, they demanded that the cross be moved or relocated close to the church building.

 The Christian community was infuriated and rejected the demand. To them, either the mosque is relocated or the worshippers must respect the presence of their revered symbol of faith since it had been standing in that position even before the

mosque was sited. Invariably, this led to a serious crisis involving both students and lecturers on campus and this attracted national attention. Campus magazines carried inflammable articles by Christians condemning Muslims of intolerance, and vowing to defend the cross from vandalism. The Muslims stood their ground, saying that it was indefensible for the Christian symbol to be located at the disputed spot.

The incident exemplifies unhealthy rivalry between the Muslims and Christians as a result of contestation for public space becauseit polarised the academic community on religious line and ruined old alliances. The university, as a public educational institution, typifies public space and attempt to project different religious symbols on the campus by the two religious groups led to unhealthy rivalry between them. This is unhealhy rivalry for physical space over the location of a symbol of religious identity. To the Muslims, the cross symbol defaced thepublic space. Therefore, the sight and presence of the cross symbol constitutes visual pollution because the Muslims considered it offensive to them which led to their protest that badly affected the harmony between them and the Christians. This findingnot only confirm the report on the issue by Nabofa, but also showed the extent to which the controversy destroyed the harmonious relationship between them. According to him:

> Between 1985 and 1987 at the University of Ibadan, the issue of the Cross standing within the vicinity of a Mosque generated heat not only withinthe campus…but also all over Nigeria. It got to a stage where all Christians in the country rallied round the Christian community in the university campus tosee that no harm was done to the Cross. In the same way, there was a corresponding support from some highly placed Muslims from all over the country who were bent on the Cross being removed from its present site so that it would not block the view of their members as they face the symbolic East (Nabofa, 1994: 20).

The controversy was resolved when a compromise was reached by allowing the erection of another plinth close to the cross with the Islamic symbol of the crescent and star within considerable sight of the mosque, the chapel and the cross. To block out the sight of the cross from the mosque, a concrete wall was also erected between the cross symbol and Islamic praying ground. Nevertheless, the foisting of a religious symbol engendered unhealthy rivalry and also impacted negatively on inter-religious harmony.

Consequently from the foregoing, this study has established that contestation for public space by religious groups resulted in precipitating unhealthy rivalry among religious groups which impacts negatively on inter-religious harmony in Oyo State. The research findings confirms Ola-Giwa (2008) that unhealthy rivalry and competition exist among the adherents of Christianity and Islam in Oyo State. Similarly, the study also corroborates the findings of Ogungbile that "unhealthy rivalry continues to manifest among different religious groups and religious sensitivity hightens" due to space contestation by Christian and Muslim students in Nigerian universities (Ogungbile, 2013:163). Thus space contestation by religious groups leads to unhealthy rivalry among them.

4.5.2 Latent intra-religious conflicts

Another significant implication of the contestation for public space by religious groups which contributed to negative implications for inter-religious harmony discovered in this study is latent intra-religious conflicts. This refers to pursuance of divergent interests by religious organisations of the same faith spectrum without recourse to violence. In other words, intra-religious conflict has to do with exibition of differences by members of the same religious group while contesting for public space.

Through observation and oral interview, the study found the existence ofsubtle intra-religious conflict largely associated with Christianity and Islam manifesting in splintering of new sects and denominations along doctrinal lines. The Christian group has different denominations formed along doctrinal beliefs and practices and they tend to demonstrate it in the public space ostensibly to attract attention and gain followers. An exemplary case is in Ogbomoso as cited earlier. On a particular street opposite Sekengbede Street, Arowomole/Sunsun Area, there are eight denominations which, through worship, exhibit their doctrinal beliefs and practices in a manner that suggests conflict among them as observed by a respondent. According to the respondent, the use of loudspeakers during worship sessions which generate much noise strongly indicates that they are subtly competing for attention in the quest to attract followers.

Furthermore, the use of loudspeakers by religious houses as a mode of contestation for public space causes intra-religious conflict because persons of same faith express displeasure with noise pollution occasioned by religious activities in churches and mosques. For example, a respondent, Pa Agbo Areo, a Christian of

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Baptist denomination boldly wrote a letter of protest to the President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention for using its Centre at Lasokun-Gbekuba area of Ibadan where the man resides for all-night worship service. According to him, "The act is inconsiderate of the health and night time security of thousands of people; it is uncivil, ungodly, indeed lawless, as it violates the age-long law on public nuisance, of noise pollution." (See Appendix V). In addition, he informed the researcher that when his letter did not yield positive response and the church continued with the "lawless" act, he decided to sue the church but was dissuaded by some people.

Another example is the case of Pa Adeyemo of Isale Adiatu, Odo-Oru area, Ogbomoso. The noise pollution from a church named Christ Calvary Apostolic Church that shared the same fence with the complainant had devastating effects on his health and that of his wife, and he instituted a court action against the church. In the Suit No.HOG/42/2000, in the High Court of Justice, Ogbomoso, the Judge held that the church building should cease to be used as a place of worship because of the overbearing noise that its activities was generating to the annoyance and disturbance of the respondent and his wife who were Christians of the Baptist denomination. Furthermore, a respondent, Pastor Jonatex revealed that there is a CherubimandSeraphim church located near his own church, Deeper Life Bible Church, Liberty Road, Ibadan and most times, the use of drums, bells, clapping and other vibrating instruments as well as shouts which characterise their mode of worship disturbs and thereby displeases them during their own worship service.

In the same vein, a Christian respondent, Kehinde Omisile, said that noise generated bya Mountain of Fire and Miracle church very close to his church at Agbowo area, Ibadan envelops the entire place. He explained that it causes disaffection for them in his own church which is a Baptist church. This means that, irrespective of religion, people are generally and naturally averse to religious noise pollution which occurs through Christian and Islamic religious groups while contesting public space. Consequently, religious noise pollution could instigate intra-religious conflict.

All the foregoing examples shows that, noise pollution, as an effect of aerial space contestation by religious groups has negative implication because as found in this study, it provokes latent intra-religious conflicts.

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Similarly, another example of intra-group conflict due to contestation for public space is observed in the use of posters, banners and billboards. As a nature or mode of contestation for public space, religious groups indiscriminately paste these communication or advertisement instruments all over public and private places.Notably, most of the posters and billboards are used for the announcement of oncoming programmes with strong appeal for mass attendance and participation. However, what makes it appears as a conflict is that different churches paste their posters and banners side by side those of others in competing for the attention of passers-by. Sometimes, they paste posters on already pasted ones by other churches which is similar to the way Muslims or Christians does to one another. Thus, in the course of contesting for public space, Christian organisations drift into competition among themselves.

Plate 14: Religious posters of different Christian denominations competing for space at Basorun, Ibadan**.**

This type of intra-religious conflict is also noticed among the Islamic group as doctrinal differences exist which informs the creation of many Islamic organisations. Some of the Islamic organisations in Oyo State are Ansarudeen Society of Nigeria, Nawairu-Deen Society of Nigeria, Nasru-Lahil-Faith Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Alasatu Irorun Oluwa, Jamiyatu Tanween Islamic Association of Nigeria, Alif Islamic Society, JanataIslamiya, Istijabah Prayer Group, Dawah Front, Haonudeen Society of Oke-Ogun, JamatuDaru-Salam, Anwarul Islam Society of Nigeria and Youmbas-Anjaena. The doctrinal beliefs and activities of these bodies could be viewed as a way of competing and contestation for space against themselves. For examlpe, members of NASFAT believe and pattern their activities after Christian practices. It is observed that they meet mostly on Sundays in public spaces such as government schools (primary, secondary and high institutions of learning). This practice is opposed by other Islamic organisations such as Ansarudeen Society of Nigeria. For example, the researcher discovered that some Muslim respondents do not subscribe to "*asalatu"* programme and they consider it as unislamic because they pattern their activities after Christianity. This confirms NASFAT activities as a new phenomenon in Nigerian Islam (Adogame, 2010; Ogungbile, 2013).

Thus differences in doctrines and religious practices in public space exist among different denominations and sects of religious groups. This finding concurs with Kazaure's observation that:

> In Nigeria, intra-religious intolerance has been a feature of our national life for some time. Various Christian denominations and various Muslim groups have been engaging in bitter arguments and disputes. Religious tensions among various Muslim groups occasionally erupted into local disturbances in some northern cities.The most widespread and violent of these were the series of riots in Kano, Borno and Gongola *(the present Adamawa and Taraba States)*States provoked by the followers of Muhammadu Marwa Maitatsine in the early years of 1980s. (Kazaure, 1988:2).

The comment affirms the discovery of this study that latent polemics exist among the Christian and Islamic groups which are capable of developing into destructive violence. The findings also corroboratesthe assertion of Gofwen (2004) that diversity of interpretation of doctrine within the same religion instigates intra-religious dissensions. It also supports the observation of Olajudu (2003) that intra-religious

pluralism that exist in Africa manifest through denominationalism, fundamentalism and sometimes schism. Furthermore, the study affirmed the observation by Gbadegesin that:

> Within the Christian religious faith, there is stiff contestation for physicalspace at every level of social, political, and economic life. And outside of the Christian faith, the contestation becomes more powerful as different Islamicorganisations have also begun to acquire hectres of land for their religious rituals and festivals (Gbadegesin, 2013:76).

4.5.3   Instigation of inter-religious conflict

Data gathered from interviews and observation have revealed that one of the implications of public space contestation by religious groups is triggering of inter-religious conflict. Inter-religious conflict in this study means that the relationship among the adherents of the three religious groups is characterised by insufficient cordiality, mutual suspicion and tendency towards violent or destructive confrontations.

A cross-section of those interviewed affirmed that contestation for public space provokes inter-eligious conflicts. For example, Bashir Olarewaju, a Muslim, provided a representative view illustrating that contesting for public space by religious groups is high and capable of triggering inter-religious conflict of violence dimension. He stated as follows:

> The practice of the use of public space by religious groups is widespread and the rate at which it is going, if care is not taken, can cause crisis, misunderstanding, animosity, both physicaland psychological violence among people (IDI at Ibadan on January 5, 2015).
> .

This view which was common with many respondents suggests not only the prevalence of the contestation, but also its possibility of triggering conflict especially among people of different religious persuasions. This is because projection of religious identities in public spaces which are collectively owned and accessible to everybody as a matter of right spurs displeasure in people when their rights are trampled on. Consequently, most people value their personal right to space and feel discomfort, anger, or anxiety when their personal space is encroached, especially if it is done by a

religious group theydo not have affinity with or which professes a different belief system.

Through observation, one of the commonest religious activity in the public space that easily provokes inter-religious conflict, as confirmed by many of the interviewed respondents, is propagation of religious beliefs. To corroborate this, the Iseyin Local Government Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President said:

> It can cause it and it may not also lead to religious conflict as it depends on the approach being used. For example, if I want to preach somewhere and I approach people in the neighbourhood politely for assistance, it may not cause conflict. But if I stand aloof and start to condemn them, that they are bound to go to hell, that can breed negative reaction. If condemnable preaching is done always by saying that Muslims and non-Christians are all going to hell, that may engender negative reaction. But if it is peaceful words of propagation that are being made, it may not cause conflict. Therefore, the approach of gospel propagation will determine the response (IDI at Iseyin on January 23, 2015).

What can be inferred from the statement is that inter-religious conflict can occur if propagation of religious belief in public place is not done with high sense of caution and avoidance of provocative or derogatory words. This is because religion is considered sacred by people and they are not only ready to defend it, but to also die for it if need be (Ayantayo, 2018). In other words, how Christians propagate their faith determines whether it would arouse conflict or not. From the opinion expressed above, what injures Muslims is the way Christians condemn them as candidates of hell fire because Muslims do not believe that Jesus Christ isthe only way to heaven. In alliance with this view, the respondent narrated an incident involving a Christian who was beaten up by some Muslims in Iseyin while preaching, with the use of megaphone, in a residential area early in the morning for condemning Muslims. Similarly, a respondent, Akinola, narrated how a Christian was also beaten by some Muslims for preaching with a megaphone in front of Raji Rasaq Mosque at Adesola area of Ibadan while on "morning cry". According to him, the preacher insulted the sensibilities of the Muslims by condemning their faith and at the same time disturbed them with noise where they were gathered for prayer.

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To illustrate that propagation message and method by Christians in the public space are capable of intigating conflict,a Muslim informant, Imam Idris Arowojede, told the researcher :

> We are not against the Christians preaching around this area but for declaring that anybody who does not believe in Jesus including we Muslims will certainly go to hell is what we dislike (IDI at Ibadan on December 20, 2014).

This statement confirms that what infuriates the Muslims is the declaration by Christians preachers that hell is the final destination of all who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the only way to God, including Muslims though they acknowlege Jesus Christ as a prophet in the Holy Quoran.

Furthermore, another Muslim respondent, Imam Musbaudeen Aremu, listed some Christian propagation activities in the public space that infuriate Muslims as:

> Street preaching done in front of mosque especially when we have gathered for prayer. Some Christians do this and it is insulting and a demonstration of no regards for our religion. Secondly, Christian preachers often use provocative language or derogatory terms for Muslims while preaching. Thirdly, preaching in commercial vehiclesby Christians. This irritates me and I consider it a waste of time and energy by the person preaching. Also, the practice by some Christians preaching in the places of work. This practice can lead to sowing seed of discord among workers who are supposed to be cordial in their relationship(IDI at Ibadan on June 10, 2015).

As a further proof that propagation of religious belief or preaching commonly associated with Christians in the public space provokes conflict, a respondent, Mrs Adedigba, shared her experience:

> My house is located is a Muslim dominated area and I used to evangelise with megaphone early in the mornings. I do it to win souls for Christ. But my experience is that some of the hearers of my message are hostile to me. There was a time when I was falsely accused of trump-up charges but I know that it was because of my preaching. This took me to the Police Station but God vindicated me (IDI at Ibadan on June 7, 2015).

Another respondent, Evangelist Ajekigbe, informed the researcher that he was attacked with gun for undertaking street evangelism somewhere in Oluyole area, Ibadan. This is

reminiscent of what happened in Abuja recently where a Christian lady of the Redeemed Christian Church of God was brutally murdered for preaching in a street housing a mosque.

It can be deduced from these remarks and encounters that Christians' propagation activities in the public space evokes displeasure among people, especiallyMuslims, which serve as a seedbed for inter-religious conflict and disharmony. However, even though it has not manifested in mass and widespread violentconflict, there is a strong predilection that it could escalate into it.This finding is similar to what Albert (1999) discovered as responsible for religious disharmony between Christians and Muslims in Kano where the latter feel offended when Christians preach in buses and market places. The act serves as a seedbed for inter-religious conflict. This shows that one of the causes of religious polemics between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is the use of public space to propagate religious belief even though the two are of Abrahamic faith.

However, some Muslim clerics are also involved in delivering provocative sermons against Christians. Unlike Christians, Muslims do not as much engage in street or bus preaching and pamphleteering but more often make use of their mosques to preach which gets amplified with loudspeakers. For example, a Christian respondent, Mr Adigun, informed the researcher of a big mosque at Agugu area of Ibadan where sermons were preached to directly attack Christians who could not but hear them. The Christians living near the mosque got infuriated and vehemently protested against it. Eventually, Ibadan North East Local Government chapter of Christian Association of Nigeria got involved in the matter and the Christians sought redress in court. This encounter indicates that Christians are also not pleased with Muslims because of the way they propagate against them especially in the public space.In the same way, Muslim leaders were accused of intolerance by *Egúngún* adherents for preaching provocative messages that incite their followers to discriminate against *Egúngún* adherentswho are regarded as *kafir* which means infidel.

Be that as it may, the foregoing shows that propagation of religious beliefs in the public space which is often done with the use of derogatory and abusive language provokes inter-religious conflict. This is because the use of derogatory terms to

describe others' religion, which is a product of ill-feeling and negative attitude towards such religions, is contemptuous and annoying. The propensity for foul language to precipitate conflict is in tandem with the writing of Iwara that:

> Language is like the atom bomb: depending on the use one makesof it. It can cause widespread devastation, as it can be a source for peace and harmony. So powerful, in fact, is language that it has sometimes been claimed that the pen is mightier than the sword…This ispossibe because language impacts heavily on a wide range of domainswhere humans beings have vested interest (Iwara, 2005:74).

Thus, contestation for public space through religious propagation in places such as markets, streets, commercial buses, mosques and churches and road setbacks through loudspeakers, especially when laced with offensive language, triggers inter-religious conflict with serious implication for inter-religious harmony. The style of evangelism or religious propagation especially by the adherents of the two Abrahamic faith-Christians and Muslims who are both mission-oriented, often creates negative effects on inter-religious relations. This is because the use of offensive and provocative language especially in public spaces engenders discord, hatred and animosity between them and adherents of indigenous religion, as deduced from the various interview respondents. This finding conforms with the view of Dzurbgba (2010) that one of the causes of religious conflict which can be prevented is that religious evangelism or propagation featuring monopolistic control, antagonistic propaganda, abusive language and attacks on other religions. Also, it confirms the claim by Ayantayo that, in the history of religious relations in Nigeria, derogatory words by religious practitioners have been a cause of inter-religious conflict under the guise of defending one religion or the other (Ayantayo, 2018:7).

However, it is not only propagation of religious beliefs in public spaces that engenders inter-religious conflicts. As unraveled in this study, another way religious groups contest public space is by blocking or barricading public roads for various reasons and in different ways. The three religious groups are involved in this nature of contstation for public space. Corroborating that religious groups and, in this particular instance the Muslims, block public roads in the conduct of some of their religious

activities which instigate inter-religious conflict, an interview respondent who is a Christian, shared his experience thus:

> One day, I was on *"Okada"* (commercial motorcyclist) and suddenly we ran into a Muslim congregation prayer which led to the blockage of the road at Alaro area in Ibadan. The motorcyclist turned back to follow another and longer route to my destination but not without raining curses on the Muslims. He complained bitterly of his time being wasted and the more fuel he has to use to get to my destination (IDI with Idowu Hassan at Ibadan on Novermber 7, 2015).

The comment above confirms the reality of the phenomenon of blockage of roads for religious activities such as prayer and reveals the frustration and the anger it generates in the people who encounter it. Thus, contestation for public space by religious groups through blockage of road provokes inter-religious conflict. This finding confirms Ayantayo's findings that some Christians and Muslims barricade major and minor streets for their religious activities and that this causes disaffection to people while constituting a violation of their rights, and concludes that such behaviour could lead to inter-religious conflict in a religiously violatile country like Nigeria (Ayantayo,2009).

Inter-religious conflict also occurs between traditional religion of *Egúngún* and other religious groups while contesting for public space by blocking roads. This much was reflected in the interview with the head (*Alaagba)* of *Egúngún* of Ibadanland and his associates. They complained that Muslims were fond of organising outdoor programmes to coincide with the period and place of their own outing. An incident that occured in Ibadan in June 2012 between some Muslim youths and the dreaded Oloolu masquerade may suffice to buttress the claim of *Egúngún* adherents. According to the information gathered, some Muslims were conducting a religious activity along a street which led to its blockage at Popoyemoja area of Ibadan. The event coincided with the time Oloolu masquerade undertook his annual outing. Before the commencement of the*Egúngún*festival, a public service announcement had been made on the radio and television on his scheduled routes. The Muslims therefore advised Oloolu not to come to the area because there were some women there and it is forbidden for the masquerade to see women. But the masquerade and his followers were said to have ignored the warning and they went there which led to a serious clash to the point that

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Oloolu was disrobed of his sacred costume. The incident set the Muslims against the traditionalists in a fierce clash that spread to other parts of the city including Idi-Arere and Beere among other areas and this caused much tension in the affected areas.

In the same vein, according to many respondents, conflicts flared up continously between the *Orò* traditional worshippers and Muslims and Christian religious communities in Iseyin in the 1980s and 1990s because the *Orò* festival were conducted in the public space which barred people especially women from the public. This led to a series of violent conflicts and court cases between the *Orò* and Islamic group on one hand and *Orò* and the Christian group on the other hand. For example, in 1990, female members of Deeper Life Bible Church were physically assaulted by *Orò* ritualists when they were going home after their church service on Sunday morning simlply because they were seen on the road. To the *Orò* adherents, the Christians had broken a taboo and had to be penalised.

Similarly, because of the clash between Muslims and *Orò* worshippers, members of the National Council of Muslim Youths Organisation, Iseyin Branch sued the *Orò* traditionalists in Suit No: HOY/34/98 in the High Court of Justice, Oyo Judicial Division in 1998 to restrain them from assaulting and denying them their fundamental rights to movement during the *Orò* festival. Judgement was delivered in year 2000 which limited the performances of *Orò* rites in the public space from the hours of 5.30 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. for the three major days of the festival and 8.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. on other days. However, Pastor Agbolamagbe (Iseyin CAN Chairman) disclosed that the judgement was not fully obeyed adding that what assisted in mitigating the perennial clashes among the religious groups in Iseyin on the account of the *Orò* festival was the speculation that Oke-Ogun State would be created with the town as the capital. Therefore, the people of the town did not want to the create impression that the town was not peaceful which could lead to its disqualification as a state capital.

Complying with the Court judgement in the breach implies that conflict still ensues whenever the festival is held and it is an indication that *Orò* adherents are committed to the sustanance of the age-long tradition of the annual ritual for the overall peace and progress of the town. Nevertheless, so long as the mode of observing

their belief affects the interests of people generally in the society and generates conflict, inter-religious harmony declines. For example, many of the interview respondents confirmed that the period of *Orò* festival affects the social and economic activities of the town which displeases people and thereby pits them against the *Orò* adherents. Therefore, since many of them belong to the other religions, they develop a hostile disposition to the followers of the traditional religion which engenders negative inter-religious harmony. This much was observed in many of the respondents interviewed who were not members of *Orò* group. Therefore, inter-religious conflict occurs when traditional religious actors block public roads in the course of conducting their activities in the public space and this has negative implications for inter-religious harmony.

Consequently, contestation for public space by the three religious groups obstructs movement of people which amounts to an infringement on their fundamental right to free movement. Imagine if someone needs urgent medical attention and there is an ongoing religious activity in the public space that compels restriction of movement. What could happen to the sick person? This question shows the severity of the denial of this fundamental right of people due to conversion of public space into a religious space. Besides, would such denial of right capable of affecting inter-religious harmony? The earlier cited example of the clash between adherents of *Egúngún* Ololu and some Muslims in Ibadan in 2012 shows that denial of right to free movement due to religious contestation for public space can lead to religious dispute. Similarly, it is the denial of the right to free movement of some Christian women in Iseyin that precipitated the conflict between them and *Orò* adherents in 1990 and subsequent clashes between them and Muslims for a long time.

Furthermore, in confirmation that obsrtuction of movement of people through religious activities in the public space negatively affects inter-religious harmony, the experience shared by a respondent is insightful:

> At a place I once lived called Ilupeju, Ibadan, there was a mosque, church and an *Egúngún*'s house situated close to each other. In a particular year, the *Egúngún* priest was observing a ceremony in front of his house and by that people were prevented from freely moving to their places of worship nearby due to road blockage by the *Egúngún*worshippers. Consequently, that led to

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a serious crisis which almost resulted in loss of lives. The Muslims and *Egúngún* members invited their supporters from other places to come and defend them. However, the Christians could not muster similar support from anywhere (IDIwith Prophetess Taiwo at Ibadan on August 20, 2015).

What can be inferred from the above incident is that, due to the insistence of one religious group in enforcing its right to freedom of worship, doing same on a collectively-owned and openly-accessible facility denied other groups their legititmate right to access their own places of worship. However, religion being a sensitive and emotive issue to individuals, sparked the conflict.

The finding above shows that blockage of roads for religious activities infringes on the right to movement of people because it obstructs their mobility and, at the same time, constitutes a source of inter-religious conflict. This finding is similar to what occurred in Zaria in 2015 when the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Tukur Yusuf Burutai and his entourage were prevented from passing through the road blocked by members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria for their religious programme. That led to outbreak of a violent clash between members of the Islamic sect and the army which caused the loss of many lives. The crisis is yet to be resolved till date as the leader of the sect is still in detention and his followers unrelentingly calling for his release. In addtion, the sect has been outlawed in Nigeria. This points to the fact that, while a religious group could consider blocking of roads for religious activity as exercising its right to religious freedom, the practice denies people their right to movement and is a veritable source of inter-religious disharmony.

The effect of noise pollution through contestation for public space also sparks inter-religious confict among the adherents of different religious organisations with implications for low inter-religious harmony. To illustrate this, the experience shared by a Director in the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources is revealing. According to the informant, in a residential area around Onipepeye Area, Old Ife Road, Ibadan, a landlady allocated a portion of her premises to a church which erected its worship centre adjoining the fence of the neighbouring apartment. The owner of the apartment is a Muslim who complained that the noise generated by the church was affecting his health being a hypertensive patient. The man lodged a complaint with the

Ministry which intervened to resolve the matter to no avail. The landlady refused to allow the church to relocate. Instead, she mobilised Christian youths in the area who insisted that, if the Ministry forced the church to relocate, then all the mosques in the area must be closed down because they also generate noise during their activities. Unable to mediate successfully, the matter is in the law court for adjudication. Thus, aside from the fact that religious noise pollution as an aftermath of contesting public space by religious groups constituting serious health hazard to people, provoking annoyance and disturbance to people, and undermining security of the environment, it causes inter-religious conflict as a precursor to negative inter-religious harmony.

Besides defacing the public space, religious posters are also found in this study to generate inter-religious conflict and, through that, impact negatively on inter-religious harmony. This happens when, for example, Christian posters are pasted in a Muslim-dominated area or on a mosque or Muslim posters are pasted on the wall of the house of a person who is a Christian or on a church building. To buttress this point, a Muslim respondent, Imam Musbaudeen Aremu, retorted:

> It is not fair for a Christian posters to be pasted in a Muslimdominated area. Recently, I saw that Christian posters were pasted on the wall of our mosque and I destroyed them. Similarly, somebody was distributing handbills and wanted to give me one and I did not only rejected it, but almost slapped him (IDI at Ibadan on June 10, 2015).

The personal experience narrated above suggests that religious posters, cloth banners and handbills can be distributed in such a way that they can offend the sensibilities of people of other religions. This shows that posters pasted by other groups are removed indecently or destroyed in annoyance. Such action is capable of precipitating religious conflict because people canbe highly emotional about their religion. Thus, the reaction of the respondent may be true of many other Muslims and even Christians too can behave in the same way. This is an indication of early signs of inter-religious conflict occasioned by visual pollution which has implications for harmonious relationship among religious actors. Therefore, unlike Ayantayo's work (2009), this research strongly links the use of posters by the religious groups to inter-religious conflict. In other words, this study has shown that contesting public space with the use of posters can incite conflict among adherents of different religions which

consequently undermines efforts at promoting interfaith dialogue and inter-religious harmony in Oyo State.

From the foregoing discussion, contestation for public space by religious groups has negative implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State. Religious groups see public space from the perspective of their belief systems and world views and, for various reasons, they are motivated to use public space for a variety of their activities in different ways. However, the usage of public space by religious groups resulted in obstruction of vehicular and pedestrian movements through blockage of public roads, defacement of private and public places or visual pollution as a result of indiscriminate pasting of religious posters, billboards and banners and disturbance of people through noise pollution engineered by erection of loudspeakers on worship centres. A synthesis of all these consequences of contestation for public space by religious bodies had negative implications for inter-religious harmony because they led to unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, promoted latent intra-religious conflicts and above all, triggered inter-religious conflicts among adherents of different religions. This is because, from the findings of this research, people are negatively affected and are therefore not pleased with the way religious groups appropriate public space to promote their beliefs, values and practices. The consequence of this is that it induced tensions and disputes among the followers of different religious groups who are supposed to live in harmony in spite of religious differences. This corroborates the assertion made by Huber (2011) that serious research shows that religiosity does not necessarily decrease, but rather at least in certain circumstances, increases latent or manifest violence. The intense religiosity of religious groups in Oyo State,a multi-religious society,manifests in various forms of religious activities in the public space and this study has revealed that it has negative implications for inter-religious harmony.

The relevance of Social Identity Theory adopted for this study can be seen in the light of the research findings. In the findings of this study, contestation for public space by religious groups has negative implications for inter-religious harmony. What has led to the disharmony are unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, latent intra-religious conflicts and inter-religious conflicts among the adherents of different religions. Religious groups contest public space in different ways with a view to

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principally promote their divergent identities. The theory avers that, due to the feeling of prejudice, which Oladosu and Uthman-Oladosu (2013) termed religious prejudice, members of a group have towards people outside their group, inter-group competition and conflict is inevitable. In other words, the theory suggests that struggle or contestation between groups is propelled by the prejudice of members of each group towards non-members or *outsiders* in the quest to demonstrate that they are better in their religions' cardinal theme or emphasis. Therefore, groups members consider themselves to be better and superior to members of other groups. As confirmed in this study, the behaviour of religious groups amply demonstrate attempt at proving that they are better and superior to others in the promotion of their different identities in the public space. Meanwhile, to promote inter-religious harmony, religious groups should not perceive themselves to be superior to others, but according to this study, the attitude and interaction of adherents of Islam, Christianity and *Egúngún* and *Orò* deities in the public space resulted in unhealthy rivalry and intra and inter-religious conflicts. These are negative implications of space contestation by religious groups which culminates into negative inter-religious harmony among religious groups in Oyo State. Thus the theory has been used to explain inter-group conflict behaviour of religious groups on issues that have nothing to do with competition for resources but, impliedly, competition for value issues such as exercise of religious beliefs and practices in the public space in a multi-religious milieu.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY,RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1   Summary

The study examined the phenomenon of contestation for public space by religious groups and its implications for inter-religious harmony in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three broad categories of religious groups found predominant in the state are Christianity, Islam and Africa Indigenous Religion (AIR). In the AIR domain, two traditional religious festivals conducted by *Egúngún* and *Orò* adherents were chosen for the study because, like the two imported religions, their activities transcend private spaces into public spaces and often trigger conflict. The study is based on the general assumption that religion is a private affair which ought to be conducted in places and in modes that it does not upset other people. However, given that Oyo State is a multi-religious state, it further assumed that religious activities in the public could have implications for inter-religious harmony. Through the instrumentality of survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and non-participant observation, four research objectives were addressed and findings affirmed that contestation for public space by religious groups impacted negatively on inter-religious harmony.

Five chapters were presented in the thesis. The first gave a background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of study, scope of study and definition of terms. The second chapter presented the literature review of the study and theoretical framework. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Social Identity Theory. The thirdchapter dealt with research methodology which described the research design, study population, sample size and selection.Similarly, detailed explanation of the instruments used in the collection of data and the process of validating the research instrument were given in the same chapter. Data analysis and discussion were the focus of the fourth chapter followed by summary ofresearch findings:

Roads are meant, among other things, to ease vehicular and pedestrian movements, but the study has shown that religious groups block them to conduct liturgical activities such as prayer, religious processions and festivals. In the same vein, Christians and Muslims conduct worship activities in churches and mosques respectively. However, the study confirmed from earlier works that they facilitate their worship sessions with loudspeakers mounted on their sacred buildings in the process of which they contest aerial space. Hence, the study revealed that religious groups contest public space through the instrumentality of loudspeakers mounted on worship centres. However, this nature of public space contestation is associated with only Christians and Muslims. Another finding of this research which confirmed earlier work is that religious groups indiscriminately paste posters, billboards and banners in public spaces as a way of contesting physical or material space. However, while previous findings limit the use of these advertising instruments to Christianity and Islam, the study discovered that *Egúngún* adherents of African Indigenous Religion also use posters to announce the commencement of their festival and warn people against interference. The foregoing findings made in this study on the nature or mode of contestation for public space by religious groups suggest a rethinking of the meaning of the concept of public space from the religious perspective which appears to be what prompts them to contest public space.

Flowing from the above, the study investigated the rational for public space contestation by religious groups. The study revealed that religious groups contest public spaces because they afford them opportunities to fulfil their religious obligations such as evangelism, *da'wah*and performaces of traditional rituals. Christians' evangelism and Muslims' *da'wah* drives are aimed at enhancing their membership population being mission-oriented. However, the study affirmed that *Egúngún* and *Orò* adherents conduct annual festivals in the public space as necessary rituals to promote peace and progress of towns as well as avert calamities. Thus, failure to observe the ritual in public space forebodes ill for the people. Another factor which motivates public space contestation, as revealed in the study, is the quest by religious groups to create awareness for themselves or enhance their identity in the public since religion is an identity marker in societies.

Furthermore, findings showed that religious groups contest public space because it provides avenue to protect themselves against domination by others. This is due to the fact that the mere presence of two or more different religious groups suggests competition as each strives to dominate the public space as much as possible. Therefore, religious groups contest public space to satisfy their desire to outdo one another. However, findings also showed that the competition is both intra and inter-religious in nature. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion for the citizens. Thus, exercise of constitutional right to worship in the public, the study unveiled, is one of the factors responsible for contestation for public space by religious groups in Oyo State. What can be implied from the factors that motivate religious groups to contest public space is that, as groups, there is the natural tendency to maintain and promote their respective distinct identities and demonstrate that they are better than other groups. The prejudice against other groups in the use of public space for religious activities instigate conflict by promoting suspicion, low cordiality and strong tendency towards violence or clashes among religious groups makes Social Identity Theory as a theoretical framework relevant for this study.

Findings of the study revealed the effects of contestation over public space by religious groups on the society and its implications for inter-religious harmony. Therefore, the study revealed that religious contestation for public space resulted in obsruction of free vehicular and pedestrian movement when religious activities such as Muslims' Friday (*Jumat*) prayer, Christians procession on the road and *Egúngún* and *Orò* streetprocessions, defacement of the aesthetic beauty of public spaces through indiscriminate pasting of posters, billboards and banners resulting in visual pollution, anddisturbance of people through noise pollution in worship places. Consequently, the contetstation had negative implications in the sense that they led to unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, provoked latent intra-religious conflicts and also triggered inter-religious conflicts among followers of Christianity, Islam, *Egúngún* and *Orò* traditional worship in Oyo State. This is because public space contestation by religious bodies impacts negativelyon people which suggests that majority of people are not pleased with the phenomenon because they suffer the consequences. Furthermore, because it significantly instigates conflict among the adherents of the religious groups,

it is reasonable to conclude that contestation for public space by religious groups has negative implications for inter-religious harmony.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered sequel to the findings of this research:

(1) The Oyo State government should collaborate with leaders of religious bodies to enlighten religious adherents on the need for harmonious use of public spaces.

(2) Since there are existing laws on the use of public space, necessary government agencies should ensure that the laws are strictly enforced for effective regulation of religious activities in public spaces.

(3) To promote inter-religious harmony among the three religious groups, every local government area in the state should have an organisation that will promote inter-faith dialogue. The essence of the organisation is to create opportunity or forum for interactions among the leaders of the religions where issues likely to lead to religious conflict are identified, discussed and jointly resolved.

(4) In order to prevent escalation of religious conflict and promote peace and inter-religious harmony,government has a role to play in line with its responsibility to protect lives and property. To this end, government should create effective policies and strong institutions to ensure that the religious practices of any community do not contravene public order, environmental hygiene, national security, public safety and good governance requirements.

(5) In addition to the above, government should collaborate with relevant stakeholders such as traditional rulers, leaders of religious bodies, landlord associations and civil society groups to engage in mass enlightenment of the citizenry on the dysfunctional effects of religious conflict and discourage them from getting involved in it. In the process, the centrality of peace, harmony and unity as a desideratum for individual progress and national development should be emphasised.

5.3   Conclusion

Religious groups in Oyo State are fond of actively utilising public spaces for a variety of activities such as worship, prayer, festival and proseletysing in spite of the fact that public spaces are collectively owned and accessible to all people. As a result, public spaces have become highly-contested terrains among religious groups in Oyo State. This has created obstruction to vehicular and human movement, visual and noise pollutions leading to negative implications for peace and inter-religious harmony because they engendered unhealthy rivalry among religious groups, intra-religious conflicts and inter-religious conflicts among adherents of different religions. Consequently, concerted efforts at promoting interfaith dialogue and inter-religious harmony in the state are seriously undermined. In conclusion, from the findings of this research, contestation for public space by religious groups has negative implications for inter-religious peace and harmony in Oyo State.

Nevertheless, sustainable inter-religious peace and harmony will be enhanced in Oyo State if all the adherents of different religious groups embraced tolerance.

5.4   Contributions to Knowledge

This study has demonstrated that religious conflicts are prevalent in Oyo State which is in Yorubaland contrary to the observation of some scholars that cultural homogenity has made inter-religious conflict a non-existing phenomenon among the people.Therefore, this is a departure from the claim in some studies that religious conflict is uncommon among the Yoruba tribe.

The study has revealed that religious groups perceive public space as sacred places that they can use to conduct their different religious activities. Through this research, it has come to be known that despite the fact that Nigerians are deeply religious, majority of them are not pleased with religious use of public space for many reasons especially because it affects their right to public space and also limits their accessibilty to public spaces which lead to negative inter-religious harmony.

Theoretically, the study affirmed the relevance of Social Identity Theory in a multi-religious setting. Methodologically, quantitative instrument was utilised in this study as against previous studies which adopted desk and qualitative approaches only.

Furthermore, the study has shown that the nature of the phenomenon constitutes immediate and open cause of religious conflict as opposed to remote and deep-rooted causes of religious conflict which are common in literature.

Moreover,extant or earlier studies onthe implications of contestation for public space by religious groups have been limited to the legal/constitutional, environmental, political and public policy perspectives. However, this study departed from these by examining the inter-religious harmony implications of contestation for public space by religious groups with particular reference to Oyo State, Nigeria.

5.5   Suggestions for Further Study

The findings of this research has highlighted the need for further investigation in some related areas. The first is that, from the observation of the researcher, many towns in Yorubaland including all the study areas have central mosques conspicuously located near the king's *(Ọba*) palace. There is the need to historically investigate why this is common in many Yoruba towns. Secondly, strongly suggested is undertaking an exploratory research into discovering the reason(s) why majority of people are keeping quiet over religious use of public space despite the fact that they are not pleased with it because of its negative impact on them. Thirdly, it might be advisable to conduct a similar research in a mono-religious society or state where there is a preponderance of one religion over others as found in the South-eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria where Catholic Christianity dominates, to ascertain if religiouscontestation for public space could lead to conflict and breed negative inter-religious religious harmony.

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APPENDIX I

Contestation for Public Space by Religious Groups and its Implications for Inter-Religious Harmony in Oyo State, Nigeria

Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Ma,

This questionnaire is designed to gather information for an academic thesis titled as above for the award of Ph.D. degree in the Institute for Peace and Strategy Studies, University of Ibadan. It is about finding out how religious groups make use of public space such as markets, schools, streets, road setback, stadia, parks, event centers and town halls among others, for religious activities in Oyo State. We humbly request that you respond to all the questions in all honesty and be assured that every information you provide will be treated confidentially and absolutely for the purpose of this research only.

Ojo, S.A.

Section A: Demographic Data.

1. Sex: (a) Male ☐ (b) Female ☐

2. In what town do you live? (a) Ibadan ☐ (b) Iseyin ☐ (c) Ogbomoso ☐
   (d) Igbo-Ora ☐

3. What is your religion? (a) Christianity ☐ (b) Islam ☐
   (c)AIR(*EGÚNGÚN/ORÒ*) ☐ (d) others ☐

4. How long have you been a member of your religious group? …………………………

5. Have you ever held a leadership position in your religious group? (a) Yes (b) No

6. Age:
   (a) 18-30 years ☐
   (b) 31-40years ☐
   (c) 41-50years ☐
   (d) 51and above years ☐

7. Occupation:

  (a) Civil Servant

  (b) Professional

  (C) Self- employed

  (d) Clergy

  (e) Unemployed

8. Level of Education:

  (a) First Degree, HND and above

  (b) NCE AND Diploma

  (c) SSCE and Grade 11

  (d) Primary Six Leaving Certificate.

  (e) None

Section B: Modes of the use public space for religious activities by religious groups
SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree.

		SA	A	D	SD
9.	Religious groups block roads to conduct their religious activities.				
10.	Religious groups erect loudspeakers on their places of worship.				
11.	Religious groups fill public spaces with posters, banners, and billboards.				

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Section C: Factors responsible for the use of public space by religious groups

		SA	A	D	SD
13.	To fulfilreligious obligations such as evangelism, *da'wah* and traditional festivals motivate the use of public space.				
14.	Religious groups carry out their activities in the public space to promote their identity.				
15.	The fear of domination by other rival religions drive them to use public space for their activities..				
16	Religious groups use public space in exercise of their right to worship in the public.				

APPENDIX II

IN-DEPT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Personal profile of the interviewee.

2. What is your religion?

3. How long have you been practising your religion?

4. Do you conduct your religious activities in your place of worship alone?

5. Do you use public sapces such as roads, stadia, motor park, public schools for some of your religious activities?

6. Name the religious activities you organise outside your worship centres.

7. How do you use public spaces for your activities?

8. Why do you use public spaces for your religious activities?

9. How do you feel when a religious organisation is using public space such as road for their programme?

10. Are you aware that loudspeakers are mounted on churches and mosques and that they use them for their worship?

11. Have you encountered noisy worship by churches and mosques?

12. What do you feel about the noise?

13. Do you think that the way religious groups organise their activities in the public space can lead to unhealthy rivalry among them?

14. Do you think that the way religious groups conduct their activities in the public space can instigate inter-religious conflict?

15. Are you aware of religious noise pollution in the society?

16. What does your agency do with noise pollution?

17. Why are religious houses located in residential areas?

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

S/N	NAME	RELIGION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
1.	Alfa Mohammed	Islam	Ibadan	5th February, 2015
2.	Alfa Oyeyemi	Islam	Ibadan	1st April, 2014
3.	Alfa Wahab	Islam	Ibadan	8th September, 2012
4.	Alh. SadiqAlarape	Islam	Ogbomoso	9th September, 2015
5.	Arc. Obatade	Islam	Igbo-Ora	5th January, 2016
6.	AremuMuideen	Islam	Ibadan	15th October, 2015
7.	Baba Mary	Christianity	Iseyin	18th May, 2015
8.	BasirOlarewaju	Islam	Ibadan	15th January, 2016
9.	Evang. IdowuHossan	Christianity	Ibadan	7th November, 2015
10.	Evang. Segun Joe	Christianity	Ibadan	21st December, 2015
11.	Evang. Zacharia	Christianity	Ibadan	15th December, 2015
12.	Evangelist Ajekigbe	Christianity	Ibadan	5th November, 2014
13.	FasakinAgbotifayo (AlaagbaOke-OfaOluyoroBabasale)	Egúngún	Ibadan	6th July, 2015
14.	Imam Habeeb	Islam	Ibadan	5th November, 2014
15.	Imam IdrisArowojede	Islam	Ibadan	20th December, 2015
16.	Imam Mubaudeen	Islam	Ibadan	6th January, 2017
17.	Imam MusbaudeenAremu	Islam	Ibadan	10th June,2015
18.	IyalodeAlaagba	Egúngún	Ibadan	6th July, 2015
19.	KehindeOmisile	Christianity	Ibadan	8th May, 2016
20.	MallamAremu	Islam	Ibadan	6th March, 2015
21.	MallamNurudeen	Islam	Ibadan	3rd September, 2015
22.	Miss Busayo	Christianity	Iseyin	18th May, 2015
23.	Mr. Adejumo	Islam	Iseyin	5th May, 2015
24.	Mr. Adigun	Christianity	Ibadan	10th November, 2014
25.	Mr. Akinola	Christianity	Ibadan	20th February, 2015
26.	Mr. K. A. Arasi	Islam	Ibadan	18th May, 2015
27.	Mr. Nasir	Islam	Iseyin	5th May, 2012
28.	Mr. Saliu	Islam	Ibadan	20th August 2015
29.	Mr. Tajudeen	Islam	Ibadan	20th December, 2014
30.	Mr. Wahab	Islam	Iseyin	11th May,2015
31.	Mrs. AbisoyeOjo	Christianity	Ibadan	3rd February, 2016
32.	Mrs. Adedigba	Christianity	Ibadan	7th June, 2015
33.	Mrs. Akintola	Christianity	Igbo-Ora	9th November, 2015
34.	Mrs. Bola Oniwinde	Christianity	Ibadan	5th November, 2015
35.	NurudeenAbiodun	Islam	Ibadan	3rd September, 2015
36.	OjelabiAladesunwa (Alaagba Idi- Aro)	Egúngún	Ibadan	6th July, 2015
37.	OjetundeAsunleke (Alaagba of Ibadan Land)	Egúngún	Ibadan	6th July, 2015
38.	OroladeFadahunsi	Orò	Ogbomoso	28th May, 2018

39.	OroladeIfadore	Orò	Ogbomoso	28th May,2018
40.	OsunwaleOjeyemi (AlaagbaDalemo)	Egúngún	Ibadan	6th July, 2015
41.	Pa Adeyemo	Christianity	Ogbomoso	5th August, 2012
42.	Pa. AderojuOjewumi	Orò	Iseyin	15th November, 2014
43.	Pa. AgboAreo	Christianity	Ibadan	19th May, 2015
44.	Pa. BolanleAdeoti	Orò	Iseyin	23rd January, 2015
45.	Pa. Olalere	Orò	Iseyin	19th December, 2014
46.	Pastor Jonatex	Christianity	Ibadan	11th December, 2015
47.	Pastor Joshua Agbolamagbe	Christianity	Iseyin	23rd January, 2015
48.	Pastor YemiAladare	Christianity	Ibadan	5th December, 2015
49.	Prophetess Taiwo	Christianity	Ibadan	20th August,2015
50.	Rev. S. T. Akande	Christianity	Ibadan	18th April, 2015

Landlords/ Residents Associations interviewed

1. Ifesowapo Landlords and Residents Association, Kute, Ibadan.

2. AdesolaOniyere Landlords and Residents Association, Adesola, Ibadan.

3. Kuola/Ahoro Landlord and Residents Association, Kuola, Apata, Ibadan.

Oyo State Government Ministry and Agency interviewed

1. Ministryof Environment and Water Resources, Ibadan.

2. Bureau for Physical Planning and Development Control, Ibadan.

PLATE 15: The Researcher with a Christian Leader – Rev (Dr) S. T. Akande

PLATE 16: The Researcher with the Head of *Egúngún* of Ibadan Land – Chief AsunlekeOjetunde.
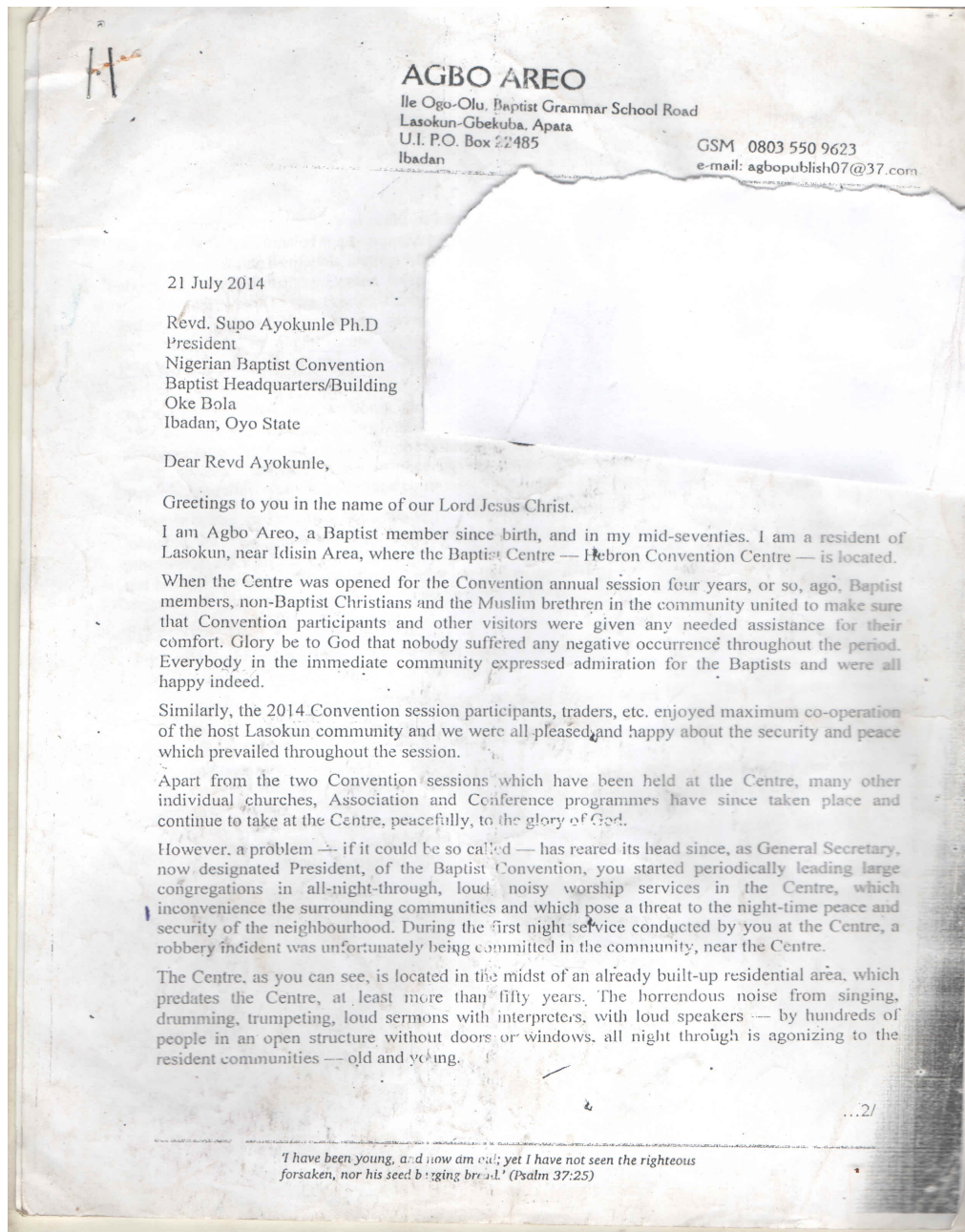
PLATE 17: The Researcher with a Muslim Cleric – Imam MusbaudeenAremu

PLATE 18: A Christian Preacher preaching in a Public Place–Road Set-Back

AGBO AREO

Ile Ogo-Olu, Baptist Grammar School Road
Lasokun-Gbekuba, Apata
U.I. P.O. Box 22485
Ibadan

GSM 0803 550 9623
e-mail: agbopublish07@37.com

21 July 2014

Revd. Supo Ayokunle Ph.D
President
Nigerian Baptist Convention
Baptist Headquarters/Building
Oke Bola
Ibadan, Oyo State

Dear Revd Ayokunle,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am Agbo Areo, a Baptist member since birth, and in my mid-seventies. I am a resident of Lasokun, near Idisin Area, where the Baptist Centre — Hebron Convention Centre — is located.

When the Centre was opened for the Convention annual session four years, or so, ago, Baptist members, non-Baptist Christians and the Muslim brethren in the community united to make sure that Convention participants and other visitors were given any needed assistance for their comfort. Glory be to God that nobody suffered any negative occurrence throughout the period. Everybody in the immediate community expressed admiration for the Baptists and were all happy indeed.

Similarly, the 2014 Convention session participants, traders, etc. enjoyed maximum co-operation of the host Lasokun community and we were all pleased and happy about the security and peace which prevailed throughout the session.

Apart from the two Convention sessions which have been held at the Centre, many other individual churches, Association and Conference programmes have since taken place and continue to take at the Centre, peacefully, to the glory of God.

However, a problem — if it could be so called — has reared its head since, as General Secretary, now designated President, of the Baptist Convention, you started periodically leading large congregations in all-night-through, loud noisy worship services in the Centre, which inconvenience the surrounding communities and which pose a threat to the night-time peace and security of the neighbourhood. During the first night service conducted by you at the Centre, a robbery incident was unfortunately being committed in the community, near the Centre.

The Centre, as you can see, is located in the midst of an already built-up residential area, which predates the Centre, at least more than fifty years. The horrendous noise from singing, drumming, trumpeting, loud sermons with interpreters, with loud speakers — by hundreds of people in an open structure without doors or windows, all night through is agonizing to the resident communities — old and young.

...2/

'I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' (Psalm 37:25)

Letter of protest against religious noise

People cannot rest peacefully at night or sleep whenever you come to conduct all-night service; the security regulations of the community are wilfully breached. The recent one held on 18 to 19 July prevented the Ramadan fasting Muslim brethren whose mosque of over fifty years is just about 60 metres from the Centre, from observing their early morning prayers. Many residents now wonder whether the Baptist denomination they had known and admired for humbleness, orderliness, peacefulness over several decades is different from the present Baptist denomination! The act is inconsiderate of the health and night time security of thousands of people; it is uncivil, ungodly — indeed lawless, as it violates the age-long law on public nuisance: of noise pollution.

In the Lasokun Area, one can count about twelve churches of various denominations and varying sizes of congregation: the mainstream Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist; also branches of the big Pentecostal and other churches. They all co-operate with the community by avoiding night services. One or two which once proved uncooperative had to eventually comply when they realized they were to soon face court suit. Why should the Baptist be an exception!

Some informal protest had been made to you before on behalf of the community, this writer included. In this regard, the community, made up of over one hundred landlords/landladies and other residents, can act collectively, groups could, and individuals could, and we hope there will not be further cause for individuals, including this writer, to resort to any legitimate action in this regard, that might embarrass our highly cherished Nigerian Baptist denomination members.

Suggestions

If the mid-night envagelism — by whatever name it is called — is to continue, I am offering the following alternative suggestions as to the venue:

1. Move the venue to Baptist Building premises, if the adjoining Oke Bola community does not complain.
2. Move the venue away to a big church, maybe your former church — if the neighbourhood does not complain.
3. Possibly the best option — acquire a virgin land for the NBC outside the city, far from any existing human settlement, where any kind of night worship services could be conducted without inconveniencing anybody with noise at night.
4. Commence service at, say, 6pm at the present Baptist Centre, and end not later than 10pm when most residents around prepare to sleep.

Our Almighty, True and Merciful God knows All Who Worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, and He Will Continue to Preserve and Bless All.

Yours sincerely,

Agbo Areo

THE EGUNGUN OLOOLU OF IBADANLAND

E7/535 , ILE - AJE, OLOOLU COMPOUND IBADAN.

Ref:................................... Your Ref:.................................... Date............................

Monday (Ojo Aje) 18/7/2016

Ti o ba ti kuro ni Ile re, yio gba Oja' gbo lo si Oranyin yio gba Oranyan, de idi Arere yio gba idi Arere bo si Odo Oba saliu Adetunji Olubadan ti Ile- Ibadan ni Popoyemoja, yio gba ibe lo si oja'ba, yio gba oja'ba bow a si Ile Balogun Oloye Olakuleyin ni ogbori efon, yoo gba ogbori efon bo si Alafara Olubadan, yoo gba ibe lo si Atipe, yio gba Atipe si Oke-Ofa Babasale , yio gba ibe lo si Aliwo ni Ile Otun Olubadan ti Ile Ibadan oloye Lekan Balogun ni Aliwo, yoo wa mo gba ibe bowa si Ile re ni Ile-Aje.

Tuesday (Ojo-Isegun) 19/7/2016

Ti o ba kuro ni Ile re, yoo gba Ojagbo lo si Ile Balogun ti Ile Ibadan Oloye Olakuleyin ni Ita Baale, yoo gba ibe lo si ogbori efon ni Ile Ekerin Olubadan Oloye Biodun Daisi, yio gba ibe lo si ile Olubadan ti Ile Ibadan Oba Saliu Adetunji ni popoyemoja, yio gba ibe lo si ile Osi Olubadan Oloye Rasidi Adewolu Ladoja ni Bounfoto, yio gba ibe losi foko ni Ile Asipa Olubadan Oloye Eddy Oyewole, yio gba ibe lo si Ile Osi Balogun Tajudeen Abimbola ni Agbeni, yio gba ibe losi Ile Fijabi lati ibe lo si Ile Mogaji Olujide Osofi ni Oja Oba, yio gba Oja'ba lo si Ile Omiyale lati Ibe losi Ile Oloye Olunloyo yio gba ibe lo si Ile Madam Odunola ati Mogaji Oke Oluokun, yio gba ibe lo si ile Madam Sariyu Akannu, yio gba ibe lo ile Mogaji Ekelo, ni Oke-Ola, yoo gba ile tuntun bo si Odinjo ni Ile Ekarun Balogun Oloye Latifu Adebimpe, yio gba Ibe lo Ile Dauda Gbedeogun ni Modina, yio gba ibe Ile ege, yio gba ibe lo Ile otun Balogun Oloye Olaifa ni Idi Aro yio gba Idi Aro bowa si ile re ni Ile Aje.

Wednesday (Ojobo) 20/7/2016

Yoo gba Oke Adu lo si Odo Alakoso Ipinle Oyo Senator Isiaka Ajimobi, yio gba ibe lo si odo otun olubadan ti ile Ibadan Oloye Lekan Balogun ni Aliwo, yio gba ibe lo si Odo Amofin Niyi Akintola, Amofin Ajobo, Amofin Azeez, Amofin Afolabi ni gati (Gate) yoo gba lo si odo JusticeAdeyemi, yoo gba ibe bo si ile Mogaji Kadelu Oloye Kayode Afolabi ni Temidire, yoo gba Labiran, pada si ile re ni Ile-Aje.

Thursday (Ojoru) 21/7/2016

Yoo gba Agugu Oremeji lo si Agugu Station lati ibe ni yio ya odo Mogaji Agugu Ogunsola Anisere Lati Ibe yio ya odo Alhaji Elewure, Madam Adijah, Iya – fin Olanisebe , Mogaji Ayegbokiki lati ibe yio ya odo Alhaji Kokodowo, yio gba ibe bo si Baale Atolu, Lati Ibe bo si Odo Ifa Boys ni Gbaremu lati ibe lo si Sekoni, yio tun gba be lo si Odo Imaamu Aje, yio gba be de odo Baale Akamo, yio gba be de Odo jeyinfa lati ibe de odo Alhaji Olorunlogbon lati ibe de odo Falere Fagbenro yio gba be bo si sodo Yisau Ajoke lati ibe lo si odo Oloye Adesina ni Gangansi, yo gba be bo si odo Baale Ewuola yio gba be bo si odo Baale Eniayenfe, yio gba be bo si odo Seriki Muritala Babalola, yio gba be bo si odo Baale Osuolale Lati Ibe bo si Odo Alhaja Sijuade, yio gba be bo si odo Mogaji Aje Chief Raimi Oyerinde, yio gba be bo si Ogbere Idi-Osan, yio gba be bo si odo Bose Omo Titilayo ni Maaku lati ibe yio ma k obo wa si Oremeji yio ma gba Oremeji bowa sile re ni Ile –Aje.

IKILO (WARNING)

EYI NI IKILO FUN AWON ONIMOTO ATI OLOKADA (WARNING FOR VEHICLE DRIVER) EYI NI LATI SO FUN GBOGBO ARA ILU PE OBINRIN KANKAN KO GBODO WO EGUNGUN OLOOLU, OLOOLU RO GBOGBO AWON ONI MOTO PATAPATA PAAPAA ONIDANFO PEKI WON MO SE GBE OBINRIN KANKAN PADE EGUNGUN OLOOLU NITORI WIPE EGUNGUN OLOOLU YIO MA YOJU WO INU MOTOR KAKIRI. ENI TI WON BA RI OBINRIN NI INU MOTO RE YOO FIMU DANRIN, ESE ASEYI SAMODUN (AMIN).

OLUKEDE MOGAJI AJE (CHIEF RAIMI OYERINDE)

Public announcement on the movement of *Egúngún*Oloolu of Ibadanland

Oba Oladunni Oyewumi AJAGUNGBADE III, J.P.

SOUN OF OGBOMOSOLAND

My Ref No. 23/333

Your Ref ....
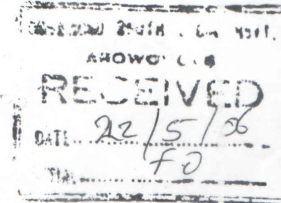
Tel. Ogbomoso 038-710000

Aafin Ogbomoso
P.O. Box 241, Ogbomoso
Oyo State, Nigeria.

22nd May, 2006

RECEIVED
DATE 22/5/06

The Executive Chairman,
Ogbomoso South Local Government,
Arowomole,
Ogbomoso.

Dear Sir,

ANNUAL ORO FESTIVAL

I am directed by Alayeluwa Oba Oladunni Oyewumi Ajagungbade III, JP, CON Soun of Ogbomosoland to inform you that, this year Oro Festival in Ogbomoso town starts on Friday, 2nd June, 2006, and ends on Friday, 9th June, 2006.

2. Please note that during this period, women are forbidden to move about in the streets within the Ogbomoso township between the hours of 11.00p.m. and 5.00a.m.

3. I am to add that druming of any kind is prohibited.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

(Robert Olutoye Oladele)
Private Secretary to Soun of Ogbomosoland

Letter of announcement on *Orò* Festival by the Soun of Ogbomosoland

ALAYELUWA

Oba Oladunni Oyewumi AJAGUNGBADE III, J.P.

SOUN OF OGBOMOSOLAND

My Ref No. 23/320

Your Ref: ....
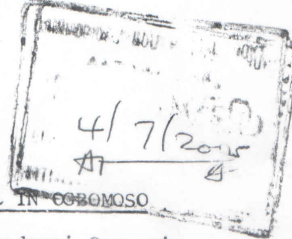
Tel. Ogbomoso 038-710000

Aafin Ogbomoso
P.O. Box 241, Ogbomoso
Oyo State, Nigeria.

4th July, 2005 19........

The Executive Chairman,
Ogbomoso South Local Government,
Arowomole,
Ogbomoso.

Dear Sir,

4/7/2005

<u>2005 EGUNGUN FESTIVAL IN OGBOMOSO</u>

I am directed by Alayeluwa Oba Oladunni Oyewumi Ajagungbade III, JP, CON Soun of Ogbomosoland to inform you that this year Egungun Festival commencing on Wednesday, 6th July, 2005, to Sunday, 17th July, 2005. Egungun festival is an annual traditional event that promotes our cultural heritage.

The Egungun worshippers had been advised to celebrate the festival peacefully.

I am to seek for your maximum co-operation throughout the period of the festival.

Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

04-07-05

(Robert Olutoye Oladele)
Private Secretary to Soun of Ogbomosoland

Letter of announcement on *Egúngún* festival by the Soun of Ogbomosoland

(OMO ALADE)

H.R.H. ADEPOJU AMOS OJO
Agbaramuda XII
Baale Ijeru of Ijeru.
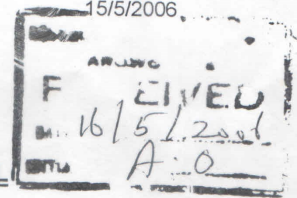
Address:
Ijeru Post Office Box 4,
Ijeru, Ogbomoso.

Office:
Aafin Ijeru
Ijeru, Ogbomoso.
☏ 08032295897
Date:..................

The Chairman,
Ogbomoso South Local Government,
Arowomole.

Dear Sir,

15/5/2006

RECEIVED 16/5/2006 A.O

NOTICE OF ORO FESTIVAL

I, HRH A. A. Ojo Baale Ijeru of Ijeru Quarters, Ogbomoso and the entire members of Oro Worshippers in Ogbomoso Land hereby notify you and entire members of Ogbomoso Land Community about Oro Festival which will begin Friday 2nd of June, 2006 to 8th of June, 2006. It will last for 7 days.

(a)   Everybody should be inside as from 11.00p.m. to 5.00a.m. everyday.

(b)   There should not be drumming during the period.

We want your co-operation and the entire community.

Yours faithfully,

HRH. A. A. OJO
Baale Ijeru of Ijeru
Ijeru Quarters.

D. P. O. Arowomole Division
S. S. S. Ogbomoso South L.G.

Letter of official announcement on *Orò* Festival by Baale of Ijeru, Ijeru quarters, Ogbomoso.