CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to study

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe especially the Soviet Union and the abrupt end of the Cold War have serious consequences for both domestic and international politics all over the world. These include the multiplication of conflicts, emergence of new patterns of alliances, conflicts within and among states, the resurgence of neo-communist and neo-fascist movements, the intensification of religious fundamentalism as well as the emergence of capitalism as the dominant socio-economic and political system under the hegemonic leadership of the United States of America (Huntington, 1996).

Williams (2010: 64) argues that capitalism has always had global aspirations because its ambition has always been to ‘penetrate, perforate and percolate every nook and cranny of the world’. He however, noted that it was in the last decade of the twentieth century that capitalism finally achieved planetary domination. This, the United States and Britain sought to achieve through the policy of neo-liberalization which requires both political and economic construction of a neo-liberal market based populist culture which had to be achieved through democratic means (Harvey, 2005). There was therefore the subtle but forceful campaign for democratisation described by Huntington (1991) as “The Third Wave of Democratization” all over the world especially in Third World countries. This seeming capitalist triumph led Fukuyama (1992) to declare “the end of history” and the consequent over glorification of the free market orthodoxy as the one best way most suited for the socio-economic and political development of mankind.
While this desire to propagate capitalism globally increased the roles and strengthened the relevance of non state actors such as Multinational Corporations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other Multilateral trading Institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) in both International and domestic affairs of countries, it at the same time consciously weakened and sometimes eroded the traditional roles played by States in most Third World countries.

The euphoria and consequent expectation of a more stable and peaceful “New World Order” occasioned by the capitalist triumph soon gave way to a rancorous international arena characterized by economic, social, racial, cultural and religious tensions which is making the world more unstable than it was before its present uni-polar form. Huntington (1996) thus declared that since the post Cold War era, the world had witnessed a “Clash of Civilizations”.

These occurrences at the global level have reverberating effects in the Third World especially in Africa. In Nigeria specifically, this period coincided with the era of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) imposed by the Breton Woods Institutions with its devastating consequences on the people. The poor policy conception, weak and dependent nature of the state, the character of the ruling elite manifested in wanton corruption and the lack of institutional discipline in the implementation of the programme resulted in decreasing growth in the economy, hyper-inflation, huge unemployment, decaying infrastructure, epileptic power supply, excruciating poverty manifested in malnutrition, infant and maternal death as well as the spread of preventable diseases.

In order to cope with this life threatening situations and considering the plural nature of the Nigerian society, people found safety nets in racial, ethnic, cultural and religious organisations.
There was therefore an upsurge in ethno-religious consciousness and the politicisation of religion to further parochial, selfish, sectional and non-sectarian interests within the polity. This present effort is therefore to illuminate and examine the concept of Political Islam and establish whether there exist any correlation between the dwindling economic fortunes of the people, the rise of religious fundamentalism and the politicisation of religion in Nigeria.

The interface between religion and politics dates back to pre-colonial Nigeria. Indeed, right from the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio and the establishment of the Caliphate in 1804, religion has played a defining role in the socio-economic and political evolution of Nigeria. Ever since then, despite Nigeria’s claim to secularism, the state has been involved in religious activities, such as praying at important state functions, forming political parties along ethno-religious lines and sending adherents to pilgrimage on the bills of the state.

Aside from the above, religion became an explosive political issue when the debate over Sharia law and its implementation divided the Constituent Assembly set up in 1978 preparatory to the return to civilian administration in 1979. It was however, during the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) that religion became politicised to an unprecedented height when in 1986 he registered Nigeria as a full member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). This move was interpreted by some individuals and groups as part of the grand design to Islamise the country. In order to douse the tension that attended this move, General Babangida quickly restored diplomatic ties with the state of Israel which had been severed after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 by the General Yakubu Gowon administration.

From then onwards, religion had remained a critical desideratum in the politics and governance of Nigeria such that most government’s action and inactions were viewed from the prism of
religious affiliations. It is within this context that the plethora of religious conflicts that have engulfed some parts of the country in recent past is to be understood.

This research therefore examines the recent agitation for political Islam manifested in the dramatic implementation of Sharia law in some states in the Northern parts of the country with total disregard for the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, and the concomitant rise in religious extremism, fundamentalism, and violence in Nigeria. It argues that the upsurge in religious fundamentalism and the consequent violence are not unconnected with the nature and character of the Nigerian state and its politics, the ineptitude and incompetence in governance and the unfavourable government policies that have impacted negatively on the generality of the people especially in the Northern parts of the country. The tentative assumption is that while there have been sparkles or pockets of religious fundamentalism, especially Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria; it is doubtful whether these agitations and activities are crystallising into or approximate the push for political Islam in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

All religions make absolute and exclusive claims to truth. In doing this, they create conflict in the process. The three ‘Abrahamic’ religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share a lot of doctrinal and scriptural similarities.
If so, why do people kill, maim and destroy property in the name and for the sake of God, despite contrary scriptural injunctions? Why is it that religions that profess peace, harmony and love suddenly turn violent or use extreme violence as means of propagation or expression? What
motivates people to these despicable acts of violence and destruction? What accounts for the high propensity of ethno-religiously induced carnage in some parts of the country in recent times?

Historically, Islam claims to recognise Judaism and Christianity as religions from God but views itself as the perfection of both. Indeed, the Holy Quran chapter 2 verse 136 clearly instructs that “Say ye: we believe in Allah and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes and that given to Moses and Jesus and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them and we submit to Allah”.

Islam also claims to acknowledge the multi-religious and multi-cultural dimensions of society and the need to be fair, just and treat everyone in the community fairly and properly. Indeed, the Holy Quran chapter 2 verse 256 avers that “there shall be no compulsion in religion….”. If this is the case, how then do we explain the extreme and violent expression of faith including its terrorist inclination for which the religion of Islam has been identified all over the world in general and in Nigeria specifically?

In the last three decades, Nigeria has remained a theatre of violent ethno-religious conflicts resulting in the wanton destruction of lives and property. Worrisome as these dastardly and unwarranted losses of life and property are; its intensification has assumed a frightening and bestial dimension. The state, which according to Weber ought to have the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, seems to be helpless in this extremely dangerous situation.

In specific terms, religious fundamentalism with extreme violence reared its ugly head in the once peaceful and commercially vibrant city of Kano in 1980, when a fundamentalist sect, the
Maitatsine group, founded by Muhammed Marwa, used his base in the ancient city as a launching ground for his extremist Islamic views.

The sect, needless to point out, wanted Islam to be practiced in its pristine form as it is done in other countries such as Iran and Lebanon. The resistance to this Islamic push led to the unleashing of an unprecedented savage and ferocious mayhem on Kano and its people. Ever since, Kano has remained ‘a touchy flash point of religious violence which breaks out with the most flimsy and absurd excuses’ (Aiyetan, 2001: 34)

Just like in Kano, Jos the Plateau state capital, once noted for its serene and tourist friendly environment has suddenly turned into a theatre of violent ethno-religious conflicts. From 1994, when the city was first greeted by deadly riots, there have been sporadic, wanton killing and destruction of lives and property. The most bestial of all was the January 2010 killing of innocent children, the aged and the elderly in a village called Dogo-nahawa by roving gangs armed with guns, machetes and other dangerous weapons.

In Bauchi, another group called the “Jamat ahli-Sunnah li Dawati Wa-Jihad” (Society committed to the practices of Prophet Mohammed and the propagation of Islam through Jihad) otherwise known as Boko Haram, which translates as ‘Western literacy is evil’ denounce Western education and described it as evil and a sin.

They therefore demanded an end to Western Education and want the Sharia (Islamic law) applied in the country. In order to achieve this, the members of the sect engaged the state in July 2009.
and within a few days; the bloody uprising has spread to neighbouring Borno, Yobe, Kano and Kaduna states.

At the end of the first phase of the uprising, more than one thousand innocent citizens were reportedly killed and property worth millions of Naira destroyed. Not done, in September 2010, Boko Haram members numbering about two hundred stormed the Bauchi Central Prison and freed about three hundred inmates. This action was believed to be a revenge strike for the extra-judicial killing of their leader Mohammed Yusuf, who was captured alive but was later killed by the agents of the state.

Similarly, on Christmas and New Year eve of 2009 and 2010, Jos and the capital city of Abuja respectively witnessed series of bomb explosions with severe devastations on the life and property of the people.

In all, between 1980 and today, several people old and young have been killed and property worth several billions destroyed. Can all of these killings and destruction of property be in the name of religious propagation? Certainly, these constitute a serious problem for the peace, unity and stability of the Nigerian state.

1.3 **Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research are to:

1. Interrogate the interface between religion and politics in Nigeria.

2. Examine the impact of religion in the formation, growth and development of the Nigerian State.
3. Examine the relationship between the quest for political Islam and the rise of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria.

4. Investigate the role(s) which political Islam play in the promotion of non-sectarian politics in Nigeria.

5. Examine the objectives, motives and the strategies of those agitating for political Islam in Nigeria.

6. Critically examine the responses of the state and the society at large to the agitations for political Islam in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How has the interface between religion and politics been in Nigeria?

2. What is the impact of religion on the formation, growth and development of the Nigerian State?

3. What relationship exists between the quest for political Islam and the rise of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria?

4. What role(s) does political Islam plays in the promotion of non-sectarian politics in Nigeria?

5. What are the objectives, motives and strategies of those agitating for political Islam in Nigeria?

6. What are the responses of the state and the society at large to the agitation for political Islam in Nigeria?
1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in its attempt to illuminate the concept of political Islam within the prism of religious fundamentalism and the politicisation of religion in Nigeria. While past efforts were devoted to examining the interface between religion and politics, this study goes beyond this by examining the extent to which religion is being politicised in Nigeria, while at the same time identifying and articulating the potentialities of religion especially the cohesion that it fosters as a catalyst for national development.

Globally, religious crises are difficult to manage, hence research efforts to understand the root causes of such crises are certainly indispensable to national peace and sustainable development. The study hopes to unravel the objectives, motives and strategies of those agitating for political Islam in Nigeria. When this is done, it would be easier for other religious adherents and the state to device means of curtailing the violent expressions which seems to frequently attend such agitations.

Finally, the study remains justified by the fact that it would contribute to the repository of knowledge about the misunderstood religions of Islam and Christianity beyond the mere study of religious uprising especially in the Northern parts of the country. When religious fundamentals are better understood and scriptural doctrines are respected, this will serve as the basis for the harmonious coexistence of religious adherents, not only in Nigeria but possibly all over the world.
1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

Political Islam

Political Islam here refers to the belief that Islam has a guiding political doctrine and clearly stated injunctions about how state and society should be ordered. Political Islamists are Muslims with avowed commitment and dedication to the establishment of an Islamically ordered society based on the principles of Sharia, to proselytise in order to reinvigorate the faithful as well as the conscious effort to establish a distinct union of Muslim communities called *Ummah* based on the example of the holy prophet of Islam and sustained by the *Khulafah Roshidun* (the four rightly guided Caliphs). Thus, in this research, political Islam and Islamism is defined as an ideology or a set of values that refer to the original sources and comprehensive nature of Islam in terms of its socio-economic and political arrangement of society, are used interchangeably.

Religious Fundamentalism

Given the use, misuse and abuse of the term fundamentalism, it is apposite to adopt the definition provided by the most broad ranging research project yet to be conducted on the nature of fundamentalism by the Fundamentalism Project at the University of Chicago, where they suggest that fundamentalism refers to a discernable pattern of religious militancy by which the self-styled “true-believers” attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the boarders of their religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviours.

Politicisation of Religion

This refers to the use, misuse, abuse and manipulation of religion; its principles, doctrines and scriptural injunctions to achieve motives, interests and goals that are essentially non-sectarian.
The Nigerian State

Just like most concepts in the Social Sciences, the term State has been a subject of conceptual disputation as there are several definitions as there are scholars and writers on the subject matter. For our own purpose, the state is identified with the nation in such a manner that it represents an organization in which government is the administrative organ. Relying on Smith and Zeocher, the State is defined as “a politically organized group of people occupying a definite territory and living under a government entirely or almost entirely free from external control and competent to secure habitual obedience from persons within it” (cf. Ologbenla, 1998: 20). The Nigerian State on the other hand is a Post-colonial state. The historical origin of the state compels it to act most often not in the interest of the people but that of its progenitor. It therefore lacks autonomy, it is rentier in nature, lacks capacity for efficient extraction and allocation of resources, it politics relies on Patron-Client relationship and the state essentially manifest what Marxist scholars have described as a class society in which one class dominates over the others.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examines Political Islam and explains how Fundamentalist agitations are used in the Politicisation of religion in Nigeria. In other words, it seeks to examine the roles which religion has been playing in the formation, growth and development of the Nigerian state.

However, for the study to be concise and manageable, the scope covers the period 1980-2012, spanning a total of thirty-two years. The justification for this is that the Maitatsine revolt in Kano in 1980 is arguably the first religious uprising with a political Islamist agenda in modern Nigeria. Since then and until now, there have been series of uprising, riots and violent confrontations with
the state in various parts of the country. Some of these confrontations were the Izala movement in Zaria, the unabated crises in Jos, the Boko Haram insurrection in Bauchi, Maiduguri, Kano, Yobe and some other states in the North. The areas to be covered in this study are Lagos, Gusau, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Minna and Abuja.

Map showing delimitation of study
REFERENCES


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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Religion and Politics

The centrality of religion to human existence and consequently to the socio-economic and political ordering of state and society cannot be over-emphasized. Religion is the belief in, worship of and the desire to obey transcendent beings, usually on the assumption that those being possess the power to regulate affairs in this world and dispense punishment in heaven. Religion is the most single powerful motive or desire in human being, for some others, it is a device through which the injustice of this world is made tolerable for those who suffer from it. When it is difficult or impossible to understand nature, events or anything, people fall back on religion, through the quest for divine intervention. Religion has several characteristics chief amongst which are truth, rituals, prayer, worship and supplications. It is also guided by spiritual, meditational, ancestral, social and exploitative principles.

Ibn Khaldun (cf. Clarke, 1986) stressed the cohesive role of religion in society. He opines that religion strengthens group feeling and solidarity which are based ultimately on the bonds of kinship. This position finds expression in Durkheim assertion, that religion cemented social relations, made and remade ‘the souls of the collectivity and of individuals’ and strengthened the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member. In such a way that the ‘group periodically renews sentiments which it has of itself and its unity. Religion brings people together in society and by this unity; people become conscious of the groups they form and those sentiments which the state expresses. While religion can contribute and has contributed to the
cohesion, unity and integration of societies, it can be used to reinforce division within the same community or between different states (Clarke 1986:229).

Religion serves group, community or national identity. It has helped provide some if not all leaders with symbols, rituals and cohesion found in nationalist or liberation movement. The American worldview which manifests in ‘democracy, constitutionalism, individual freedom, personal activism and laissez-faire economics has been described as a civil religion’ which serves to unite Americans. This is based on the Durkeheimian’s view of the role which religion can play as a form of social cement (cf. Clarke 1986: 228). While religion can contribute and has contributed to the cohesion, unity and integration of societies, it can be used to reinforce division within the same community or between different states (Clarke 1986:229).

Barker (1961) observes that the rise and spread of the Christian religion made a break from the old, through useful system of ideas. He notes that the biblical text “Render…… unto Ceasar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are Gods (Mathew 22 v 21) ultimately meant the severance of the sphere of society from the sphere of the state. The effect of this on the Christian religion was the emergence of the doctrine of two ends, the temporal end which alone belongs to the state, and the eternal end which belongs to and is the prerogative of the Church (Baker, 1961: 7).

It was St Augustine (354-430AD) who attempted a systematic Christian philosophy of society in his work titled the “City of God.” where he refers to the biblical Jerusalem and Babylon, the temporal and the spiritual. He claims that one is on earth and the other in heaven. He notes that the City of God was concerned with belief, obedience and the love of God almost to the point of contempt for self, while the earthly city (Babylon) was the manifestation of pride, sin, lust, and
self-love to the point of contempt for God. He argues that self-love was the source of evil in man.

St Augustine believes that the political state ought to mediate between the earthly realm of sin and disharmony, and the heavenly realm of absolute righteousness.

In his opinion, all political institutions as long as they follow the love of God, they are ordained by God, but once they deviate from the love of God, they become bad. The ideal state therefore is where there is the rule of freemen by freemen and that anytime a dictator emerges then the state is no longer ideal, because the divine law of God has been violated.

Building on the St. Augustinian doctrine, St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274AD) attempts to synthesize the philosophy of Aristotle with the articles of Christian faith and in doing this, he generated very useful and authoritative system of theology and political doctrine which formed the foundation of Roman Catholic teachings. Essentially, he based his teachings on the exposition of the idea of natural law.

Aquinas argues that there are four things which belonged to the realm of the state, while all else as a matter of the eternal end belongs to the Church. The first is the security and sufficiency of life which means freedom from the threat of death and freedom from the threat of starvation. The second is the legal scheme of order and justice which involves a set of laws proceeding from the people or from competent authority acting on their behalf with a correlative scheme of administrative order. The third, according to him is the promotion of a minimum standard of morality in aid of and subsidiary to the major moral activity of the Church which has the general custody of moral life. The fourth, which is at the top of the scale is the protection of religion as an auxiliary function to the life of the Church because the state, being bound by a due respect for
the eternal end to secure for its members the conditions in which they can exercise the eternal truth under the wing and guidance of the Church (Barker, 1961:8).

What is instructive in these two systematic theories of Christian political thought is the distinction between the temporal and spiritual and consequently the separation of the state from the Church. Herein lays the distinction between Christian and Islamic political thoughts. For in Islamic political thought, the temporal and the spiritual are fused and one cannot be separated from the other. According to Muhammed Igbal,

In Islam, it is the same reality which appears as the church, from one point of view and the state from another… The essence of tawhid (monotheism) as a working idea is equality, solidarity and freedom. The state from an Islamic standpoint is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space time forces, an aspiration to realize them into a definite human organization (cf. Jawed, 1999:1)

This unity of the Church and the state in Islam, demonstrates the inherent link between Islam as a comprehensive way of ordering human life and politic as an indispensable machinery for securing the universal compliance with this way. This unity was further given bent by another distinguished scholar of Islam, Bernard Lewis when he asserts that

For Muslims, the State was God’s State, the army God’s army, and of course the enemy was God’s enemy. Of more practical important, the laws was God’s law, and in principle there could be no other. The question of separating the church and the state did not arise, since there was no Church, as an autonomous-institution to be separated. Church and State were one and the same (cf. Jawed, 1999:1)

Beyond this fusion of religion and politics, what is today referred to as Islamic political thought actually stemmed from the controversy which broke out after the death of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Mohammed (SAW) at the Saqifah assembly called for the purpose of choosing the next
successor of the Holy Prophet. This disputation formed the basis of the theoretical underpinning of the nature of political leadership in Islam.

### 2.2 Political Islam in Perspective

Hamid Enayat (1999) identified three discernable strands of political thought from the dispute over the personality of who became the successor to the prophet. This disputation formed the foundation of the doctrinal and theoretical underpinning of the nature of political leadership in Islam.

The first group called the Shiites consists of those who believed that the prophet had designated his son-in-law and cousin, Ali to be his successor. According to this strand of thought, the designation had taken place during the Prophets journey from his last pilgrimage from Mecca in 632AH at a place called the Ghardir Khum (Pool of Khum) where he made the fateful declaration that ‘He for whom I was master, should hence have Ali as master’. Within this strand, was another splinter group who believed that the next successor should be the Prophet’s Uncle Abbas; they argued that Abbas being Ali’s senior, had a better claim to the Prophet’s position. However, this group was actually in the minority.

The second group who were in the majority opined that the Prophet deliberately left the question of his successor to the community to take a decision as to who should be the most competent person to assume the position of leadership, these group of Muslims came to be known as Sunni or the followers of Sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet. This appellation symbolises their adherence to the principle of tradition, rather than personalities. Indeed, the Sunnis were of the opinion that it was the exclusive right of the Muslim community to choose the Prophet’s successor in political
leadership rather than by ascription or the exclusive preserve of any individual based on his relationship with the Prophet.

The last group which represented the third major political trend consisted of those who rejected both the Shiite and the Sunni positions. The members of this group became known as the *Khawarij* (which means outsider or who seceded). This group came into existence about twenty-five years after the death of the Prophet when a group of Muslims revolted against Caliph Ali who had agreed to refer the dispute between himself and the ‘rebel’ Mu’awiyah to arbitration. They believed that the dispute was a conflict between right and wrong and therefore emphatically insisted that in such matters, there could be no arbitration or judgment by man, except by God.

While the Shiites vehemently argued that the leadership of the Muslim Community was too vital to be left for the deliberations of ordinary people who could make the mistake of choosing the wrong person, the Khawarij on their own insisted that following the Quran, Muslims have the right, irrespective of their tribal, racial or class distinctions to elect or be elected as rulers. This it should be noted, set them aside from the Sunni’s who for the most part confined the Caliphate to the Meccan *Quraysh* ethnic stock and the Shiites who restricted leadership to one branch of the Meccan aristocratic lineage and in fact to the House of the Prophet (known as Banu Hashim). Another distinguishing feature between the Sunnis and the Shiites is that whereas the Sunnis believe in the Caliphate as epitomized by the four rightly guided Caliphs (Khulafah Rashedun), the Shiites espoused the concept of the Imamate.

But more fundamentally, the Sunni-Shiites dichotomy has to do with personalities and those dealing with concepts and doctrines. While the Shiites espouses the perceived misdeeds of the
first three Caliphs before Ali, the Sunnis emphasize Islamic concepts and doctrine. Ibn Tamiyyah (cf. Enayat, 1991) has remained the most celebrated scholar in espousing these doctrinal differences between Sunnis and Shiites. For example he noted that there is nowhere in the Quran and the Sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet to support the Shiites’ claim that the Imamate is one of the pillars of the religion of Islam. He queried, how this could have been otherwise since according to him, the Imams disappearance has reduced him to a useless being unable to serve any worldly and other-worldly interests of the Muslims since the hidden Imam according to the Shiites has now been absent for more than four hundred years. The anticipation of his return has produced nothing but false hopes, sedition and corrupt practices among certain groups of Muslims. Citing Quran (chapter 4:13, 69) Obeying God and the Prophet is enough to entitle every Muslim to paradise. He insists that by requiring obedience to a hidden Imam whom no one can see, hear or communicate with, Shiism imposes a duty on Muslims beyond their capacity. He concluded that the doctrine of Imamate in Shiite tradition aims at setting a standard which is impossible to achieve (cf. Enayat 1991).

In the same vein, the Shiites continues to confuse the issue of power to rule with that of competence to rule. If the Sunnis pay allegiance to their rulers, this does not mean that they deny the competence or virtues of other claimants to rulership. He believes that rulers should be obeyed only in so far as they themselves obey God and the Prophet and enforce religious tenets. To the Sunnis therefore, the Amir, Imam or Caliph is the person who has the power to fulfill the purpose of leadership. Ibn Tamiyyah submitted that Sunni realism which recognises the legitimacy of powerful and competent rulers is preferable to Shiite’s idealism, which only lays claim to the ascendancy of an inaccessible leader since this can give rise to anarchy. The Sunni – Shiite controversy in Islamic political thought can be summed up as follows:
…the difference between Shiism and Sunnism is something more substantive and more far reaching than pedantic squabbling over ritual, legal and even theological matters. It impinges on the way in which the Quranic injunctions are applied to the nature of man, the method of interpreting and conveying message, the meaning of justice and the philosophy of history. Sunnism and Shiism are two parallel orthodox perspectives of the Islamic revelation that cannot converge in the exoteric aspects for reasons inherent in the nature of each. (Enayat, 1991: 51)

However, despite these seemingly irreconcilable differences between Sunnism and Shiism, it must be pointed out that in its original form the Sunni-Shiite’s dispute is not concerned with the fundamentals of Islamic religion. As noted by Enayat (1991) their disagreement does not relate to the nature of God, or the function of his Emissary or the manner of achieving salvation. Rather it relates to issues which are decidedly marginal to these matters and have no ‘bearing on the basic duties of a Muslim such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage, almsgiving, and holy war’ (Enayat, 1991: 31)

With this in mind, there have been concerted efforts to reconcile these two schools of thought in Islam and one of the vehicles for achieving this was through Sufism. With its theoretical aversion to bigotry and prejudice, its exaltation of tolerance and humility as virtues necessitated by the patient quest for the truth or right and its inherent dislike of any doctrinal regimentation, Sufism has been an ideal framework for bringing about this unity of purpose between the two divide.

But beyond this, Enayat (1991) suggests that with the modernist trend gaining ground among religious circles in the Muslim world from the middle of the nineteenth century, the barriers between Sunnis and Shiites gradually became less insuperable and he adduced some reasons for this. The first is that there was the altered mould of political loyalties, such that the idea of nation-state was replacing religious devotion as the ruling civic culture of the modern age. Second, is that, since Islamic unity is one of the cardinal articles of faith, the leaders of the first
generation of Islamic modernists, notably Jamal ad-Din Asad-abadi (Afghani 1897) and Muhammed Abduh (1905) made very strong pleas for Sunni-Shiite unity. The third came as a byproduct of modernism and this was rationalism, which governed the better part of the modernist reformulation of Islamic spiritual heritage devoid of narrow and parochial values in the interests of the universally applicable findings of reason.

Indeed, just as the Quranic Unitarian teachings liberated the Arabs from tribalism; Islamic modernism was expected to dissolve all sectarian bonds. Beyond this, the fight against Western domination which coincided with this period required the unity of all Muslims irrespective of their subsidiary beliefs. It was therefore expedient to tolerate and support heterodox trends in so far as they contributed to imperialistic struggle. (Enayat, 1991) It is the desire to shield away the imperialist West and to preserve pristine Islam from this Western imperialistic infiltration into Islam and the Muslim world that has led to the phenomenon now famously called political Islam.

What is political Islam? How best can this concept be understood? What led to the upsurge in the agitation for political Islam in virtually all Muslim countries all over the world? Just like most concepts in the social sciences, political Islam too, is a controversial concept, known within the Arabic world as “al-Islam al-Siyasiyy”, or Islamiyya (Islamism). It refers to a set of ideologies which insists that Islam is not only a religion but also a political system. This suggests that modern Muslims must be prepared to live with Islamic principles in their legal, social, economic, cultural and political undertakings.

Fuller (2003) avers that political Islam refers to the “support for (Muslim) identity, authenticity, broader regionalism, revivalism and the revitalization of the (Muslim) community. More politically, in a footnote to the September 11 bombing of the Twin Tower Commission, it is
understood as “an Islamic militant, anti-democratic movement bearing a holistic vision of Islam whose final aim is the restoration of the Caliphate” (cf. Fuller, 2003:21).

Indeed, some scholars have argued that the concept political Islam presupposes that there is Islam as a religion which is separate and distinct from the phenomenon now described as political Islam. Esposito (1992, 1993) Halliday (2003) by this logic, assumed an apolitical notion of Islam. Extending this argument further, some scholars suggest that the conception of political Islam is ‘unhistorical and self serving’, because it is a creation of the Americans to explain the Iranian Islamic Revolution. In concrete terms, political Islam was an historical fluke of the short lived heydays of secular Arab nationalism between 1945 and 1970 (Understanding Islamism; Middle East Report, 2005). Consequently, in the West, Islamist movements are often portrayed in their most extreme and violent form. While the diversity of the movements and the bulk of non-violent Islamists abound within and outside the Muslim world receive little or no attention.

However, properly conceived for our own purpose, political Islam assumes an ideology that guides society as a whole and that state law must be in conformity with the dictates of the Islamic Sharia (Shepard, 1996:40). This conception is derived from the belief that Islam is a total way of life and its laws should therefore guide social, economic, political and personal way of life of the people.
Flowing from this Ayoob, (2005) gave a more precise and analytically useful definition when he describes it as a form of instrumentation of Islam by individuals, groups and organisations that pursue political objectives. It provides, according to him, “political responses to today’s societal challenges by imaging a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition” (Ayoob, 2005:952). Indeed, adherents of political Islam are not in doubt as to the fact that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in contemporary Muslim world and implemented in some fashion (Ayoob, 2005:951).

Thus, increased agitation for political Islam may not be unconnected with the widespread deficiencies if not outright failure of the post-colonial states in the Muslim world especially the Middle East. This failure has manifested in excruciating poverty in spite of the petro-dollar, massive corruption, over reliance on coercion, crisis in values and identities, decay of the educational system, problems of immigrant integration and the failure of Arab socialism in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria. These failures have coincided with the collapse of various secularist nationalist and leftist political projects leaving the only available option to the revival of old Islamic precepts (Beinin and Stork, 1997).

Apart from this, the political Islam agitators continue to argue that the primary threat of the West is not political or economic but cultural. They insist that cultural imperialism and dependency robs one of faith and identity and this no doubt will destroy Islam and the Islamic community (Ummah) far more effectively than political rule can ever do. Islamist thus re-enact the memory of the cultural and institutional success of Islamic civilization perceived to be better and superior to the new dominant and rampaging Western civilization.
Despite the West’s tendency to consider political Islam as a monolithic phenomenon bent on implanting a single grand agenda. Ayoob (2005) observes that there are several Islamism operating within discrete political contexts determined by the existence of the sovereign territorial state. He notes that although the various Islamist movements have recourse to similar vocabulary because they draw inspiration from the same source but that when the actions and political objectives of the Islamists are carefully scrutinized, it becomes clear that they are engaged primarily in promoting multiple national agenda and not a universal project.

His conclusion is that even the shared preoccupation of various Islamist groups with creating the “Islamic state” is very clearly envisaged within the territorial confines of an existing states and that their objective to Islamise existing state and not to join them in a single political entity can be challenged based on the fact that the objective of core Islamist is to unite several Islamic state under the banner of an Islamic Ummah akin to what obtained during the Caliphate. The objective of Islamist needless to stress is the idea of recreating a universal Caliphate, despite the fact that there are territorial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural division within the Muslim world today. Although, whether this is achievable remains a matter of mere conjecture.

Indeed, Ayoob’s (2005) insistence that extremist transnational organisation like Al-Qaeda that purports to speak on behalf of Islam and Muslims looms large in the West’s imagination as a result of their dramatic acts of violence and terror. His argument that organisations like the Al-Qaeda are marginal to the larger majority of Islamist movements and therefore ineffective as far as the day to day political struggles within Muslim countries are concerned may be held as valid. But this speaks to only one side of the story, because there is no doubt that the leaders of Al Qaeda rightly or wrongly believes that the only enemy of Islam is the West led by the United
States of America and that it is only through the defeat of the West, can the goal of a universal Caliphate be realised.

From the foregoing analysis, two issues are raised by Ayoob (2005) the first is that Islamism is above all a political ideology and not a theological construct. Its main attraction is not that it offers spiritual solace, but that it has the capacity to provide answers to contemporary political and social problems. By this analysis, according to him, political Islam is a product of modernity and also a response to it.

The second argument is that despite the ahistorical and acontextual construction of a romanticised golden age, political Islam comes in various shapes and sizes and it may be more accurate to refer to political Islam in plural terms. In spite of this, it is a common believe among the Islamists that the Muslims golden age was lost when they deviated from pure and pristine practice of Islam. The prescription is therefore simple, if Muslims are able to recreate a true and pure Islamic society, they will be able to regain their former glory and compete with the West on the basis of equality.

The history of political Islam can be traced to the late nineteenth century when the Ottoman Empire was in decline owing to the crass desire of Muslims to Westernise and modernise in a bid to compete with the European powers. It was within this context that Islamic scholars such as Jamal-ad-din al. Afghani (1937-1897), Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) wrote and preached Islamic alternatives to political, economic and cultural decline of the empire (Mortimer, 1982:93).
Indeed, Muhammed Abduh and Rashid Rida laid the foundation for the beginning of the Salafist Movement as well as the Islamic modernist movement. The ideas they espoused included the creation of a truly Islamic society under Sharia law and the rejection of “taqliq” which connotes the blind imitation of earlier authorities, which in their opinion, was a deviation from the true messages of Islam.

Meanwhile, prior to the emergence of Jamal Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, there were some Islamic revivalist leaders which include Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (1564-1624) who was part of a reassertion of orthodoxy within Sufism and was credited with giving Indian Islam the rigid and conservative stamp it bears today. (Ahmed, 1967) Closely associated with Sirhindi was Ibn Tammiiyyah, a Syrian Islamic jurist who is often quoted by contemporary adherents of political Islam. Ibn Tammiiyyah drew attention to the decline in the use of the Sharia law among Muslims and spoke against innovative practices such as the celebration of Mohammed’s birthday or the construction of Mosques around tombs of Sufi Sheikhs, arguing that these were unacceptable borrowing from Christianity (Memom, 1976:78).

Two contemporaries Shah Waliullah of India and Muhammed Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab of Arabia met each other while studying in Mecca. Whereas Mohammed Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab advocated doing away with later accretions like grave worship and getting to the letter and spirit of Islam as preached and practiced by Muhammed. This he intended to achieve by founding a popular revivalist movement known as the Wahhabism. On the other hand, Sha Walihullah was a forerunner of reformist like Muhammad Abduh in his belief that there was a constant need for new “Ijtihad” as Muslim community progressed and expanded, the new generations had to cope with new problems. He showed keen interest in the social and economic problems of the poor (Mortimer, 1982: 67). It is to be noted that Shah Walihullah’s followers founded the Daral Ulum
seminary in 1867 in the town of Deoband and from this school developed the Deobandi movement which became the largest philosophical movement of traditional Islamic thought and led to the establishment of several Madrasahs throughout Indian, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

However, what is today referred to as contemporary political Islam or Islamism is historically associated with the ideas and political activities of two great Islamic intellectuals Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Abu’l-a’la Mawdudi (1903-1979).

Other intellectuals and activists such as Sayyid Quth (1906-1966), Sayyid Abul-Hassan ‘Ali Nadwi (1914-1999) and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) gave practical expressions to the ideas and great thoughts of Banna and Mawdudi

On the issue of Jihad, which means to struggle or to strive, Quran chapter 2 verse 256 declares that “there shall be no compulsion in religion”. While Islamist like Maududi and Banna belief that the Islamic state can be brought about by gradual political participation and societal transformation others like Qutb and Khomeini think otherwise especially because the claim that fighting unbelievers is the preeminent enactment of individual Muslim piety seems to justify the characterisation of Islam and indeed political Islam as sanctioning and encouraging violence.

Political Islamists like Qutb, argues that only in a state in which Islamic law reigns supreme are human beings free from enslavement to one another’s rule and all are equal by virtue of their common submission to God. Therefore, the path to freedom according to Qutb (1991:47- 48) must occasionally be hewn by way of the sword because tyrants are not reasoned out of power and Jahiliyyah is not “abstract theory”… It consciously or unconsciously strives to preserve its own existence, to defend its essence (and) to annihilate dangerous elements which threaten its very being” (cf. Euben and Zaman, 2009:44) For Islamists therefore, Jihad is both a means and
an end, an effort to eradicate those obstacles to restoring a just community on earth that simultaneously brings human action into accord with God’s plans and purposes.

Thus, Muslims scholars and Islamist have tended to consider Jihad against foreign enemies as *Fard kifaya* (collective obligation), that is, a duty a group of people within the community may perform on behalf of the rest and this presupposes that a legitimate Muslim leader can declare or lead the charge. This has been distinguished by Jurists from *Fard’ayn* (individual duty) that must be fulfilled by every single Muslim in cases of defensive Jihad, when the Ummah is under attack.

However, as a mode of political action Sayyid Qutb insists that Jihad must be regarded as a “permanent condition not an occasional concern” one that in the current circumstances requires deeds rather than words, struggle rather than contemplation, revolution at home as well as resistance abroad (Qutb 1991:67-68).

Meanwhile, it must be appreciated that the largely defensive character of Jihad sought to show that relations between Muslims and non-Muslims were normally peaceful rather than antagonistic. Mahmud Shaltut (cf. Peters 1996:74-75) argues that the Quranic verses on fighting “prohibit the provocation of hostility and this prohibition is reinforced by God’s repugnance to aggression and by his dislike of those who provoke hostility.

Therefore, conversion by force is anathema to Islam while fighting is commanded only in defence and in response to aggression initiated by others. He pointed out that, even defensive Jihad must aim at “the termination of the aggression and the establishment of religious liberty devoted to God and free from any pressure of force” (cf. Euben and Zaman 2009:41). Given this type of argument, many Islamist explicitly dismiss such argument as a symptom of false consciousness, especially one of the many destructive effects of colonial domination. Mawdudi,
for example believes that while the imperialist ravaged the world to satisfy their greed, “Jihad alone conjures up the vision of a marching band of religious fanatics with savage beards and fury eyes brandishing drawn swords and attacking infidels wherever they met them” (cf. Euben and Zaman, 2009: 41).

For Qutb, while he agrees that Islam does not tolerate the spreading of its message by force or coercion, he had little patience with those who sought to present Jihad as legitimate only in self defence. It is in this connection that many contemporary Islamists believe that violent Jihad is a necessary response to the pervasive power of those who demonstrate hostility to Muslim lives, lands, pieties and sensibilities. Jihad in this context is therefore seen as a form of retaliation from psychological, economic as well as physical violence initially unleashed on Muslims and Islam generally. This view of Jihad subsumes individuals into “believers” and “infidels”. It is within this context that the carnage wrought by the attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in 2001, the Bali night club bombing in 2002, Madrid commuter trains bombing in 2004, the London train attack in 2005 and the daily attacks in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan must be understood.

Mawdudi (cf. Euben and Zerman, 2009) observes that Jihad is but another name for the attempt to erect the system of truth since the Quran declares it to be a touchstone on the same footing with a man’s faith. The nature of his faith itself requires that he should concentrate all his effort upon wrestling leadership from unbelieving and corrupt men so as to entrust it to the righteous. Upon erecting the system of truth that has been ordained for the conduct of the world according to the will of God, there must then exists a righteous community committed to the principle of truth and devoted to the sole purpose of erecting, maintaining and properly realising the system of truth ordained by Islam. We must point out that the fact that some Islamist thinkers justify and
sanctify violent struggles does not mean that all those who advocate or engage in Jihad endorse violence (Euben and Zaman 2009)

In a comparative analysis of political philosophies, religion and culture, Black (1993) drew some similarities and differences between classical Islam and Medieval Europe. He opines that it is usually assumed that Christendom and Islam was more like each other in the earlier times, but that by the seventeenth century, it may be said that one became ‘modern’ while the other remained ‘medieval and feudal’. This cannot be other wise if one considers the differences in the conception of religious community, religious law and the difference in the mode of political reasoning. For example in term of similarities, Black (1993) observes that both Christianity and Islam preached a message of salvation that was personal and social which was aimed at improving the way human beings treated themselves. He argues that the Christian community was initially designed as a gathering-together or assembly of those to be saved from the world. At first, it consists of small groups meeting together for prayer and dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel. Within a few generations, it transformed into a cosmopolitan structure of cells linked by Bishop (overseers) that, collaborated worldwide to define, defend and proclaim the faith. By the fourth century AD, it was developing a patriarchal character and becoming a mass society.

On the other hand, the *Ummah* of Islam was designed by Mohammed and his followers to overcome blood feud and tribalism among Arabs by submitting all of them to a single set of moral and legal rules and to a unified political and military leadership. Mohammed did not conceive any separation between ‘spiritual’ and secular aspects of society, his Prophecy and leadership were spiritual, judicial, fiscal and military’. Indeed, after the death of Mohammed, the Caliph stood as the defender of the faith, the dispenser of justice, the leader in prayer and in war, all in one. The religious law (Sharia) and religious government the (Caliphate) were concerned
with both this world and with the hereafter, which served as a powerful source of social discipline (Black, 1993:60)

In further identifying the difference between the two religions Black (1993) argues that the Christian community did not have a religious law in the Judaic or Islamic sense. Its political and economic matters were left virtually unregulated. Just as its social teaching was left wide open to outside influence, while in Islam, the Islamic law (Sharia) covers every aspect of life from conception to burial. It specified social relationship of many kinds, including political ones, adjudication, property, social, welfare as well as ritual matters. It embodies religious rituals, moral and social ideals. In principle it is applicable to everything.

In medieval Europe, the validity of secular laws was always fully recognised. Indeed Roman law was sometimes accorded almost scriptural respect while in Islamic religious justice system, there was no place for legislation until the tenth century when religious scholars could interpret and apply law by independent reasoning known as *Ijtihad*.

Meanwhile, by far the most crucial difference between classical Islam and medieval Europe was the emergence in Europe, of what is today known as the idea of a fully legitimate secular political authority known as the State, since Christian theologians had always regarded secular power as ordained by God. On the contrary, Islamic cities were never self-governing and rarely acquired any organisational coherence for the territorial unit as a whole. Indeed, political leadership in Islamic society whether by a Sultan and his dynasty or by religious *Ulama* (scholars) was intensely personal, this, no doubt might have been responsible for these cities inability to evolve an impersonal kind of authority which we associate with the State in the modern sense (Black, 1993)
While examining the contextual citizenship in Modern Islamic thought, Scott (2007) indicates that the relations between Muslims and non-Muslim in classical Islamic society were based on the concept of *Dhimma*. According to Cahen, the *Dhimma* designated an indefinitely renewed contract though which Jews and Christians (people of the Book) and according to the Hanafi and the Maliki schools of law, is a situation where other non-Muslims were accorded protection ‘on (the) condition of their acknowledging the domination of Islam’ (cf. Scott, 2007:3). Citing a contested document preserved in the *Sira* of Ibn Ishaq and later known as the Constitution of Medina, he avers “served as one of the Prophetic precedent for the *Dhimma*.

According to Scott (2007) the constitution established the terms for an alliance between Muhammad, his religious community and the eight tribes of Medina in about 627AD. He notes that the contracting parties, both Muslim and Jews agreed to recognise Mohammed as their leader. “The Jews as monotheists were clearly distinguished from other non-believers at the time especially the Arab polytheists (*mushrikun*). Jews received the protection of the state and were allowed to follow their religion as well as own properties within the territory.” He indicates that they were protected but not equal since *Dhimmis* retained freedom of religion based on the Quranic injunction of “no compulsion in religion” contained in (Q2:256) on the condition of the payment of poll tax known as *Jiz‘ya*, by male adult of sound mind.

The *Dhimma* contract it must be emphasised offered non-Muslims security of life and property, defence against the enemy, communal self government and freedom of religious practice. *Dhimmis* were allowed to retain their own religious organisations and personal status codes, which covered marriages, divorce, inheritance and guardianship which were enforced by their own courts (Scott 2007) While the political supremacy of and dominance of Islam were
necessary, uniformity of religion was not. Thus, coercion was condemned, while faith as a voluntary act was emphasised.

It should be noted that while non-Muslims were tolerated, they were not equal. For example, the non-Muslims were excluded from the polity and did not have any legal parity with Muslims because the testimony of a non-Muslim was not considered to be equal to that of a Muslim based on the Quranic statement, “…..and never will Allah grant to the unbelievers a (way to triumph over the Believers)” Q4:141). In sum, according to Scott, (2007) the non-Muslims were a subject of social discrimination.

Scott (2007) further argues that medieval Muslims have a concept of ‘rights’ and ‘freedom’ just like Crone, shows that Sharia law gave Dhimmis ‘civil’ or ‘human claims’, in that, their lives, property, personal freedom, family relations and commercial transaction were protected even though, the rights of Dhimmis were not acquired by an individual but only by virtue of his membership of a protected community (cf. Scott, 2007:4)

Contemporarily, it is not uncommon to associate or even equate political Islam (Islamism) with violence and terrorism while we forget or ignore the historical fact that most religions and nations have resorted to violence in their “just” struggles, wars, and revolutions; the holy wars of the Bible, the Crusades, the French and American revolutions, the Afghan jihad, the war on global terrorism etc. The critical distinction is between the legitimate and illegitimate use of religion to justify the use of violence (Esposito, 2010:73).

Meanwhile, Jackson (2007) opines albeit erroneously given the fact above that, violence and by implication terrorism is inherent in Islam, because to him unlike Christianity, Islam makes no distinction between Church and State and has never discarded the notion of religious war and
purports to regulate both the public and the private lives of Muslim and has much to say about political life of the community. Apart from this, it is usually assumed that terrorism is directly linked to, emerges from or is inspired by extremist and fundamentalist forms of Islam.

Islamic terrorism is motivated largely by religious or ‘sacred’ causes rather than political or ideological concerns. Jackson (2007) While this may not be entirely true because most of the grievances and goals are often primarily nationalistic, such as to end the occupation of lands or to force “foreign” military forces from what these Islamists regard as homelands but using religious symbolism, referring to moral justifications and obligations and adding the certitude that comes from moral authority and heavenly rewards, can strengthen recruitment and enhance a willingness to fight and die in a sacred struggle (Esposito, 2010:72). Thus, Islamic terrorists aim primarily to destroy Israel and the West, overthrow apostate regimes in Muslim lands, return the Muslim World to a true and pure form of Islam and re-establish the Islamic Caliphate, which entails uniting all Muslim into one state and dominating the world. All these are certainly not inspired by sacred reasons alone.

Much more fundamentally, Muslim terrorists are said to be motivated by a deep ‘hatred’ of United States of America and the West which is in turn caused by rage and a sense of impotence brought about by the failure of the Muslim world to achieve economic development and Westernization, successive military defeats of Arabs by Israel and the inability of people especially in the Muslim World to resist the intrusive process of globalisation and secularisation (Jackson 2007: 406). This has led scholars like Ranstorp (1996) to see Islamic terrorism as anti-modern, anti-secular and anti-democratic
The threat of secularisation from foreign sources is the catalyst for springing religious terrorists into action; these groups are motivated by xenophobia against everything alien or secular and a vehement rejection of Western culture (Ranstorp, 1996:49). In the same vein, another scholar Barber (2002: 247) avers that these ‘Jihadic’ warriors detest modernity, the secular, scientific, rational and commercial civilisation created by the Enlightenment as it is defined in its virtues of freedom, democracy, tolerance and diversity.

Islamic terrorism is therefore seen as a potent force that threatens to destroy Western democracy, civilisation and its entire way of life since they have the support of several dangerous ‘rogue’ regimes and hundreds of millions of sympathisers across both Muslim and Western world. As a consequence, thousands of militant jihadists have been trained in the Afghan campaign and are linked together in a global jihad (Jackson 2007: 408) Driven by hatred, fanaticism and extremism rather than by political ideology Jackson (2007; 409) insists that today’s religiously inspired terrorists are determined to cause mass causalities among civilians, driven to sacrifice themselves in murderous suicide attacks and would be willing to employ weapons of mass destruction without hesitation.

In line with this kind of thinking, the impression is given that Islamic terrorism is fanatical, religiously motivated, murderous and irrational and therefore there is no possibility of negotiation, compromise or appeasement. It is believed that eradication, deterrence, and forceful counter terrorism are the only reasonable responses. This kind of thinking needless to say, informs United States of America and the West’s responses to Islamic terrorism since it is widely believed that Islamic terrorism and extremism by Muslims living in Western societies is largely due to lack of integration, alienation, unemployment, the failure of multiculturalism or the radicalising influence of foreign jihadist.
Islamic terrorist are most often seen as vulnerable, weak minded or uneducated young men who are indoctrinated, groomed, brainwashed or radicalised into terrorism through extremist Madrasahs, Mosques, or Internet sites and also that Islamic suicide bombers are primarily young men driven by sexual frustration and impotence (Jackson, 2007: 412). This kind of thinking confirms the stereotype about Muslims and obscures the understanding of Muslim militancy especially terrorism. In contrast to Jackson’s (2007) submission, like people joining social movements throughout the world, members of terrorist organisations are not solely “have nots”, the poor, and the oppressed. Very often they are bright, educated, upwardly mobile, and motivated individuals, responding to what they perceive as grave political and social injustices in their societies. Most of them are not graduates of religious schools like Madrasahs or seminaries but of private and public schools and universities. For instance, Osama bin Laden was trained in management, economics and engineering, al-Zawahiri, a surgeon and other al-Qaeda leaders such as Mohammed Atta were all well educated middle class professionals (Esposito, 2010)

The point to note is that most of the discourses on Islamic terrorism are highly contestable because they consist of over-simplifications, misconceptions and most often mistaken inferences. For example, there is a large sophisticated body of research that seems to confirm that Islamic fundamentalism is not typically or necessarily violent, anti-democratic or incompatible with secularism and modernity (Esposito, 2010, Fuller, 2003). This is so because , Islamist movements like Hamas, Hizbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood usually referred to as Islamic terrorists groups have not only participated in national elections in their respect countries but have well established internal democratic processes. What cannot be denied from this perspective is that the branding of Islamic terrorism depoliticises, de-contextualises and de-historicises the political grievances and political struggles of groups and societies, thereby de-
linking the motives of the terrorist from the policies of the West and their allies as well as a response to anti-Islamic Western policies (Jackson, 2007) Understood from this position, there is a synthetic linkage between Islamism or political Islam and Islamic fundamentalism.

2.3 **Fundamentalism and Political Agitation**

Fundamentalism refers to a strict, uncompromising and rigid application and practice of religious teachings, rules and doctrines. Riesebrodt (2000) sees fundamentalism as a specific type of religious revival movement which reacts to social changes perceived as a dramatic crisis. In such movements, people attempt to restructure their worlds cognitively, emotionally and practically. Reinvent their social identities and regain a sense of dignity, honour and respect.

The term fundamentalism emerged in the early twentieth century specifically to describe protestant evangelicals anxious to rescue American Christianity and culture from what they perceived as the moral degeneration inaugurated by modernism, rationalism and materialism. These evangelicals referred to as “Warriors for God” sought to do ‘battle royal’ for the fundamentals by re-establishing the Bible as the authoritative moral compass for the Americans. On his part, Riesebrodt (2000) refers to fundamentalist as those who opposed biblical criticism, the teaching of evolutionism, and the philosophy of “Nietzsche” while advocating biblical literalism, strict patriarchal moralism and authority, prohibition or control of social vices and self control. He points out that fundamentalism has become “a term which nowadays is also used to refer to religious revival movements outside the protestant tradition in Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and even Confucianism”. (Riesebrodt 2000:270)

Fundamentalists do not have an elaborate theological system to supplement their devotion to the Bible. They take the name from an early twentieth-century effort to reduce Christian belief to its
fundamentals, which according to the first documented account of the movement is put as five which are ‘the inerrancy of the Bible, plus certain views about the birth, death, resurrection and return of Jesus’ (Garvey, 1993:33).

There are many types of fundamentalist movements but we are here concerned with religious fundamentalism described by Marty and Appleby (1993) as a tendency, a habit of mind, found within religious communities and embodies in certain representative individuals and movement. It manifests itself as a strategy or a set of strategies, by which believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as a people or group. Feeling this identity to be at risk in this contemporary era, they fortify it by a selective retrieval of doctrines, beliefs and practices from a sacred past. These retrieved “fundamentals” are refined, modified and sanctioned in a spirit of shrewd pragmatism to serve as bulwark against encroachment of outsiders who threaten to draw the believers into a syncretistic, ‘areligious’ or irreligious cultural milieu.

All fundamentalist movements express features which are particular to the religious tradition from which they have emerged and they share many feature in common since such movements emerged under the impact of similar processes of social transformation. Fundamentalists seek to remake the world in the service of a dual commitment to unfolding eschatological drama (by returning all things in the submission to the divine) and to self-preservation (by neutralising the threatening “other”).

This kind of endeavour often requires charismatic and authoritarian leadership and also depends upon a disciplined inner core of adherents and promotes a rigorous social and moral code for all its followers (Marty and Appleby, 1993). Fundamentalists remain firmly committed to their beliefs, despite frequent ridicule from the larger culture; in fact this is the primary defining
characteristics of fundamentalism, identified by many sociologists and historians of religion (Bruce 1989, 2000, Marsden, 1980) as its defensive reaction to modernism. Like all other people, fundamentalists do not appreciate seeing or hearing things that conflict with their deeply held beliefs, especially if those things are intentionally offered. And yet, by nature, fundamentalists are not “masochinists”. They want to be accepted by others, but not at the price of compromising that which they believe strongly in.

For this reason, fundamentalists frequently separate themselves from the world and its philosophy and justify their position on the basis of selective scriptural passages such as “beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ” (Colossians, 2:8) Indeed, many such fundamentalists even take comfort and pleasure in finding meaning through their status as “a peculiar people” who have been called “out of darkness into (Christ’s) marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9) Needless to stress that fundamentalists within other traditions whether Hasidic, Jews, or Islamic, find similar justifications through texts sacred to their traditions. Also, protestant fundamentalists, emphasise regulations that prohibit dancing, smoking, card playing or drinking on the basis of scriptural injunctions such as “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him” In this case, the “world” is identified as sinful culture with its associated behavioural pleasures (Esposito, 2010)

In his analysis of fundamentalism and politics Garvey (1993a) observes that there are three fundamentalist movements that are typical and politically salient. These are those that are conservative, popular and practical. The argument is that fundamentalists try to conserve a particular religious heritage and look up to their religious traditions for guidance in dealing with modern problems. They do not propose new ideology nor do they want to revise their habits and
beliefs to keep them in tune with the times. By popular, Garvey (1993a) notes that its simplicity and its non-hierarchical style gives fundamentalist movement mass appeal since the Church create complex ecclesiastical structure when they have to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy and provide religious services to members.

Fundamentalists prefer a populist, loosely connected and non-hierarchical movement which are practical by nature. This he identifies as the third characteristics of religious fundamentalism, but reckoned that almost as though to compensate for their doctrinal simplicity, fundamentalists lay heavy emphasis on the right behaviours and stresses codes of conduct governing such matters as dress, smoking, intercourse, self discipline and general good behaviour.

Garvey (1993b) identifies two important features of religious fundamentalism. The first is exaggerated individual piety and the second is uncompromising biblical faith. In the case of the first, he observes that fundamentalists espouse a markedly individualistic form of religiousity and its best known feature is the experience of being “born again” to a new life in Jesus Christ. Garvey (1993b) to be “born again” is to come to believe that one has been saved by Jesus (and) it often happens rather suddenly. The born again Christian is usually moved to always share his faith with others who are not so ‘fortunate’ in a bid to win their soul for Christ. Apart from this, they lack the apparent interest in the larger concerns of social justice. Religious fundamentalists therefore remain indifferent to organised efforts to address issues of poverty, hunger, environmental pollution, racial and sexual discrimination and peace among nations. They seem to trace everything to ones’ relationship with God and of sin as the harbinger of all vices in human life.
As for the second feature which has to do with uncompromising biblical faith, fundamentalists believe that God speaks directly to individuals in the bible. This means that the bible is literally the “Word of God” it therefore has a central importance in the life of fundamentalist, because they refer to it almost all the time and uses it as a guide to daily life. They consult it for advice about difficult decisions, for comfort in time of affliction, and for words of praise and thanksgiving. As a corollary to this, evangelisation (spreading of the gospel) is considered an important religious exercise. The true believer thinks that the most important thing one person can do for another is to lead him to the faith and that the best way to this is through the bible (Garvey, 1993b). Thus, fundamentalism is a highly individualistic form of religion, “its ethics stress individual piety, its theology emphasizes unmediated access to God through the scripture and its ecclesiology is atomistic” (Garvey, 1993b:33).

Fundamentalist fits within liberal tradition in their emphasis on individualism and freedom. It incorporates these in the idea of rights, particularly the right to freedom. Such freedom carves out an area where the individual is sovereign and therefore allows him to make choice. Fundamentalist economic proposal in the same vein always stress the free market (Garvey, 1993). For example, fundamentalist Churches are voluntary organisations, members are free to come and go. Freedom also characterises the individual’s relations to God. The Godly individual is one who obeys God’s commandments of his own free will and also, that they also believe that true freedom is the voluntary submission to the will of God (Garvey, 1993). These are clearly very important planks for liberal political theory since it incorporates the idea of rights and freedom.

Fundamentalists have struggled with the mainstreams of their own religious denominations and with the immediate secular culture in which they are located especially when they perceive their
religious belief to be under the threat of extinction by the forces of modernism (Herriot 2007:14). Indeed, what distinguishes fundamentalists from other religious adherents is their particular approach towards understanding and practicing their religion. This understanding **elevates the sacred test to a position of supreme authority** and subordinates all other potential sources of knowledge and meaning (Hood, 2005:13).

Almond, et al (2003) has identified nine characteristics of fundamentalism five of which are ideological, while the remaining four are organisational. The five ideological features include reactivity to the marginalisation of religion, selectivity, moral Manichaeanism, absolutism and inerrancy as well as Millennialism and Messianism. The four organisational features are Elect chosen membership, sharp boundaries, authoritarian organisation and behavioural requirements.

Herriot (2007) suggests that reactivity implies hostility to the secular modern world. Thus, fundamentalist movements are formed in reaction to and in defence against the processes and consequences of modernisation and secularisation which have penetrated the larger religious community. Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Jews etc are losing their members to the secular world outrightly or to relativism which is the assumption that any given religion is culture bound and thus relatively true or false. Fundamentalists assume this to be the “erosion and displacement of true religion, is thus a militant effort to counteract this trend” (Herriot, 2007: 32). It is also possible that some movements are reacting against some other consequences of secularisation and relativism such as heightened ethnic or religious pluralism, or to competing ideologies of nation.

But to qualify as “pure” fundamentalism, “a movement must be concerned first with the erosion of religion and its proper role in society. It must therefore be protecting some religious content;
some set of traditional cosmological beliefs and associated conduct. (Thus) the defence of religion is the *sine qua non* of fundamentalism; without which a movement may not properly be labeled fundamentalists” (Almond et al 2003:93).

As for selectivity, Almond et al (2003) opines that fundamentalism is selective in three ways. First, not only is fundamentalist merely defensive of the religious tradition but selects and reshapes particular aspects of the tradition especially those that clearly distinguish the fundamentalists from the other mainstream adherents. Secondly, fundamentalisms select some aspects of modernity to affirm and embrace. Much of modern science and technology may be accepted such as the use of radio, television, internet etc. Thirdly, fundamentalisms select certain consequences or processes of modernity and single these out for special attention, usually in the form of focused opposition such as tourists trade in Egypt, abortion in the United States and ”Land for peace” in Israel.

The third ideological feature is moral Manichaeanism or a straight jacket dualistic worldview in which it is identified with the world of the spirit and of good, and darkness which is identified with matter and evil. The belief among fundamentalist movement is that the world outside (fundamentalism) is contaminated, doomed and sinful, while the world inside (fundamentalism) is pure and redeemed. Thus, ultimately good will triumph over evil and light over darkness.

As for absolutism and inerrancy, the ideological belief is that the movement’s sacred tests such as the Torah, Talmud, the Halakah, the Quran, and the Bible are of divine origin, true and accurate in all particulars. Fundamentalists steadfastly reject hermeneutical methods developed by secularised philosophers and critics. They show the willingness to believe and obey their sacred tests or books as infallible and inerrant. The fifth and last ideological feature of
fundamentalist movements is their believe in millenialism and messianism which has to do with
the consciousness that history has a miraculous culmination in which good will ultimately
triumph over evil, immortality over mortality while the reign of eternal justice will terminate
history. The belief that the end of days will be preceded by trials and tribulations which will be
ushered in by the coming of the Messiah, the Savior, the Hidden Imam etc Messianism and
Millenialism promise victory to the believer, millenialism by promising an end to suffering
and waiting, and Messiahism by promising an all powerful redeemer. This belief is most
common and elaborate in the Abrahamic religious movements.

The four organisational characteristics of fundamentalism are an Elect/Chosen membership, the
creation of sharp boundaries, an Authoritarian organisation and some Behavioural Requirements
expected from members. Concerning the first organisational characteristics, fundamentalist
movements tend to have an “elect”, a chosen divinely inspired or divinely called membership,
described variously as “the faithful”, “the remnant”, the “last outpost”, the “covenant keepers”,
those who “bear witness”, who “walked in the Lord”, and the likes.

Fundamentalist movements also create sharp boundaries between the saved and the sinful which
they normally implement through audiovisual boundaries, distinctive vocabulary or dress code
and through control over access to the media. Authoritarian organisations is another feature of
fundamentalists movements because the typical form of fundamentalist organisation is
charismatic, amplified by a leader-follower relationship. Instructions, directives and behavioural
ethics and codes emanates from the leader while the followers imputes extraordinary qualities,
heavenly grace, special access to deity, deep and complete understanding of sacred texts by the
leader called Imam, Ministers or Rabbe. This one man is set aside from all others as the source of
authority and guidance.
The last but not the least of the organisational features is the behavioural requirements of members. The members’ time, space and activity are a group resource and not an individual one. Thus, elaborate behavioural requirements create a powerful affective dimension, an imitative and conforming dimension. Almond, et al (2003) notes that “this feature is closely related to the boundary setting function of the enclave” (Almond et al, 2003: 34) since there is a distinctive music, hymnals, Hasidic chants, Quranic psalmodies, distinctive rules for dress, prescription on sinful behavior and rules about drinking, sexuality, appropriate speech and discipline of children(Almond et al.2003)

From the foregoing, it is clear that fundamentalism provides an organising framework for understanding how the world is perceived and experienced. It does so, by relying upon a single, authoritative, all-encompassing text in which answers to significant questions of life can be found. The nature and meaning of life are not simply described, but prescribed as well. Moral codes are provided that are absolute. Once internalised, they need not be constantly debated. Also adherence to such moral codes provide a “form of life” or “lifestyles” that is often in opposition to the larger world. Furthermore, the fundamentalist’s life is embedded in a larger horizon that includes not only a sense of transcendence, but an assurance that death is overcome. Hence, what may appear as “foolish” to someone in a secular world is salvation to a fundamentalist believer (Hood 2005:35).

Following the principles of intratextuality, the text to the fundamentalist does not contradict itself. The principle and teachings found in the narrative yield a consistent picture of what a life that is pleasing to the Divine Being should look like. It is the blueprint for living and no “vain philosophy” of the world shall in anyway modify the blueprint. This blue print, fundamentalist insists, communicates a singular ultimate concern which is the pleasing of God. Also, it should
be stressed that fundamentalists regardless of tradition have but one ultimate concern which is living by the dictates of the sacred text alone, because it alone illuminates the path to fellowship with the Divine Being in this life and in the world to come. All other concerns are subordinated and reconciled to this overriding concern (Hood 2005). The fact that the text is authoritative, inerrant, and without contradiction means that the believers are capable of knowing with total certainty, how fellowship with the Divine Being is achieved, as a result, no other source of knowledge shall in anyway alter the true meaning of the text.

Whatever is deemed in conflict with the text and living a holy life is regarded as a temptation designed by Satan to draw the believer away from a close walk with God no matter how harmless such activities may seem in the eyes of the others. An intratextual understanding of the Bible prohibits them and demands denial for the sake of the ultimate concern. As the bible declares “for without holiness, no man shall see the Lord” (Hood 2005:37)

For Muslims, the term fundamentalism is a Western terminology that Arabic references and source do not use (Ramadan, 1993). Modern usage of Islamic fundamentalism refers to those individuals, groups or organisations who wish to renew Islam by working to purify it from spurious beliefs, to return to its first principle, reconcile Islam with the requirement of the modern age, consider Islam as an appropriate instrument for government and to insist on Islam’s capacity to push the wheels of progress rather than rely on Western secular political structure and laws (Ramadan, 1993). Viewed from this perspective, fundamentalist movement which arose in response to the wave of Westernization followed “the path of confrontation and resistance to what was considered as moral degeneration and disintegration as well as a wave of “apostasy and obscenity” (Ramadan, 1993:153)
Islamic fundamentalists believe that they have a sacred duty and responsibility to ensure that their society is ruled by God’s legislation and when this is not the case they must launch and participate in Jihad. This they could do through calling the people to God through the recruitment of members, the publication of educational and instructive tracts, conducting Islamic social activities such as aiding the poor with Zakat (alms) and Sadaqar (donations), taxes and visiting the sick in the hospitals (Ramadan 1993). But Jihad can also take the form of religious violence as was witnessed in Egypt through the Society of the Muslim Brothers, in Algeria through the Islamic Salvation Front and in Afghanistan, through the Mujahidin and later the Taliban.

Muslims worldwide are generally returning to religion (Demant, 2006). Within this trend exist a growing minority, which identifies with a politicised, anti-Western, and anti-modern reading of their religion called Islamism, among these Islamists also exists a further minority that endorses the use of violence and terrorism against the West in order to ward off the corrupting influence of Western societies. In this sense, Islamism is an anti-western and anti-modern movement, produced by modernity, during modern times, using modern means and irreversibly partaking of modernity. Its authentic character shows its attempt to introduce an ideal order (Demant, 2006).

Meanwhile, millions of people the world over rely on religion to organise their sentiments, choose from its own ranks their role models and develop enduring hope in the future. Also, the elites lean on religion to engage in intra and inter regional competition especially within the Nigerian polity. While Islam is both a religious and political force in Nigeria, most of the prevailing works on religion have concentrated on inter-religious skirmishes and sporadic violence resulting from the activities of the two dominant religions, Christianity and Islam. Such themes include but not limited to politics and religion in Nigeria in which Danbazau (1991) examines the way politics affect religion and vice versa and argues that ethnicity and religion has
been a significant influence on government policies since independence and that it was during the Babangida era that these became pronounced. Kukah, (1993) looks at the relationship between religion, politics and power especially in Northern Nigeria. Kukah (1993) opines that Islam and Christianity, the two dominant religions were critical factors in the formation of Nigerian state and that the relationship between the two religions has influenced post-colonial politics in Nigeria.

Kastfelf, (1994) in his own analysis discusses religion and politics in Nigeria with particular reference to understanding the origin, impact as well as the consequences of the incursion of Christianity to where is now regarded as Middle-Belt Nigeria. Williams and Falola, (1995) in their own contribution, examines the impact of Religion on the Nation State and in doing this, they chronicle the various ways in which religion has impacted on the state especially during the era of General Ibrahim Babangida where he manipulated Religion for political ends. Kukah and Falola, (1996) assess the various ways by which religion affects politics in relation to authority, legitimacy, power and equity, they also examine the various militant religious struggles and equate all these to the agitation for self-assertion and determination within the Nigerian state. These studies have not extended the frontiers of knowledge beyond the mere chronicle of ethno-religious violence which the country had witnessed. There is yet to be a holistic study of the phenomenon of political Islam in its ideological context and how this result in the politicisation of religion in Nigeria. This is the lacuna in the literature that this present effort intents to fill.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Earlier efforts at understanding and explaining Muslim and indeed Islamic conflict, rebellion and violence (not fundamentalism) concentrate attention on the “relative deprivation” and
“frustration-aggression thesis” pioneered by Ted Gurr’s (1970) seminal work on why Men Rebel. In Gurr’s explanation, he tried to link incidence of political violence and violence directly to feelings of deprivation which arose out of unfulfilled expectations. He suggests that these feelings of deprivation results in anger and anxiety which make ordinary people prone to aggression and rebellion.

Hafez (2003) indicates that this Gurr’s explanatory model has been criticised on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Three of such criticisms become relevant in this study. The first is that it is not always possible to prove that individuals and groups who engage in collective struggles are deprived or aggrieved of something. Secondly, if aggrieved individuals are able to mobilize the quantum of resources and activists often needed for a successful rebellion they need not resort to militancy and violence to alleviate the privations since they can work through conventional channels to effect change in their conditions and thirdly, the nature of deprivation and grievances do not often determine the purpose (revolutionary or reformist), scale (local or national), scope (limited or expensive), intensity (sustained or sporadic) and duration (brief or protracted) of the kind of militancy of exhibited by aggrieved or deprived people (Hafez, 2003:18).

While these criticisms are not intended to suggest that socio-economic and psychological conditions are not important in the understanding of the upsurge in political Islam and fundamentalism, the fact remains that this explanatory approach tells only one side of the story. Thus, given the multi-dimensional nature of this study and its specific concern for political and fundamentalism, an eclectic theoretical framework has been carefully selected and these are; the Social Identity theory (SID), the Structure, Chance and Choice (SCC) theory, and the Marxist theory of state. The three theories are combined in such a way that one theory complements the
identified limitations in the other so as to give a holistic analysis and explanation of the phenomenon under study.

Herriot (2007) opines that “there appears to be no other theoretical perspective which offers an inclusive and powerful explanation for the whole range of fundamentalist phenomenon as does Social Identity theory” (Herriot, 2007:25). While this opinion sounds exaggerated, let us examine what Social Identity Theory (SID) is all about.

There are basically two strands of explanation in the Social Identity Theory (SID), the Social Identity theory examines how group membership leads to the formation of social identity which enhances self-esteem, while the second, Self Categorisation theory concentrates upon the ways in which social identities operate as social categories within the self-concept. Social Identity theory asserts that “people define and evaluate themselves in terms of groups to which they belong” To that extent, “they see themselves as having a social identity. I am a pious and faithful Muslim and God has chosen me to do His will. I am a Bible believing Baptist and God have reserved a place for me in Heaven” (Herriot, 2007:26)

Social identities direct that behaviour which relates to groups. Put differently, they regulate and motivate the sorts of behaviour in which member of groups engage as members. Such behaviour may include conformity with the group and cohesion within it, the stereotyping of members of other groups; favouritism towards members of one’s own group, and discrimination against members of other groups. For example, the typical fundamentalist movement requires a high level of conformity among its members to its Behavioural, Values and Norms (BVNs) and it benefits from the cohesion that results. It treats members of the mainstream religion from which it is derived as faithless apostates. Its members regard themselves as uniquely blessed, and treat
others as inferior (Herriot 2007). A born again believer for example, will perceive others in terms of their belief or lack of it.

As for the second strand, the self-categorisation theory, it relates to a very important feature of SID, which is the “meta-contrast principle” (Herriot 2007: 32), which states that the salience of a social identity is accentuated when the differences within one’s own category are less than the differences between one’s own and another category. Hence, a social identity will be particularly salient if the similarities within one’s own category and the differences with an ‘out-group’ are both maximised. In other words, we have to be as like each other as possible, and as different as possible from ‘them’. Thus, “self-categorisation is a context-determined process based on sensitivity to relative differences” (Herriot 2007:32).

Social identity theory provides an insightful account of why people join social groups and specifies the conditions under which those groups are more likely to be in conflict with others. These include the “degree of identification of members with the group, the extent to which the social context permits group members to make comparisons of their own group with others; the reasons why a particular social identity becomes salient in the individuals mind so that it directs his or her behaviour” (Herriot 2007:40). But this only tells one side of the story as far as our study is concerned. The theory concentrates on explaining why people join or belong to fundamentalist groups without taking into consideration the historical development of a society in terms of the nature of state, the class relations within a society, the character of the ruling elites as well as the plural nature of the society which may lure people into ethno-religious groups.
It is in this regard that we augment this theory with the Structure, Chance and Choice (SCC) theory put forward by Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003). Here, Almond et al (2003) posit that there are specific conditions under which fundamentalism emerge and grow. Out of these conditions, fundamentalist movements are generated and shaped by three sets of causes; first, long term contextual or structural conditions, two, contingent chance factors, and three, the particularities of human choice and leadership. Hence, the Structure, Chance and Choice explanatory framework for understanding, explaining and analysing the complex phenomenon of fundamentalism.

By structural explanation, Almond et al (2003) refers to large and long term contextual factors such as social class and status – wealth, income distribution, and social rank – the organisation and penetration of the state, education, its content and distribution, cultural and sub-cultural differences. By Chance, they refer to short-term contingent variables such as fluctuations in productivity, trade, international and domestic security etc. By Choice; they refer to the creativity of leadership (or their decline in creativity and to collective psychic responses of one kind or another. This approach designates “religious leaders” as the players in founding and shaping fundamentalism. The centrality of religious leaders is germane to fundamentalism because, from their various privilege locations in the community they contest certain interpretations of sacred texts and practices and legitimise others. Thus, a given leader inclined towards extremism thereby nurtures the characteristic traits and elements of fundamentalism within the sector(s) of the religious community over which he exercise authority.

In addition, structural factors such as structural unemployment may create a pool of potential recruits while people who feel relative deprivation because of inconsistencies between status and income may express grievances through a fundamentalist movement. Persecuted ethnic groups,
dislocated people, victims of war, or migrants looking for identity and community may join them. Chance influences the size and social location. For example, an area where a riot or strike has recently galvanised the population or some part of it will be a fertile recruiting ground for fundamentalist members.

Much more specifically, the importance of Western imperialism, slavery and colonialism cannot be overestimated in the explanation of fundamentalism especially in the Third World. The exchange of goods and ideas implied in open diplomacy, trade and communications threatens the integrity of culture and opens members to competing religions, debilitating materialism and moral corruption. Little wonder therefore, “that appeals of fundamentalism are influenced by international events that create grievances such as wars and their aftermath, terms of trade and global economic fluctuations harming Third World economies” (Almond et al 2003:132)

Although, from the foregoing, the “Structure, Chance and Choice” theory offers a seemingly persuasive explanation of fundamentalism in the World, it is evident that this explanation is limited to the extent that it fails to underscore the critical role which the nature and character of a state can play in making and shaping of fundamentalism in any society. It is in this regards that we complement this explanation with the Marxist Theory of state.

The Marxist theory of state pioneered by Marx and Engels assume that the state is a product of the “irreconcilability of class antagonism” occasioned by capitalism. Indeed, Marx and Engels argue that the state is “nothing more than the form of organisation which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests” (cf. Hay, 2006:67). From the extant literature on the Marxist theory of state, two main strands can be identified and they are the Instrumentalists and the Structuralists perspectives.
For the instrumentalists, the state is nothing but an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for the preservation of their class interests and the domination of the masses. Sweezy (1942:243, cf. Hay, 2006) strengthens this argument when he posits that the state is “an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for enforcing and guaranteeing the stability of the class structure itself” (Hay, 2006:61) This they often did either directly through the exercise of state power by people who wields such powers or indirectly through the manipulation of state policies in the interest of the ruling class. The state is also understood as the repressive organ of the bourgeois capitalist ruling class and function only in the interest, preservation and perpetuation of the class.

For the Structuralist perspective, the emergence of the state is understood from the inherent conflicts that are embedded in capitalist societies. These conflicts stems from the capitalist mode of production which thrives on the exploitation of labour and the stratification of society in to social classes based on the relations of production. For both the Instrumentalists and the Structuralists in the Marxist theory of state, the state is made up of a number of institutions which interact to constitute its reality (Miliband 1969). These institutions include the government, the administration, bureaucracy, the military, police, judiciary, sub-regional governments and parliamentary assemblies. These are what Poulantzas (1969) describes as the repressive apparatus of the state. The others are what he calls the ideological apparatus of the state and these are the Church, educational institutions, the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie parties, the press, the radio and television which are often used to disseminate the ideology of the dominant class.

Still within the Marxian paradigm Alavi (1972) identifies three attributes of the post colonial state and these are its being overdeveloped relative to the society, it enjoys relative autonomy and intervenes widely in the economy. While Alavi’s (1972) argument of the post colonial state
being overdeveloped has been challenged on empirical and theoretical fronts, Alavi’s (1972) explanation offers an incisive insight into the workings of post-colonial states especially in Africa. Ake (1996) opines that the state in Africa was unusually ‘statist’ and that this colonial creation with its attributes of ‘absolutism and arbitrariness’ were inherited by the ruling elites at independence. For our analysis within this framework, Ake (1996) posits that

In most African countries, there is really no state, liberal or autocratic. What exists is a public force that should be the state but that is nominally so, because it is essentially privatized… the so-called state is not able to rise above the struggles and conflicts of contending social groups. It becomes itself a contested terrain where contending parties vie for the appropriation of resources, including the power of the state (Ake, 1996: 129)

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that our theoretical framework offers a rigorously elaborate attempt to look at the phenomenon of political Islam, fundamentalism and the politicisation of religion in Nigeria. The Social Identity theory offers insight into the twists and turns in the making of fundamentalism, fundamentalist movements and organisations. The Structure, Chance and Choice theory when applied to Nigeria helps us to understand the structure of Nigeria and how this predisposes Nigerians to fundamentalist agitation taking into cognisance the structure of the state, the legitimacy of its institutions, the leadership composition, the level of political participation, the degree of partisan polarisation and the nature of politics. The theory is also useful for our analysis because it also recognises the importance of situational variable which could trigger the rise or decline of fundamentalist groups. The limitation of the theory is that it fails to recognise the role which the state can play in the manipulation of religion for selfish or sectional interest. This is where the Marxist theory of state comes in handy in order to fill this gap and complement the two initially mentioned theories.
On the whole, our theoretical framework when applied to Nigeria, helps us to expose and explain why people belong to fundamentalist groups; understand the context for the agitation for political Islam as well as the manipulative tendencies of the wielders of state power in religious matters. Its attraction for this study stems from its all inclusive and comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon. The framework is rooted within the Marxian paradigm of historical as well as dialectical materialism which is an essential tool in the understanding and explanation of a hydra headed and complex phenomenon such as political Islam and fundamentalism especially in Nigeria.
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CHAPTER THREE  

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY  

The methodology for this research is qualitative. This method offered the researcher the opportunity to interact with quite a number of well informed Nigerians who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon of political Islam fundamentalism and the politicisation of religion in Nigeria. The interview sessions and Focus Group Discussions were robust as issues that center on politics and religion within the Nigerian context were discussed. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

3.1 Research Design  

As indicated earlier, this research is qualitative in nature and therefore benefited from the use of multiple methods of data collection that were interactive and engaging. Two methods of data collection were employed in this study namely: 1) Key Informant Interviews (KII s); and 2) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

3.2 Study Location  

This research was conducted in ten states that have witnessed one form of religious fundamentalism or the other. Apart from Lagos, the remaining nine states have been hotbeds of religious fundamentalism with the political Islamic bent. Lagos was chosen because of the many knowledgeable informants that are abound there and also because Lagos served as some sort of control location given the fact that it has witnessed little or no ethno-religious crises in spite of its cosmopolitan nature when compared with the remaining study locations which are Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Bauchi, Gusau, Sokoto, Minna, Abuja (FCT) and Maiduguri.
3.3 Study Population and Sample

The study population for this research was drawn from selected religious leaders, academics, leaders of fundamentalist religious organisations, journalists, members of the National Inter-religious Council, Security agencies and victims/witnesses of fundamentalist uprising and violence. A sample size of seventy respondents was selected for the collection of primary data. For this research, the sample was purposively selected based on the researcher’s judgment about which respondents have the requisite knowledge and expertise on the phenomenon being studied. Seven respondents were selected from each state. The researcher selected only those who met the purpose of the study. Additional information was also sought from other informed individuals on the phenomenon being studied. The primary data elicited from the interviews were also complemented with secondary data gathered from books, journals, newspapers, magazines and reports of panels of inquiry set up by government at various times.
3.4 Data Collection Technique

Given the nature of this research, in-depth interviews were conducted with people who are very knowledgeable on the phenomena being studied. The respondents, who were purposively selected as indicated earlier, included religious leaders such as Imams and Pastors, Leaders/Members of fundamentalists’ organisations, Islamic scholars, members of the security agencies, academics, victims/witnesses of fundamentalists’ violence, and members of the Nigerian Inter-religious Council. The researcher developed rapport and familiarity with the respondents in order to build trust and confidence. This approach made the interview sessions very informative, rewarding and successful. It also provided ample opportunity for the researcher to ask, discuss and probe responses to questions in order to ensure accuracy and consistency in responses. All the responses were recorded using audio recording devices except in some instances where the recording device had to be put off at the instance of respondents. Only a few of the respondents out-rightly refused to be recorded. Those who refused to speak on tape believed that they were giving classified information which they cannot allow to be recorded on tape. Some even requested for some measure of anonymity before they agreed to speak. The semi-structured interview guide helped in keeping the discussions focused as a lot of respondents saw the interview sessions as ample opportunity to pour out their disappointments about the way the Nigerian state is being managed.

Focus Group Discussions (FDGs)

Three Focus Group Discussions were held in order to elicit further information through the cross fertilisation of ideas which this method offers. The FGDs were held in Lagos, Kaduna and Jos. These locations were specially selected for their strategic importance to the study. Lagos, Kaduna and Jos are three cosmopolitan cities in Nigeria with diverse ethnic and religious groups.
Lagos was selected in order to see whether there could be some lessons for Kaduna and Jos. Of course, the choice of Kaduna and Jos was because the two cities have been hotbeds of ethno-religious crises in recent times.

**Lagos FGD**

The Lagos FGD was held on the 14th of March, 2012 at the Ansar-ud-deen Grammar School, Surulere Lagos. There were a total of eight individuals in attendance representing various shades of opinion on the phenomenon being studied, (see appendix 3 for the names of those who attended the FGD). The discussion lasted for about one hour eighteen minutes with all the participants giving their candid response to the questions raised. The researcher moderated the discussion and ensured that the participants remained focused on the research questions, while a research assistant recorded the proceedings. The discussions were audio recorded for accuracy.

**Kaduna FGD**

The Kaduna FGD was held on the 22nd of March, 2012 at the Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna. There were a total of eight participants in attendance representing various religious groups in the state with ample knowledge and information on the phenomenon being studied, (see appendix 3 for the names of those who attended the FGD). However, two policemen who attended the discussion pleaded anonymity. Just like in Lagos, the researcher moderated the discussion and ensured that the participants responded to the questions raised in the FGD guide. A research assistant was hired to help record the proceedings. The discussions were fruitful in that it provided fresh insights in to the phenomenon under study.
Jos FGD

The Jos FGD was held on the 28th of March, 2012, at the University of Jos. There were a total of eleven participants in attendance, (see appendix 3 for the names of those who attended the FGD). Here, some of the participants were initially unwilling to volunteer information because they were suspicious of the researcher’s intentions. It took the intervention of the President of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) before the discussion took off. The researcher moderated the discussion, which was audio recorded, while a research assistant recorded the proceedings. The researcher ensured that discussions remained focused on the Instrument because the participants tried to seize the opportunity to express their frustrations and misgiving about a number of issues associated with the phenomenon under study. Needless to say that the group discussions were quite revealing as a lot of information useful for the research were volunteered by the participants. The discussions lasted for about one hour twenty-five minutes.

3.5 Research Instrument

Two research Instruments were used for this study (see appendix 1&2) namely the Semi-structured Interview Guide and the FGD Guide. These instruments were carefully designed to elicit critical information from the sampled population. In doing this, adequate care was taken in framing the questions in such a way that the questions will be clear to the respondents. Double barrel questions were also avoided as the questions asked were as simple, precise and as clear as possible.

The questions in the two research instruments were based on themes and variables contained in the research and these are Political Islam, Religious Fundamentalism, interface between religion and politics in Nigeria, politicisation of religion, state responses to religious fundamentalism,
factors accounting for the rise of religious fundamentalism and non-sectarian politics and other reactions to the phenomenon of Political Islam. The instruments were modified twice after the pilot study in order to meet the requirements of the research. The recording devices were also tested to ensure optimal performance.

3.6 Validity and Reliability
The entire research enterprise was subjected to the two tests of validity and reliability. This was done by first making sure that there was consistency in respondents’ responses to questions within the same category. Conscious efforts were also made to validate and revalidate claims made by respondents during the research. Test questions were also imbued into the research instrument in order to double check responses for validity. The researcher also ensured that different ways were used to examine the responses on the same variable through triangulation in order to ascertain the correct position on different findings.

3.7 Method of Analysis
The data collected from the Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions as well as secondary data from books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and reports of Panels of Inquiry were carefully organised for analysis. Following the suggestion by Creswell, (2003) the interviews were transcribed, necessary materials were scanned, field notes were read and typed, just as collected data were sorted and arranged into different categories in relation to the research questions.
After this, the coding system was adopted in order to further prepare the data for analysis. By coding, we mean the process of organizing materials into “chunks” before bringing meaning to these ‘chunks’ (Rossman and Rallies, 1998:171). After reading through all the data with a view to obtaining a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning bearing in mind the tone of ideas, the general impression of the overall depth, credibility of information and how the information is to be put to use, the content analysis method was used to analyze the data.

The researcher then mapped out how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. The researcher then used a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis which includes the chronology of events, detailed discussion of themes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals and quotations as well as discussions with interconnecting themes using visuals, figures and tables as adjunct to the discussion where necessary.

The last stage involved making interpretation or giving meanings to the data through rigorous and systematic analysis of the data collected with a view to ensuring that the analysed data speaks to the overall objectives of the research. This was done using historical narratives as well as contextual analysis of the data as presented in the next chapter.
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CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORY OF ISLAM AND ITS INCURSION INTO NIGERIA

4.1 Mohammed and the Message of Islam

The Prophet of Islam Mohammed (SAW) was born in the year 570AD into the Quraish tribe of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. His father’s name was Abdullah who went on a trade expedition, fell sick on his way back and died before Mohammed was born. His mother Aminah also died six years after. The care of the young Mohammed became the responsibility of his grandfather Abdul al-Muttalib first and later his uncle Abu-Talib after the death of the former.

Mohammed, just like most Prophet of God started as a shepherd for his uncle and later joined him in the caravan trade between Arabia, Syria as well as the Mediterranean countries of the north and west. Shortly after this enterprise, Abu Talib arranged for Mohammed to become an agent with a successful commercial firm in Mecca owned by Khadijah, who at that time was a widow. When Mohammed was working with Khadijah, she found him to be a hardworking, honest and dynamic young man and believed that she had become more prosperous since Mohammed joined her. She then proposed to Mohammed to marry her at a time when he was twenty-five years of age while Khadijah was Forty years.

During this time, the Meccan society was regarded as Jahiliyah – this period was the period of ignorance, corruption and crass materialism by the wealthy and influential elites of Mecca. As corrupt and decadent as the Meccan society was at that time, the Meccans saw in Mohammad an unusual honesty, dedication and candor such that they nicknamed him Al-Ameen meaning the “trustworthy”. He was also a reformer in his day to day dealings with the Meccans as he never
allowed the corruptive influences of the society to affect him. As Clarke (1982) puts it “he began to consider ways and means of regenerating Meccan society which he believed has been corrupted by the materialism of the wealthy and influential merchants of the city” (Clarke, 1982:1).

As a result of this, Mohammed usually visited a cave on Mount *Hira*, where he normally meditates about the situation in Mecca and its environs at that time. Indeed, he thought about “the purpose of life, what gives life its value and meaning and about man’s relationship to God” (Clarke, 1982:1).

At the age of 40 years, while on his usual visits to Mount *Hira*, the arch Angel Jubril (Gabriel) appeared to him and commanded him to read according to the account by Mohammed, who replied that he was not literate and the Angel commanded him again to “read in the name of the Lord” (Quran C96 V1-5). This encounter marked the beginning of Mohammed’s Prophethood as the Angel convinced him that he was “the Messenger of God” and this marked the emergence of Islam as a complete way of life for Muslims.

From this first encounter with Angel Jubril (Gabriel) in the year 610AD, Mohammed continued to receive revelations from God through Angel Jubril. All these revelations as we shall see later were put together under the leadership of Caliph Umar and became what is today known as the Quran. The revelations all together makes the 114 chapters in the Holy Quran, and are divided into two parts, the Meccan and the Medinah *Suras* (chapters).

Muslims regard the Quran as the word or speech of God. “It is not Mohammed’s words. It is God’s most complete and final word to man” (Clarke, 1986:2). In fact, Muslims believe that all other Prophets such as Moses, David, Jesus and all those before them received and spoke the
Words of God (Allah) but that his final, comprehensive and most complete revelation to man came through the Prophet of Islam, Mohammed (SAW) thus making him the seal of all Prophets from Almighty Allah. This position is supported by the Holy Quran chapter 2 verse 138, which reads

Say ye: We believe in Allah and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes and that given to Moses, and Jesus and that given to all Prophets from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another of them and we bow to Allah (in Islam) (cf. Bidmos, 1993:24).

As we pointed out earlier, Mohammed’s encounter with Angel Jubril marked the beginning of his Prophethood and the emergence of the religion of Islam. What then is Islam? How did the religion came by the name? What are the pillars and articles of faith in Islam?

The etymology of the Word Islam is from the Arabic word ‘Salam’ which means peace. More broadly ‘Islam’ can be regarded as the total and absolute submission to the Will of Allah. Bidmos (1993:24) avers that “Prophet Mohammed did not claim to have founded a religion and so the question of naming a religion after him does not arise”. Therefore those who refer to Islam or Muslims as Mohammedan’s may have missed the point. The name Islam for the religion revealed to mankind through Mohammed has been settled by Allah (God) when he says in the Quran chapter 3 v 19 that “the religion before God is Islam (submission to His will) (cf. Bidmos, 1993:214). This also finds expression in the opinion of another religious scholar who indicated that of all religions, it is the outsider who supplied the name, the (only) exception is Islam, which came into being with its own name” (Bidmos, 1993: 25). Also on the name Islam, Quran chapter 5 v 4 says that, “this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (cf. Bidmos 1993:24).
Islam rests upon five cardinal principles or pillars these are the Kalimah,-the unshakable belief that there is only one God and that Mohammed is His Messenger, Salat-Praying five times a day, Zakat, giving the poor due, Ramadhan – fasting during the ninth month of the Lunar calender and Hajj – going on pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a life time. Apart from these, there are also six articles of faith in Islam without which one’s religion is incomplete. They are Tawhid, belief in Allah (God) as the only One and the one worthy of worship, belief in the Malaikas known as Angels, belief in Kutub, that is revelations or books sent by Allah including Torah, Bible and the Quran. Belief in Rasul that is, all Messengers or Prophets sent by Allah including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, belief in Qiyama, that is, in the day of Resurrection (life after death) and the belief in Qadar which is the unconditional belief in destiny or fate. All these make up the articles of faith in Islam. Quran chapter 4 v 136 supports this when it declares that “whoever disbelieveth in God and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily wandered far astray” (Q4 v 136).

4.2 The Spread of Islam and Opposition to Mohammed in Mecca

As to be expected, when Mohammed got home shivering from Mount Hira after his encounter with Angel Jubril, he narrated his experience to his wife Khadijah who, based on her previous encounters and opinion of him as a trustworthy individual believed him promptly and accepted all he told her. Thus, she became the first individual to accept Islam. She was followed by Ali bn Abu Talib his cousin, who was living with him, the next was Abu Bakr, Mohammed’s closest friend and companion. There was also al-Argam a rich young merchant from the tribe of Makhzum. From then onwards, Mohammad began to propagate and preach the word of Allah to
the people of Mecca. Mohammed spoke against the prevailing decadent, corrupt and perverted ways of life of the Meccans at that time.

Not surprisingly, sooner than later, opposition came from the merchants of Mecca who felt uncomfortable with Mohammed’s challenge of their economic, social and political status. It was reported that Abu Jahl, a merchant from the clan of Makhzum was one of Mohammed’s greatest critique. Apart from this opposition from the people of Mecca, other misfortunes such as the death of Khadijah, his wife, confidant and loyal supporter and that of Abu Talib, his uncle who had given him protection as the leader of clan from which Mohammed came from befell him in the year 619AD.

Of particular concern to this study is the revocation of the protective policy offered to Mohammed by his deceased uncle since the new leader of the clan Abu Lahab was not interested in protecting Mohammed. This, no doubt, exposed him to a number of risks on account of his preachings and teachings. It was within this circumstances that he decided to emigrate to Yathrib later known as Medina, since a number of leading citizens there have offered him protection.

Thus, in the year 622AD, Mohammed, Abu Bakr and Ali his cousin and other followers of Mohammed left Mecca for Medina. This is known as Hijra which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar year. It was in Medina that Mohammed founded and presided over the first Islamic community known as Ummah. The Muslim community of course accepted Mohammed as the political as well as the spiritual leader of the community.

The new community gradually took on a distinctive form. The members recite the Shahada or confession of divine unity and of Mohammed’s Prophethood. “There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet” (Clarke, 1982:4).
It is important to note that this *Ummah*, (Islamic community) followed its own sacred law called Sharia which is the sacred law of Islam. The principal sources of the Sharia is the Quran and Sunnah, which is the deeds and examples of the Prophet as well as his sayings (Hadith) as handed down by his closest companions. When the Muslims finally settled down in Medina, they made it a point of duty to invite others to the path of Islam. This was done through *Da’wah* and Jihad. These two activities found expression in Quran chapter 3 v 104, which says “there should always be among you a band of people who invite to what is good and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong: they alone will attain true success” (Q3 v 104).

It is in the light of the above that the early Muslims strived in the path of Allah through Jihad which can be performed in a number of ways such as Jihad of the heart, which is the process of purifying the soul of evil thoughts, desires and deeds. There is also the Jihad of the tongue which has to do with commanding people to do what is right and forbidding what is wrong or evil. Jihad of the hand which has to do with the administering of Islamic disciplinary measures when the need arises and the last is the Jihad of the sword, which refers to one’s involvement in open warfare either in the defence of the Islamic community, or in the revival of Islam.

This type of Jihad is a collective duty, an obligation for the community as a whole and such obligation is fulfilled when a sufficient number of persons perform it (Clarke, 1982). This elaboration on the several types of Jihad becomes necessary in order to put in proper perspective the concept and also correct the seemingly erroneous impression that once Jihad is mentioned
what is meant is wanton, reckless, purposeless and criminal killing, arson and destruction of property as we have come to witness in recent past in Nigeria and in other Muslim dominated societies.

It is instructive to note that while in Medinah, neither Islam nor the Prophet demanded that the Jews and indeed the Christians should become Muslims forcefully since these two groups in Islam are recognised as the people of the Book, who received revelations from God. The Muslims were reported to have allowed them to retain and practice their religion without any hindrance. They must however pay the Jizya – a poll tax to the Muslim Ummah in return for the guarantee of protection and the preservation of their rights. These categories of Jews and Christians living under Islamic protection and paying the Jizya are known as Dhimmis (Protected citizens).

However, this is not to say that there were no conflicts or friction between the Islamic Ummah and other groups in the Arabian Peninsula at that time. Far from it, the point is that most of the conflicts were with the unbelievers especially the Meccan pagans who would not desist from persecuting the Prophet of Islam. Despite this, the Muslims continued to propagate and preach Islam in the most peaceful and methodological manner as enshrined in the Quran chapter 16 v 25 where Allah enjoins Muslims to “call thou (all mankind) unto thy sustainer’s path with wisdom and godly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner” (cf. Bidmos, 1993:18).

This peaceful strategy of Islamic propagation did not go down well with the Meccans as they were determined to extinguish the light which Islam supposedly represented during this period. The constant aggression and harassment by the Meccan pagans led inevitably to series of war between the Muslims and these Meccans. Indeed, the Prophet restrained from going to war with
the Meccans until this revelation came in Quran chapter 2 v 190 which commands that “…and fight in Allah’s cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression for verily, Allah does not love aggressors” (Q 2 v 190).

It was after this revelation that Prophet Mohammed organised his own army to confront the Meccan aggressors which led to the famous battle between the Muslims and the Meccans at a place called Badr. This battle is commonly referred to as the battle of Badr in 624AD. With a very lean army and relying on Allah’s support, the Muslims defeated the highly rated Meccan soldiers. There was another battle at Uhud known as the battle of Uhud, there the Muslims, basking in the euphoria of the first victory became careless and they were severely punished for it. They not only lost the war, some brave Muslims were killed at this battle.

Meanwhile in 627AD at the battle of Khandaq, the Muslims successfully defended Medina against the Meccan Army who was twice the size of that of the Prophet. This defeat shocked the Meccans such that the following year the Muslims, led by Mohammed met the Meccans at the city of Hudaybiyah where a treaty for a cessation of hostilities for a period of ten years was signed between the two parties. This treaty is known in Islamic history as the Treaty of Hudaybiyah which was signed in the year 628AD.

Apart from the cessation of hostilities, other agreements reached at Hudaybiyah include the need to send back any Quraysh who have accepted Islam without the permission of his guardian but any who have accepted Islam and decides to go back to the Quraysh was not to be sent back, that evil of whatever nature would be avoided by the two parties including raiding and spoliation of war. As unfair and one sided as this treaty appears to be, Prophet Mohammed complied with this decision by promptly extraditing the son of Suhayl and a group of others who had accepted Islam.
and ran away from home without the consent of their parents or guardians. The prophets appeal that they should be allowed to remain was rebuffed as Suhayl insisted that they must be deported and the Prophet complied assuring the victims of Allah’s protection, guidance and eternal bliss (Adetona. 2005:276).

Meanwhile, barely two years into the treaty, the Meccans violated the terms of the treaty by attacking the Muslims, thus, Mohammed in 630AD with a 10,000 strong Muslim army, with little resistance from the Meccans and with very little bloodshed the Prophet of Islam conquered Mecca in what has been regarded as the greatest triumph in the history of Islam. As narrated by Clarke (1982) “a general amnesty was granted to all those who opposed Mohammed in Mecca while the idols at Ka’aba and other shrines were removed and the offices and the privileges of the wealthy merchants were abolished” (Clarke 1982:5). After this conquest, Prophet Mohammed performed the pilgrimage known as Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam in 632AD. This pilgrimage by the Prophet is referred to as the farewell pilgrimage. The prophet of Islam died in the same year leaving the leadership of the Ummah to the Khulafahi Roshiduun, the four rightly guided Caliphs.

As was indicated earlier in this work, the first major cleavage among the Ummah began at the Saqiffah assembly called to appoint a successor to the Prophet. This disagreement led to the Sunni/Shiite division in Islam. However, the fact of history is that Abu Bakr was selected as the first Caliph of Islam to succeed the Prophet.

Within the two years of his leadership 632-634AD, Abu Bakr succeeded in bringing the whole of Arabia and parts of Palestine under Islamic rule. Caliph Umar bn Khattab succeeded Abu Bakr and led the Islamic community between 634-644AD. Under Umar’s leadership, Islam was taken
to Damascus in Syria, and he also won a decisive victory over Roman armies at the battle of Yarmuk in 636AD. Indeed this victory opened the way for the Islamic advance to east Mesopotamia, Iran (Persia), Asia and to Alexandria in Egypt and as far as Tripoli before their advance was held up by Berber resistance (Clarke 1982). Umar died in 644AD and the leadership of the vast Muslim Caliphate fell on the shoulders of Uthman bn Affan. Under Uthman, Islam also spread rapidly over running Kabul in Afghanistan, opening up the way into Central Asia, Pakistan and India between 644-712AD.

North West Africa came under Muslim control in the first decade of the 8th century when Muslim forces crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and occupied large parts of Spain, where divisions among the Christians facilitated their conquest. From there, the Muslims moved into France, before their advance was checked at the battle of Portiers in 732AD. Uthman led the Islamic community between 644-656AD a total of twelve years and no doubt the longest serving Caliph amongst the four rightly guided Caliphs.

Ali bn Abu Talib, the cousin of the Prophet became the Caliph between 656-661AD. Under him, the *Ummah* suffered a great deal from civil strife between Ali and Mu’awiya, the governor of Damascus in Syria and the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. This disagreement, it must be noted had severe consequences for the whole of the Muslim community.

However, it is no gainsaying that the period when the four rightly guided Caliphs led the Muslim community has been referred to in Islamic history as the “Golden Age” of Islam. The Islamic community founded by Mohammed was transformed into a vast Islamic empire by the four rightly guided Caliphs, “this transformation was accomplished by peaceful means (such as) by preaching and teaching of Muslim missionaries and by Jihad of the Sword” (Clarke, 1982:12).
4.3 Islamic contacts with Borno and Hausaland

The vast expanse of land north of what is now known as Nigeria was referred to as Kasar Hausawa “the land of those who speak Hausa language” (Clarke 1982:60). Meanwhile, opinion appears divided as to the exact date of the arrival of Islam in this area. While an account states that there was a Muslim community in Kano by the 14th century when during the reign of Yaji, (1349 – 1385AD) the Wangarawa came from Mali and brought the religion of Islam to the city, the other account states that though the Wangarawa brought the religion, but not in the reign of Yaji but that of Mohammed Rumfa, some one hundred years later between 1463 – 1499AD.

The first Muslim country in the Sudan which Islam entered was Borno (Clarke 1982) under Mai Humai Jilme who ruled Kanem-Borno from 1805 to 1097AD. He was said to be the first Muslim king in the empire, who with Mohammed Ibn Mani were responsible for the rapid spread of Islam in the region. It is instructive to note that Kanem-Borno made its first contact with Islam through trade since the 8th century, when the Muslim community in Kanem-Borno displaced the Dugawa dynasty and established in power the Sefawa dynasty.

After this displacement, Islam remained confined for several years to the royal court and the commercial centres. However, not too long after the conversion, the rulers of the kingdom began to perform such duties expected of devout Muslims such as going on pilgrimage to Mecca, introduction of some aspects of Islamic law and the wearing of cloths styled in the fashion of the Muslim rulers of North Africa. Administratively, the Muslim influence was felt in the emergence of a class of Muslim officials such as Qadis (Judges), Talibs (Scholars) and Waziris (Chief Ministers) whose task was to administer the empire.
Apart from the administrative competence of the Mai and those he appointed into the numerous positions enumerated above, literacy in Arabic language, the Quranic system of education and the Muslim festivals including the Friday prayers at the Mosque played very significant roles in the social, economic, political and cultural lives of the people of Borno at that time.

In Katstina, Muhammed Korau 1466-1493 who overthrew the Durbawa dynasty which represented the central point of traditional religion is said to be the first authentic Muslim ruler of Katsina. As for Zaria and its environs, Islamic presence was felt in the early 16th century. From Borno, Kano, Katsina, Zaria through Gobir, Islam spread throughout what is now referred to as Northern Nigeria. It was in Gobir as we shall see shortly that the Islamic revival took place under the leadership of Uthman Dan Fodio.

Despite this progress made by Islam in this area during this period in history, it is important to indicate that whereas the Muslim rulers were anxious to Islamise the society and impose an Islamic system of government for political and religious reasons, they met with very stiff opposition and resistance from the non-Muslim population at that time. Indeed, as was the case in Kano, Katsina and Zaria, the Muslim rulers had to compromise and accept a system of government in which the leaders of the traditional religion continued to exercise considerable influence in religion and political matters (Clarke 1982).

### 4.4 Islamic Reform and the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio in Hausaland

Two conditions, it can be argued, necessitated the need for the Islamic reform embarked upon by Uthman Dan Fodio. The first was the opposition by the adherents of the indigenous traditional religion to make Islam the state religion, while the second was the attitude of Muslim rulers,
Ulama’s (scholars) and Mallams (teachers) who, after accepting Islam mixed pristine Islam with other practices found in Hausaland such as covering the Quran with goat skin and venerating it as a lucky charm, imposing and collecting un-Islamic taxes such as the *Jangali* (cattle tax) and other taxes that were regarded as exorbitant, extortionist and exploitative. As indicated by Al-Maghili, one of the orthodox scholars from whom Uthman Dan Fodio drew inspiration “a ruler who imposes unjust and illegal taxes must be regarded as an unbeliever. He therefore concluded that Holy War against them (those who mix Islam) is better and more meritorious than Holy War against unbelievers” (Clarke 1982:101). This position by Al-Maghili formed the ideological basis for the Islamic reform embarked upon by Uthman Dan Fodio in Hausaland.

In order to understand the context of the Islamic reform (Jihad) it is necessary to dwell a little about the background of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio. Born in 1754 to Mohammed Fodio among the Torodhe clan of the Fulanis who settled in Konni in present day Niger Republic under the leadership of Musa Jokollo, who arrived since the fifteenth century from Futa Toro in the Senegambia region, this group of people is known as the Toronkawas in Hausaland. Uthman was born into a family of itinerant scholars, and that the epithet Fodio conferred on Shehu’s father, means a learned scholar or jurist in Fulfulde language (Bunza, 2007). Little wonder therefore that Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio was brought up with the main preoccupation and zeal for scholarship in the tradition of the family.

Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio, was a prolific author, teacher and preacher who wrote several books including *Wasiqat al-Ikhwan*, *Kitab al-Farq* and *Bayan Wiyud al-Lujra* (On the obligation of Migrating) *Kitab ulum al-Mu’amala* (The Sciences of Behaviour) *Usul-addin* (The Roots of Religion) etc. Apart from his erudition, he also combined in a fascinating manner, the fundamental characteristics of the Sufi (one who claims to be in direct communication with God
and the Prophet) of the Qadiriyya stock with those of the lawyer-theologian, who derives his knowledge from the understanding of Islamic law Sharia (Mack and Boyd, 2000).

Uthman Dan Fodio started preaching and teaching Islam at the age of twenty and by 1790; he became the leader of a large Muslims community who settled at Degel in Gobir. Members of his community were Muslim Scholars, who came from outside Gobir. The community was in some respects “a state within a state” (Clarke, 1982:101) and was very critical of the rulers of Gobir for their failure to govern according to Islamic law which emphasises equality between all tribes, struggle against injustice and oppression as well as the establishment and sustenance of an ideal and just system of government based on the principles of social justice.

The radical preachings of Uthman Dan Fodio became intolerable to the rulers of Gobir as it began to radicalise the people. As was expected, the rulers of Gobir were anxious to curtail the growing influence of Uthman Dan Fodio, indeed one of the rulers Nafata issued a proclamation between 1797-1798, which prevented all other Ulamas, Mallams and clerics from preaching except Uthman Dan Fodio and made it illegal for a son to adopt a religion different from that of his father.

It is interesting to note that Nafata’s successor Yunfa, who was incidentally a onetime student of Uthman Dan Fodio tried without success to assassinate his former teacher because the Shehu directed his scholarly attention to addressing the plight of the masses, the deplorable state of Islam, and the decaying social political institutions which manifest in corruption, maladministration as well as the problems of equity and equality in Hausaland during this period. It is clear from this face off, between the Shehu and the ruler of Gobir that negotiation and diplomacy had failed. Thus, according to the narrative by Clarke (1982) Shehu Uthman Dan
Fodio initially refused to obey the order directing him to leave Gobir, but later reconsidered his decision in 1804 by moving from Degel to Gudu following the example of the Prophet who made *Hijra* (moving) from Mecca to Medina in the year 622AD.

At Gudu, the large Muslim congregation formally elected Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio as the Imam and *Amir-al-Mu’minin* (Commander of the Faithful). As part of his verbal assault on the non-Muslim and the nominal Hebe Hausa rulers he accused them of insincerity, incompetence and corruption. For example, he points out that

> they impose (illegal) taxes such as Jangali or Cattle tax without any reference to the Sharia. They take bribes and fail to observe the Islamic law in matters of inheritance and succession. Furthermore, the rulers compel the people to serve in their armies, even though they are Muslim… And whoever does not go, they impose upon him money payment not imposed by the Sharia (Clarke 1082:114)

Apart from this, the Shehu was also very critical of the non-Muslims religious beliefs and practises which were in vogue in Hausaland. In his book titled *Ta’lim al-Ikwan* (Educating the Brethren) the Shehu condemns polytheistic practices (such as) venerating trees and rocks on which libations were poured or sacrifices carried out ----- the belief and the ritual associated with the belief in spirits who were regarded as inhabiting wells, streams and rivers and various forms of divination such as divination by sand, by the stars and by the spirits. (Clarke 1982:115)

According to the Shehu, all these beliefs and practices were unlawful and un-Islamic as they implied respect for and veneration of other forces and supernatural beings other than Allah.

When the situation became unbearable for the rulers of Gobir on account of the Shehu’s incessant criticisms, they attacked Gudu, the base of the Muslims. With this attack, the Muslim community prepared to defend themselves and the Jihad of the sword was declared in 1804. The
Jihad was so intense but within two years, 1806-1808 the Jihad forces of Uthman Dan Fodio captured Alkalawa capital of Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Daura and Bauchi who were ruled by Muslim loyal to Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio. Borno was also captured in 1808 bringing the whole of the Northern part of Nigeria under the leadership of Uthman Dan Fodio in what is today referred to as the Sokoto Caliphate.

The newly established Caliphate was administered from two administrative quarters in 1812. Mohammed Bello, Shehu’s son and successor took charge of the eastern sphere administered from Sokoto. Abdullahi took charge of the western region with headquarters in Gwandu, while Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio held the title of Amir-al-Mu’miniu who also held overall responsibility for the Caliphate until his death in 1817.

Two issues arising from the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio is of analytical importance to this research. The first is the justification for and consequence of the Jihad, while the second, is the position and status of non-Muslims within the Caliphate even after the Jihad in Hausaland.

In Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio’s manifesto of Jihad in Hausaland called Wathiqat’ahl al-Sudan, the Shehu clearly enumerated the conditions that must be prevalent in a society before Muslims can embark on Jihad. According to him, it is the duty of upright and conscientious Muslims to embark on Jihad (Holy War of the sword) against non-Muslim rulers who refuse to acknowledge and profess the belief in one God otherwise known as Sha’ada which represents the Muslims confession of faith when one declares that “there is no god but Allah and Mohammed (SAW) is His messenger”.

Also, it is obligatory for Muslims to take over the government of a kingdom where the ruler even though a Muslim abandons Islam for heathendom or when a Muslim ruler though continues to
profess his faith in one God and other Islamic doctrines but combines the practice of Islam with other un-Islamic religious observances. The Shehu points out categorically that it is wrong for a Muslim to attack Muslims residing in Muslim territory and that it is also unlawful to enslave the freeborn amongst the Muslims whether they reside within the territory of Islam or in the enemy territory.

A Muslim must not wage war or take away the property of a non-Muslim who has accepted the peace terms offered by the Muslims. While it is a duty of Muslims to launch holy war against oppression, he (the Muslim) has a duty “to command what is right and forbid evil” (cf. Clarke 1982:114)

Uthman Dan Fodio’s delaration that it is unlawful for Muslims to wage war or take away the property of non-Muslims who has accepted the peace terms offered by Muslims determines the position of non-Muslims under the Caliphate. Bunza (2007) indicates that non-Muslims under the Caliphate were known as “Maguzawa”. According to him, the Caliphate leadership adopted rules and regulations governing the treatment of non-Muslims under an Islamic State. These include allowing them to practice the religion of their choice, freedom to practice aspects of their culture not harmful or offensive to the society like the consumption of alcohol in public, nude dress and the likes.

Apart from allowing them to practice the religion of their choice, they were not in any way forced to accept Islam. In the words of a distinguished historian, Professor E.A. Ayandele who observed that there was no clear evidence of any forced conversion to Islam within the Caliphate, but noted specifically that
there is no record that captured slaves were being consciously converted to Islam. In Zaria and Kano emirates there were the Maguzawa, indigenous and pure Hausa people who up to now have refused to embrace Islam. They were left alone as freemen, both in Habe and Fulani Zazzau. It may be noted that in Zazzau the Fulani appointed an official to be in charge of their affairs (non-Muslims) administratively. Surely, if the Fulani jihadist had wished, the Maguzawa could have been compelled to become at least nominally Muslim (cf. Bunza 2007:10).

Not only were the non-Muslims allowed to practise their own religion, they were treated fairly and kindly such that in matters of litigation between Muslims and non-Muslims, the non-Muslims were left to determine whether they wanted to be judged under the Sharia Islamic law or the customary law. Bunza (2007) citing Naniya avers that

In matters of litigation (in the Caliphate) involving Muslims, Alkali, invoke the Shariah to arrive at a judgement. When Maguzawa (non Muslims) were the parties an Alkali normally provided the parties with the option of either the Shariah or traditional customary practice. In the event of the opting for the later, the Alkali invited the traditional leaders of the Maguzawa concerned to sit with him in Court as assessors. Together they passed judgement (cf. Bunza, 2007:8).

One very important aspect of the Caliphate that is often either ignored on neglected is the position of woman in the Islamic community. Women are usually erroneously thought of as being subjugated, oppressed, neglected and relegated to the background. This was not so in the Caliphate established by Uthman Dan Fodio, as one of his daughters Nana Asmau “who defies contemporary stereotypes and typifies the ideal of the scholarly, pious and yet worldly woman” helped transform her society by socialising war renegades and contributed significantly to the Islamic reformation process in northern Nigeria” (Mack and Boyo, 2000: xiv)

Relying on the Islamic belief that the pursuit of education is not optional but necessary and central to increased spirituality and following the scholarly tradition of the family, Asmau “was a
legendary female scholar who studied Islamic philosophical texts on prayer, mysticism, legal matters *fiqh* (which regulates religious conduct) and *tawhid* (dogma)” (Mark and Boyo 2000:7)

Just like her brother Mohammed Bello, Asmau was comfortable in intellectual debates. As a multi-linguist, she wrote poetic and praise works in Arabic, Hausa and Fulani that dealt with war, the Sunna and Women’s roles in the Islamic society especially the Quadiriyah community. She believes in the redeeming value of education and urges the pursuit of Divine Truth through education which must be made available to all irrespective of gender, age, political level or socio-economic status.

As we have indicated earlier, the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio created serious social upheavals leaving non-Muslim men, women and children as victims who needed to be assimilated into the Islamic community that was established. It was to Asma’u’s credit that she helped promote reconciliation, education and justice as a personal Jihad which took three aspects which are:

First was the preservation and propagation of all that the Shehu stood for ---- second, was the education of woman who were primary mentors of future generations. She was acutely aware that if captured Gobir woman practised their old customs and passed them on to their children, the seeds of disintegration would be sown. Her aim was to prevent this from happening. Third, she devoted her life to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, using her wit, her imagination and her immense prestige to find pragmatic solutions to the problems ------ (Mack and Boyd, 2000:6)

Having consolidated the Jihad in the northern part of Nigeria and firmly established the Islamic theocratic state with headquarters in Sokoto and Gwandu, it was time for the Jihadist to move southwest into Yorubaland after the decline of the great Oyo Empire in the late 18th century. Although there were only a few relatively small Muslim communities in Yoruba land by the 19th century, these communities were old Oyo, Ilorin, Badagry, Epe and Lagos which “consisted of
mainly Muslim merchants, missionaries and slaves from Hausaland and Borno” (Clarke, 1982:166).

However, the Islamic penetration began from Ilorin with the connivance of Solagberu, the leader of the Yoruba Muslims in and around Ilorin and Salih B. Muhammed B. Janata, also known as Alimi, the leader of the Fulani and Hausa Muslim in Ilorin, who assisted Afonja, the Are Ona Kakanfo in his rebellion against the Alaafin of Oyo. After the death of Alimi, his son challenged Afonja’s claim to the leadership of Ilorin and in the battle that ensued, Afonja was killed and Abdul Salami son of Alimi was installed as the first Emir of Ilorin, making Ilorin part of the Sokoto empire and also Darul-al-Islam from where the Emirs of Ilorin led by Abdul Salam went on to wage Islamic Jihad against the old Oyo Empire. This Jihadist advance was however checked by the Ibadan forces, which defeated the Ilorin army at the battle of Osogbo in 1840 (Clarke 1982).

Prior to the Islamic push, it is important to point out that the Yoruba’s also have the conception God, as a supreme Being known as Olodumare, who is regarded as the “Creator, Immortal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Transcendent, King and Judge” (Clarke 1982:166). Despite this similarity with Islam, the new religion was seen as a threat to the socio-economic, cultural, and political stability of the Yorubas, since it challenged the established hierarchy of authority and altered a number of erstwhile beliefs held sacrosanct by the people.

As the people came to accept the reality of Islamic incursion, they began to relax the initial apprehension they had for the new religion. Thus, as prominent rulers and successful merchants converted to Islam, the religion began to make slow but steady progress in some prominent
towns in Yoruba land, such as Ijebu ode, Ibadan, Oyo, Iwo, Epe, Osogbo, Ikorodu, Badagry, Abeokuta and Lagos.

Expousing the reasons for the spread of Islam in Yoruba land and using the case of Ijebu land as example, Clarke (1982) avers that at first the community practiced the Islamic faith in secret because of the opposition from the local people, but when many chiefs and influential people in and around Ijebu became sympathetic towards the religion and were prepared to become Muslims, the new converts were also in many respects tolerant of the local customs and traditions. While they took over many of the organisational and administrative structures of the local society, they did not venture into any radical alteration of the system. They were prepared to borrow and strike parallels between Islam and the prevailing customs and traditions. Also, in many parts of Yoruba land, Muslims were loyal supporters of local rulers as they paid due respect to these authorities. The close links between urban and rural areas typical of all Yoruba societies and the rapid spread of literacy occasioned by Islamic education as well as the action of freed Muslim slaves who began to return home with their knowledge of Portuguese, English and other skills gave Islam some prestige it never had before. All these factors facilitated the spread of Islam in Yorubaland in the 19th century (Clarke 1982).

However, by readily accommodating the traditional, political, social and cultural life of Yoruba society, it became extremely difficult for the Muslims, to establish a distinct Islamic identity and community based on the dictates of the Sharia. Indeed, as Islam was beginning to make steady progress, the religion was confronted with a very stiff competition from the Christian missionaries who were also bent on propagating the teachings of Christ. It is to the relationship and competition between Islam and Christianity especially under colonial administration that we now turn.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER FIVE
POLITICISATION OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN
RELIGION AND POLITICS

5.1 Religion and the Formation of the Nigerian State

Before the advent of Islam and Christianity, majority of the people who inhabits the vast geographical territory now known as Nigeria were adherents of what has been termed African traditional or indigenous religion which the white Missionaries and indeed some Western sociologist believe to be ‘a morass of bizarre belief and primitive practices’ which had “barely advanced to idolatory, and had never grasped the ideas of a personal deity, a duty in life, a moral code” (Clarke 1986: 221)

However, borrowing from Clarke (1986) the term “traditional is not intended to convey the impression that these religions were static unchanging system of beliefs and practices, but is simply a convenient and appropriate way of referring to the oldest of West Africa’s living religion” which has not only remained an important force in the society, but have continued to exercise a very strong influence on the educational, medical, cultural, economic, social and political spheres of life of the people (Clarke,1986:3)

Indeed, Idowu (1963:18) opines that the concept of monotheism is not alien to the Yoruba people who have been in existence for thousands of years before their contact with Islamic and Euro-christian culture and civilsation. Specifically, the Yoruba belief in Olodumare, the Supreme Being, “whose eternal existence for all practical purposes been taken for granted as a fact beyond question. It is upon this basic faith that the whole superstructure of Yoruba belief rests” (Idowu, 1963:18) This is without prejudice to the fact that the Yoruba also believe that he has other
messangers or *Orisa* through which He conducts the affairs of man on earth. It is the worshipping of these *Orisas* that early European and Christian scholars erroneously referred to as Idolatory, fetichism and paganism and that the people are “worshippers of wood and stone”

According to Yoruba theology, the *Orisas* namely *Orisa-nla* also known as *Obatala, Orunmila, Ogun, Esu, Sango (Oramfe, Jakuta), Sopona and Ela*, are prominent divinities sent by Olodumare and are not only worshipped but they are believed to be charged with vital functions on earth that are universally recognised by the Yoruba people. According to Idowu,

> the Orisas have been employed from the very beginning in duties connected with the earth and its fullness. Thus, they are ministers of Olodumare looking after the affairs of His universe and acting as intermediaries between Him and the world of Men. To each of them is assigned department over which he is ruler and governor. Each of them has its own emblems according to peoples’ conception of him. (Idowu, 1963:62)

Meanwhile, it is important to assert that “proper polytheism does not apply to the religion of the Yoruba” (Idowu, 1963: 58). William Schmidt, a Catholic Priest supports this assertion when he argues that “African (traditional) religions were at the outset monotheistic ----. The supreme Being and not lesser gods and idols was at the heart of African traditional religions” Loyer another Christian Cleric of the Catholic stock unequivocally declared in the eighteenth century that “they Africans (on the West Coast) believe in one Supreme God, the Creator and Sustainer of all thing” (cf. Clarke 1986:221)

It is important to note from the outset that the primary purpose of both Islamic and Christian imperialism in West Africa was first and foremost for commercial reasons making little “distinction between religion and politics” in their adventure. In order to have unfettered access to the resources (both human and material) of the area, they needed to establish their religions.
While Islam was a little accommodating of the traditional practices before the revival or reform, the aim of Christianity was to alter and suppress all contrary beliefs, rituals and the way of life of the people.

The term Christianity is a generic term which covers a great variety of religious beliefs, practices and organisations. These varieties played out in the missionary’s scramble to win souls for Christ in West Africa in general but in Nigeria specifically. Needless to point out therefore, that the relationship between the Christian missionaries were characterised by disagreements, rivalry, competition and conflicts. However, as Clarke (1986) perceptively observes that while these disagreements have loomed large, it is possible to point to some overall agreement on a number of fundamentals which all Christians have agreed. The first is that all Christians agree that because of the ‘original sin’ all men have come short of the “glory of God” thus, all men need to be saved and Jesus Christ is the Savior. Two, that there is a general agreement that the Bible comprising of both the Old and New Testaments are the two most important revealed sources of Christian belief and three that the fulfillment of human existence is to be found in life after death (Clarke 1986:5)

While Catholic Missions pioneered missionary activities as early as the 15th Century in West Africa, the first missionary society to be founded in Britain was the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) 1792, followed by London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, while the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) and the Scottish Presbyterian Society (SPS) were formed in 1799 (Clarke, 1986:31).

However, the first missionary contact with Nigeria began in Badagry in the year 1842, when Thomas Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Methodist Church arrived there. This, as Ajayi
(1965:31) puts it, “marked the effective beginning of the ‘modern’ missionary enterprise in Nigeria”. From Badagry, they moved to Abeokuta in the same year. Similarly, Henry Townsend, of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) also began to explore the possibility of missionary work in Badagry and Abeokuta, with the opening of the first CMS station in Badagry in 1845.

One year later in 1846, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a returnee slave, and who will later play very significant roles in the spread of Christianity through missionary activities and Henry Townsend opened a CMS Mission in Abeokuta. By 1854, four other mission stations had been opened in and around Abeokuta and from there, the CMS made in routes to the hinterlands where missions were opened in Ibadan in 1850, Oyo in 1857 and in Ife in 1858. During this period, Hope Waddle of the Presbyterian Church started missionary activities in and around Calabar. By 1890 Catholic missionaries were also working in Easter Nigeria.

Missionary activities were therefore characterised more by “rivalry, criticism, hostility competition and outright opposition than by cooperation. Indeed, there was cut throat competition between Anglicans, Methodist and the Independent Churches” (Clarke 1986:209). Various strategies were used for the spread of Christianity in these new found territories. These strategies include the establishment of mission schools, mission hospitals, care for the sick and the disabled. For example, while the French Missionary Fathers work in Lagos and its environs favoured the establishment of schools, the French Holy Ghost Fathers who arrived at Nkissi near Onitsha Wharf in 1885 favoured the system of “Christian village”; which is a model that encouraged the buying of slaves where they would be taught the Christian faith, employed by the mission and trained as Evangelists. (Clarke 1986:69)
Meanwhile, starting from 1841, Ajayi Crowther had made several journeys up the Niger and by 1857; there was a vast Niger mission which covers all the people of the Niger River from its delta northwards including the Northern states of present day Nigeria (Clarke 1986). Prior to these missionary efforts to spread Christianity by Ajayi Crowther, the Sokoto Caliphate had come in contact with the Europeans in 1824, seven years after the death of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio and fifteen years after the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate.

Clapperton was the first European explorer to arrive in Sokoto and met with Caliph Mohammed Bello. Clapperton was nicknamed Abdullahi in order to underscore the friendship and cooperation that existed between the explorers and the leadership of the Caliphate (Bunza, 2007).

After the death of Clapperton, other explorers visited Sokoto and these visits were to open up commercial, imperial and religious relationship between the Caliphate and the European missionaries ably supported by their respective government (Bunza, 2007:16). Thus, the relationship between Islam and Christianity begun before and continued during colonial rule which had far reaching consequences for the post-colonial politics and religious co-existence of the people in Northern Nigeria and by extension the whole country.

5.2 Islam and Christianity in Historical Perspective

Historically, Islam and Christianity had encountered one another before their contact in Nigeria. Thus, given the philosophical, ideological and eschatological differences between the two religions, their encounter in Northern Nigeria with its Islamic background must therefore necessarily be negative, competitive, confrontational, hostile and conflictual. For example, a Church Missionary Society (CMS) document observes that
(Islam was) ---- the only (religion) that definitely claims to correct, compete, and supersede Christianity; the only one that categorically denies the truth of Christianity; the only one that has in the past signally defeated Christianity; the only which in several parts of the world, is today forestalling and gaining on Christianity. (cf. Bunza, 2007:36)

With this mind set and world view about Islam, missionaries began work in Northern Nigeria with the Roman Catholic missionaries opening a mission in Lokoja in 1886, Dekina in 1904 and Shendam in Jos-Plateau in 1905. Prior to this, the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) began work in Pategi in 1901. New mission stations were opened at Zaki Biam in 1913, Sevav in 1919, Mkar in 1923, Adikpo in 1923, Turan in 1926 and Kunav and other areas of Tiv in 1927 (Clarke,1986:106). The Sudan United Mission (SUM) opened a mission in Wase in Jos-Plateau. The development of Sabon-geri system, where ‘strangers’ lived and worked in separate areas on the periphery of the old Muslim centres of the North such as Sokoto, Kano and Bauchi eventually led to the incursion of Christian missionaries in and around this area (Clarke 1986:109).

As Christianity penetrated these Muslim strongholds, they went along with their prejudice and contempt for Islam. The Sudan United Mission (SUM) regarded Islamic civilisation as a ‘higher’ form of civilisation than African civilisation, while “Christian civilisation was higher than both” Another Scholar Kumm, depicted Islam as “excelling in works of evil”. He also contrasted the benefits of Western civilisation with ‘evils’ of Islamic and African civilisation. He concluded that Western colonisation was divinely ordained: It was God’s instrument for bringing in the name of Christ, liberty and justice to Africans. (Clarke 1986:110)

Indeed, one of the principal objectives of the missionaries working in northern Nigeria was to stem the tide of Islam. According to one of the leaders of the Sudan Missionary Association, “his
missionaries were engaged in a struggle in northern Nigeria to ‘defend’ the traditional religionist against Islam and if they were successful they would not only improve their barbarous customs but also hand them over to the true God”. Some of the missionaries even suggested that there is a causal link between Islamic beliefs and practices and destitution, poverty and low morality: (Clarke 1986:111).

From this worldview, Christian missionary encounter with Islam produced a clash at the spiritual, doctrinal and cultural levels. At the doctrinal level, was a fundamental disagreement on the fact that Islam totally reject Christian teachings on trinity, divinity of Christ and on the claim of Christians that Christ is the saviour, while at the cultural level, the missionaries believed that

------ God had worked wonders for European civilization centuries ago, when by means of Christianity He transformed the English, the French, and other European from ‘savages’ and ‘barbarians’ into cultured and civilized people. Now - but for Islam which rejected colonial rule and Christianity-the same process could speedily be got underway in Africa. European civilization was considered to be the highest form of civilization and in refusing to accept it; Muslims were perpetuating the ‘evil’ generated by Islam’s inferior form of civilization (cf. Clarke 1986:111)

With this superiority complex about the infallibility of the European civilisation and the justification of colonial rule as well as the winning of Souls for Christ, the missionaries adopted several strategies to convert the people of Northern Nigeria to Christianity. Bunza (2007) identified the use of charity and material benefits such as the payment of weekly pay, feeding, clothing, giving to house helps, gardeners, messengers, cooks and patients in the hospitals in order to convert them. Also the missionaries used education and the building of schools, provision of health care services such as building mission hospitals.

Indeed, Bunza (2007:47) avers that empirical evidence shows that missions secured most of their converts among Muslims in the Sokoto province through medical treatment. He observes that
leprosy patients usually suffer isolation from the society due to the stigma attached to the disease. These sufferers and other socially marginalised groups such as ex-slaves were among the early converts to Christianity. Public preaching, pamphlets and media as well as what he called “cultural surrender” a situation where the missionaries adopted Hausa cultural norms in order to penetrate the society (Bunza 2007:62) were all used to convert people to Christianity. Despite all these strategies, it should be underscored that Christian pronouncements on Islam were consistently negative and hostile in the 1840s and 1850s, but this began to subside when effective colonisation began and the indirect rule policy was introduced.

One important phenomenon that facilitated the growth of Christianity South of the Niger was the establishment of ‘Independent’, ‘African’ or Ethiopian Churches. The formation of these Churches was occasioned by the secession of members from the mission Churches. The secession was usually premised on the tendency to dominate and downgrade Africans even those who had risen to leadership positions in the Churches. A case in point was the attack on Ajayi Crowther’s leadership, which some Christian analyst have interpreted to be motivated by racialism. This led to the division between “we” and “them”. African leaders who felt unfairly treated began to express their sentiment by insisting that

The Christianity that was introduced to Nigeria was British Christianity, which gave England the privilege to become a powerful nation and teaches the superiority of white man to black man, while God teaches equality and the right of every nation to become a holy nation. No nation had any right to say to another worship God after my own fashion, sing to God in my own tune, say my prayers, speak to God in my own language, marry after my own tradition --- Roman Christianity is the Christianity of Rome, English Christianity is the property of England ---- it isn’t African. (cf. Clarke 1986:158)

The Christian missionaries paid little or no attention to the close relationship between religion and the society within the African context. Christian missionaries were not sensitive to the
difference between the communal nature of African societies compared to the highly industrialised, capitalist, individualistic and secularised nature of Europe which provided for a clearer distinction between the religious sphere and the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of the society. Since the religious and the societal spheres are more integrated in Africa and indeed Nigeria, Christianity unlike Islam, was presented as a religion in conflict with African society and its values. Missionary activities were interpreted as trying to denigrate and eradicate African cultural practices like marrying more than one wife, singing in foreign language, conduct of marriage ceremonies etc. while upholding and over glorying many European values such as monogamy.

An example of a Church formed in order to reject this perceived domination and control of Africans by the European was the National Church of Africa founded in 1885 by Adedeji Ishola. Ishola claimed to be the recipient of a divine calling to free Africans from religious bondage and to search for “a religion which was not tainted with dogmatism nor adorned with colonialism” (cf. Clarke 1986:175)

Similarly in 1888, there was a split in the American Baptist Missionary Society in Lagos which led to the formation of the African Baptist Church led by Mojola Agbebi. The secession occurred over disagreements among the Nigerian elite in Lagos over what names to adopt, what styles of dress to wear and how many wives to marry. He opined that Christianity in Africa should make itself relevant and indigenous, using wherever possible African style and fashion of worship (Clarke 1986:160). In 1891, the United Native African Church was formed by ex-members of the CMS in Lagos on account of some of the reasons enumerated above.
Meanwhile, apart from the unfair treatment meted out to Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the dismissal of the first Nigerian Baptist Pastor named Moses Ladejo Stone from his Pastorate in Lagos in 1887 in a way contrary to the laid down Baptist Church practice was the “immediate, direct cause of the secession and the establishment of the Native Baptist Church in 1888. In the resolution of the United Native African Church established three years later in 1891, the founders of the Church declared as follows;

We are no longer prepared to accept the view or presumption that it was for foreign missionaries to rule and Africans to obey ---- in humble dependence on Almighty God --- resolved that a purely Native African Church be founded for evangelization and amelioration of our race, to be governed by Africans ---- and to change Christianity’s alien, foreign image. (cf. Clarke 1986:161)

Also, the establishment of the African Church (Incorporated) in Lagos in 1901 was occasioned by what some Anglican Church members saw as the unjustifiable removal of the Nigerian Bishop James Johnson from his post as the Pastor of St. Paul’s Breadfruit Church, Lagos. These members met at the Rose Cottage, Marina in December 1901 to open the Bethel Church on the premise that they “objected to the lack of consultation, paternalism and the autocratic manner of the CMS authorities” on the question of polygamy for the members of the new found Church. While relying on such scriptural passages as 1 Timothy 3:2, 3:12, they decided that while the clergy should remain monogamous, Christian laymen were permitted to take more than one wife (cf. Clarke 1986:162). Another secession occurred again in 1917, this time from the Methodist Church with the formation of the United African Methodist Church (UAMC) or UAM Eleja with reasons for their secession not too different from the ones enumerated above.

The reasons adduced for the various breakaways from these missionary Churches cannot be separated from the behaviour of the missionaries. As Ajayi once described these missionaries as “able, young, zealous, imperious, uncharitable and opinionated” (cf. Clarke 1986:67). In the
same vein, what we see in the rise of these Independent or African Churches is undoubtedly a case of spiritual and cultural clash, a clash of identities, and a clash concerning the meaning and purpose of religion!

While missionaries’ believe that it is part of the function of Christianity to bring about a fundamental change in the thinking attitudes, customs, traditions and the general way of life of Africans, some Africans however saw the activities of the missionaries as using their religion to extend and preserve their own foreign culture and tradition at the expense of those of Africa (Clarke 1986). Thus, these spates of secessions and the establishment of African or Independent Churches can be interpreted as part of the struggles against imperialism and colonialism.

There was also the formation of what has been referred to as Zion, Prophet, Spiritual and Praying Churches which emphasised miracles, the miraculous healing power of consecrated water, and the belief in the power, efficacy and indispensable role of prayer in the healing process, especially in the cure of leprosy, sores, barrenness, small pox, fear, eye pain and evil spirits (Clarke 1986:169)

Such Churches include the Precious Stone-Faith Tabernacle Movement founded in Ijebu-ode in 1918 by Joseph Shadare a member of the St. Saviour’s Anglican Church, the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) founded by Akinyele and others including Joseph Babalola who severed ties with the Baptist Church in 1940 to establish the Christ Apostolic Church. There was also the formation of the Aladura Churches such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Society founded by Moses Orimolade Tunolase from Ikare in Ondo State and Christana Abiodun Akinsowon from Lagos in 1925. Moses Orimolade and Christana Abiodun separated in 1929 and Moses Orimolade renamed his own Church as the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim.
The Church of the Lord (Aladura) was founded by another former Anglican, Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu in 1926.

One important distinguishing feature of the Zion, Spiritual or Praying (Aladura Churches) is that Church services had the appearance of being informal, spontaneous, entertaining and vibrant (Clarke, 1986). They also emphasise the sacredness of certain places such as mountains and hill tops, sea shores or beaches such as Orioke Moses Orimolade in Ikare, Olorunkole hill near Ibadan and Bar Beach in Lagos. In addition to this, there are many prohibitions that are similar to those to be found in Islam, such as preventing menstruating women from entering a sacred place like the Churches or Mosque, person who has not washed after sexual intercourse, ban on alcoholic drinks, the eating of pork, the use of charms and the wearing of shoes in holy places. (Clarke, 1986:174)

5.3 Islam and Christianity under Colonial Rule in Nigeria

The Europeans have had contacts with the people of the area now referred to as Nigeria but it is important to point out that:

Whether these Europeans came to trade or to convert local people (to Christianity), they all shared a similar attitude toward Islam. They accepted the assumption of Christianity of their age that the world was divided into Christian believers and the rest who were disbelievers or downright infidels. They were wholly uncritical in their approach to their own belief and never doubted for one moment that Christianity was the true faith believing all other religions including Islam to be false. (cf. Bunza, 2007:18).

This was the underlying philosophy of the Europeans, especially Britain when Fredrich Lugard was appointed the High Commissioner for the protectorate of Northern Nigeria on the 1st of January 1900, which marked the formal beginning of British Colonial administration in Nigeria.
From the perspective of the missionaries who had been in Nigeria before this time, they saw colonialism as “a form of imperialism based on the divine mandate and designed to bring liberation, spiritual, cultural, economic and political – by sharing the blessing of Christ inspired civilization of the west with a people suffering under satanic forces of oppression, ignorance and disease, effected by a combination of political, economic and religious forces that co-operate under a regime seeking the benefit of both ruler and ruled” (Boer, 1988:7).

It is important to point out from the outset that opinions are divided about the intention and actions of the colonial government towards Islam and Christianity. While some including Boer (1988) insists that notwithstanding the principal support of colonialism on the part of the missionaries, point of friction between the two were many and severe. Most of these points of friction arose not only because of the regimes protection of Islam, but its active encouragement of that religion”. Others such as Fafunwa (1974) were of the opinion that “the British officials …were themselves Christians representing as Lord Lugard claimed “the most Christian nation in the world. British occupation in Nigeria was therefore synonymous with Christian evangelism…helping the benighted Africans to accept Christianity and Western civilisation. The missionaries by and large were able to carry out their mission with the connivance of the British officials” (cf. Boer, 1988:5)

Indeed, Fafunwa (1974) asserts further that “the powerful forces of Church and state combined in an unholy alliance to convert Emirs, Obas, Chiefs and their people into Christianity. Christian-oriented schools, textbooks, sermons and other built-in educational devices were employed as instruments of conversation” (cf. Boer, 1988:5)
From the empirical data available and as it shall become clearer shortly, the two positions seems to be correct about colonial rule in Nigeria. In order to court the support of the Emirs and the predominantly Muslim people of that part of the country especially following the introduction of the indirect rule policy of the administration, Lugard had promised that the government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion. “All men are free to worship God as they please, mosques and prayer places will be treated with respect by us”. However, it should be borne in mind that Lugard was just being pragmatic in his approach to the administration of the area as he did not mean to shut the door against the missionary’ activities in the Muslim area

Boer (1988) indicates that Lugard allowed Miller, a missionary of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) to preach anywhere in the North. He also suggested to the Sudan United Missionary (SUM) that they should settle initially at Wase, a community under Muslim control.

It was only when he noticed that missionaries did not always exercise caution in a potentially explosive situation that he began to prevent them from entering Muslim areas (Boer 1988:9)

This Lugardian promise was subsequently used by Lugard’s successors to out-rightly prevent missions among Muslims and in many areas in Africa. The colonial governments were accused of aiding the propagation and expansion of Islam while they were suppressing Christianity (Boer, 1988). The question then is, in what ways was the colonial government aiding the expansion of Islam? As it is well known, the success of the indirect rule system demands that, where well established systems of political administration exist such systems must be preserved, oiled and entrenched. This desire to see the indirect rule system work took preeminence over all other considerations including evangelism and winning souls for Christ.
The colonial government aided the expansion of Islam in several ways. First, there was the common practice of extending the rule of Muslims Emirs over traditional tribes that formerly were not under Muslim rule. Citing the example of Bukuru, a mining town close to Jos where as soon as the tin mines were beginning to develop, a Hausa market sprung up, followed by Muslim teachers and by 1912, call to prayer was heard, where only a little while ago, there was nothing but wilderness (Boer, 1988). Similarly, the colonial government employed Muslims and gave them prestigious positions amongst people who are not Muslims. For example, the Bongo people had hatred for the Muslims and have refused their suppression over the years on account of the protracted war between the Bongos and the Arabs (Boer, 1988:8).

However, after the arrival of the Europeans and the resulting peace, Muslims were sent to the area in various colonial capacities and clothed in considerable prestige. “What the Muslims had been unable to achieve through violence, the British achieved through peace and aided by such government appointments, Islam infiltrated the tribe (and) young Bongo warriors had begun to wear Muslim robes” (Boer 1988:9).

Secondly, the colonial government was also accused of using education to extend the frontiers of Islam. The colonial government was said to have introduced Muslim teaching, taught Islam to children of soldiers irrespective of the father’s religion under government supervision. Indeed, Smith an Anglican Bishop once reported cases of traditional boys forcibly enrolled in government schools where they were taught by Muslim teachers. He claimed that government was prescribing school textbooks that were as good as handbooks on Islam while Fridays were appointed as the day of rest for soldiers instead of Sunday just as Christian boys attending industrial schools were compelled to work on Sunday. (Boer, 1988:10) Government officials also
used all sorts of devices and excuses to restrict missionary activities such as making it illegal to teach the Christian faith to children of Muslim parents who are under eighteen (18) years of age.

Thirdly, the colonial government placed restrictions and regulated missionary activities in territories declared as “unsettled” since officials were held responsible for the safety of missionaries; the colonial officials exploited this to prevent missionaries from entering areas not considered safe or fully subdued. The 440 yard rule, which prohibited Europeans from residing within 440 yards from the nearest Nigerian community in order to protect Europeans from yellow fever, was also exploited to the disadvantaged of the missionaries in order to reduce or prevent their entry to Muslim dominated areas (Boer 1988:13). The missionaries also experienced problems with getting and renewal of leases for the various stations. If and when leases are granted, they were often of such short duration that the missions felt insecure and hesitated to construct permanent structures on such plots of land (Boer, 1988:14).

However, despite all these allegations of colonial support for Islam, the counter perspective is that the colonial government gave tacit support and used surreptitious means to aid, expand and propagate missionary activities in Nigeria. While Lugard in a tacit reaction argued that “the government of the Sudan and Nigeria favoured Muhammadanism (and were anti-missionary). The attitude which British government has endeavoured to assume is strict religious liberty and neutrality” (cf. Bunza 2007:103)

But citing a senior British colonial officer to the contrary, Sir, H. H. Johnson avers that “in fact the CMS for good or for ill, has done more to create British-Nigeria than the British government” (cf Bunza, 2007:78). The colonial government gave financial assistance to the
missionaries in the form of grants to build schools, hospitals and for the establishment and construction of Churches in several places in the northern part of the country.

It has been argued that the Lugardian pledge of non-interference was never an act of benevolence nor any love for Islam since colonial government was not instituted for any altruistic reasons such as the re-organisation of the Nigerian society but simply to create the necessary and proper conditions for commerce and by extension, exploitation. Bunza (2007) supports this view when he argues that “any promise by the imperial power, to preserve the culture and religion of the colonised was no more than deceit”. And citing Amical Cabral, he declares that

To take up arms to dominate a people is above all to take up arms to destroy or at least to neutralize and paralyze their cultural life. For as long as part of that people can have a cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure of its perpetuation. It is not possible to harmonize the economic and political domination of a people, whatever the degree of their social development, with the preservation of their cultural (or religious) personality (cf. Bunza, 2007:99).

By 1914 when Lugard amalgamated the northern protectorate with the colony of Lagos and the protectorate of southern Nigeria, the indirect rule introduced to the southern part of the country was not as successful as it was in the north. The reasons for this have been well documented in literature. What is of concern to us here is the consequence of the British incursion into this (southern) part of the country.

The Islamisation of the Yoruba was made possible by peaceful means even though three problems confronted Islam at that time. The first, according to them, was that there was no political transformation of the entire society like the kind at Ilorin. Second, Islam just like Christianity failed to displace the indigenous religion but Christianity spread around the area in the 1840s and recorded phenomenal success, such that the three religions had to co-exist with a
great deal of tolerance, while the third problem was that, although Christianity was the last religion to arrive, it quickly produced elites that was to threaten the Islamic elites (Kukah and Falola, 1996:65).

The early embrace of colonial and by extension Christian education produced the first set of elites who were in control of education, politics, civil service, judiciary and the bureaucracy. Thus, most of Muslims engagement with the state at this period was to protest the seeming backwardness and perceived marginalisation of Islam in the governance and administration of the society. As a response to this feeling of alienation, the colonial government and the ruling class responded through a strategy of incorporation such that Muslims were appointed as chiefs, leaders of Muslim community and were consulted in major policy matters especially those that could create conflicts. In order to relate easily with the Muslim community, the colonial government always insisted that there should be a Muslim leader recognised by the Muslim community.

However, this involvement of Muslims in the administration did not always provide political stability, legitimate policies or political action. Thus, Muslims resorted to protest when they felt that their rights had been trampled upon, excluded from power or when they feel that Christians were being privileged or acquiring more influence. It should be emphasised that the Muslims’ protest were not usually against Christianity as a religion, but against the decisions of Christian political leaders who formulate and implement policies perceived to be against Muslims and the interest of Islam (Kukah and Falola 1996) Several issues were protested by the Muslims during the colonial era but the notable ones are:
the establishment of schools for Muslims, representation in local
governments, the right to worship in certain areas, the
appointments of Muslim clients and the support for Muslims who
wanted to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. In some cases, the
reasons for the protest were not consistent… they change with the
interpretation imposed by the Muslim leaders and the perception of
threat to Islam (Kukah and Falola, 1996:80).

The colonial government responded to these protest by the Muslims. In the education sector, a
Muslim school known as Government Muslim School (GMS) was established, Muslim teachers
would teach Muslim pupils, and measures were taken to separate the study of English language
from Christianity. When it was realised that the Muslim were satisfied with this arrangement two
new schools were opened in Epe in 1898 and in Badagry in 1899. Not only were the
management of these schools in the hands of Muslim communities, the instructors were Muslims.

By the time the government Muslim schools were abolished in 1926, it was clear that a synthesis
of Islam and Western education was possible. Sooner than later Muslims agitation for more
schools increased and where governments were unable to meet such demands, several Muslim
Societies such as Nawir-ud-deen Society established in Abeokuta in 1923, Young Ansar-ud-deen
established in Lagos in 1923, the Islamic Society of Nigeria established in 1924, the Ijebu-Ode
Mohammed Friendly Society in 1927, the Society for Promoting Muslim Knowledge in 1947,
the Muslim Congress of Nigeria in 1948, the Proprietors of Muslim Schools and the Muslim
Welfare Association were formed in the 1950s at one time or the other established schools for
Muslims (Kukah & Falola, 1996:81) including the Ahmadiyyah Movement. The establishment
of these schools “broke the monopoly of Western education and encouraged Muslims to
withstand Christian propaganda” (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:82)
A much more fundamental reaction of the Muslims to the challenge posed by Christianity was the formation of a political party called the United Muslim Party (UMP) in 1953. The party used Islam as the rallying point and hopes to bring all Muslims under one political platform. Another political party known as the National Muslim League was formed in 1957, with similar aims with the UMP. From time to time, the United Muslim Party challenged the Action Group on several educational issues within the Western region. At some point, the UMP threatened to continue with its protests until adequate educational facilities and funds were made available to the Muslims (Kukahand Falola, 1996). Also, when Muslims were taught Christian Religious Knowledge and were been either converted or have their names changed to Christian names, the UMP and other Muslim pressure groups protested all these pro-Christian activities in the name of education (Falola and Kukah, 1996:82)

This protest on education was taken to the highest level when Queen Elizabeth II of England visited the country in 1956, the UMP declares as follows

Muslims have not been treated adequately well in Nigeria, and in no sphere has this been too patent than in the field of education and allocation of school grants and education development funds, that in consequence of this neglect, medical attention, education and jobs are not within reach of the Muslim Communities…..that the Muslim community can neither match up with the other progressive community nor really enjoy the fruits of self government…..unless its (Muslim education) is literally encouraged with bulk catch-up education grant and with awards of scholarships for advanced studies in overseas Universities and technological institutions; and unless it is no more purposely neglected to engender ignorance and political inferiority (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:88)

It is instructive here to note another complaint by the United Muslim party. In the opinion of the party, government favoured Christians to the neglect of Muslims in the conduct of official ceremonies. In a petition to government the party argues inter alia that
For too long has officialdom displayed a preference for the Christian form of worship in a population pre-dominantly Muslim with result that loyal citizens and public men who are followers of Islam are, by force of circumstances made to attend a place of worship and participate in a devotional service in which a human being -a Prophet is addressed as God, and the Only one God of the universe is addressed as Trinity (Kukah and Falola, 1996:84)

Consequently, the members of the UMP wanted Muslims to be invited to state functions as dignitaries and that government should give equal recognition to Islam and Christianity in order to stop the prominence usually accorded Bishops and Archbishops in state functions at the expense of Alfás/ Imams and Chief Imams. Similarly, the demand for assistance to facilitate pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia turned to protest in 1950. These demands include the need for ease of obtaining foreign exchange, good housing and medical facilities in Saudi Arabia, comfortable transportation and the safeguards of intending pilgrims from agents who swindle and collect illegal fees from them. (Kukah and Falola 1996)

The agitations of United Muslim Party and later the National Muslim League (NML) who later changed its name to the Emancipation League (Egbe So Eru do Omo) though still retaining its Islamic character became so political and threatened the dominance of the Action Group in the region. This necessitated political action to stem the tide of the Party’s divisive tendencies in the region. Indeed, the Regional and Federal governments responded to the agitations over pilgrimage such that the two levels of government dispatch missions to Saudi Arabia. While the federal government concentrated on bilateral negotiations, the regional government tried to simplify the process of travelling for the pilgrimage. The Action Group government in Western Region took the matter very seriously and promulgated laws to ameliorate the suffering of the Muslims. This was done in order to convince them (the Muslims) in the region that the party was interested in their affairs in spite of the opposition’s propaganda
Thus, on the 27th May 1958, the Western House of Assembly passed a law to establish the Western Regional Pilgrims Welfare Board, with an all Muslim composition, the Board was to protect and safeguard the interest and welfare of Western Nigeria pilgrims journeying to or from Mecca and Medina or stranded in the course of the journey to or from holy places. The Board was also to assist in making suitable transportation, accommodation arrangements and in obtaining visas and foreign currency (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996)

Similar government response and reaction came when, the president of another Muslim Political Party known as Egbe Musulumi Parapo, the National Muslim League, Mr. R.A Smith criticised the Action Group government for its poor allocation of resources to issues affecting Muslims, such as the non teaching of Arabic language in schools, the dominance of Christian members in the Western House of Chiefs and the Western Region Executive Council. As a reaction to the activities of this Muslim party, which in the opinion of the leaders of the Action Group, could use force of religion especially Islam to destabilise the government, the Premier of the region and the leader of the Action Group Chief Obafemi Awolowo publicly appealed to all well meaning Nigerians to reject and destroy the National Muslim League (NML), since according to him, the NML was an evil organisation, that has introduced fanaticism and religious intolerance into the body polity of the region with the consequence of war and the disintegration of the corporate body of religion itself. Awolowo then declared that the Action Group Government would meet with “repraisal and retaliation” as well as leave “no stone unturned to combat what is really a diabolical threat to the peace and tranquility of this country and a calculated assault on the freedom of Religion” (Kukah and Falola, 1996:89) While urging the people not to engage in subversive activities using the toga of religion, Awolowo counsels that
It is open to any Muslim or Christian who has political ambition either to join one of the existing political parties or to start a new non-sectarian and secular party of his own. It is absolutely intolerable indeed unthinkable for a group of religionist to essay to get themselves into power so that they might lord it over those who do not belong to their faith. It is an indirect means of destroying freedom of religions to embrace the faith of the party in power (cf. Kukah and Falola, 1996:90)

The fears of the Action Group and its leaders were justified when the Muslim League entered into an alliance with the Northern Peoples’ Congress, another Muslim dominated party preparatory to the 1958 and 1959 elections at the regional and federal levels. Needless to point out that the party performed woefully in the two elections as it polled less than one percent of the total votes in the local government elections and failed to win a seat in the federal. The Action Group won through a number of strategies such as using coercion, propaganda on Yoruba solidarity and the formation of a rival Muslim Organisation, called the United Muslim Council in order to fight the National Emancipation League (Kukah and Falola 1996)

5.4 Religion and Politics in Post-colonial Nigeria

The historical roots of this tragic development which has threatened to tear Nigeria apart along religious lines are partly to be found in the 1950s with the emergence of constitutional regionalism and regionally based political parties. Since then, ethnic, religious and regional loyalties have been decisive and formative elements in Nigerian politics (Kasfelt, 1994)

The 1946 Arthur Richards constitution introduced regionalism to the politics of Nigeria. This division was further consolidated by the Macpherson constitution, with the emergence of regional as well as religious political parties. Of specific importance to this work is the use of religion as a political force (Kukah and Falola 1996) especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria.
Little wonder therefore, that in the march to Nigeria’s independence, the Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) under the leadership of Sir Ahmadu Bello in connivance with the colonial government ensured that the Northern region was bigger than the East and Western parts put together. This advantage was what the Sardauna built upon immediately after independence with serious consequences for the political stability of the country.

With the formation of the Jamaatu Nasril Islam (JNI) especially to counter the rising influence of the Tijjaniya Sufi Brotherhood and the millions of pounds received from the Muslim world by the JNI, the Sarduauna’s missionary project became more ambitious (Kukah and Falola 1996) piecing through many non-Muslim areas and communities for his conversion campaign targeted at both Christians and non-Muslims in the North. It should be borne in mind that before the Sardauna’s conversion campaigns the Christian Mission Organisations had the freehand to convert non-Muslims described as ‘animist’ in the ‘pagan’ area of the northern Nigeria without any competition. In Isa Abba’s view, the Sardauna’s programme of conversion therefore, posed a very serious challenge to Christian Missionary activities. Thus, the Missionaries and the non-Muslims from the North and the South joined forces against the Sardauna as his campaign was “interpreted as an attempt to Islamise Nigeria through Jihad that would sweep all non-Muslims into the ocean” (Bunza, 2007:137). Also, through this conversion campaigns, many traditional rulers in non-Muslim areas of the north who were reluctant to convert to Islam were allegedly blackmailed, victimized and humiliated.

Jamatul Nasirul Islam (JNI) was founded by the Sardauna of Sokoto in 1962 with the aim of educating the Muslims about their religious obligation and to serve as a mouthpiece of Muslims throughout Nigeria on religious and political matters. Since the inception of the JNI, the Sultan
of Sokoto being the *Amiral Mumeenin* (the spiritual leader of the Muslims) has always been President of JNI.

The high point of the conversion campaign which was to have very severe consequence for the political history of Nigeria came in an address delivered to the World Muslim Congress in 1964, where the Sardauna declared unequivocally that

> It will please you, my dear brothers, to hear that in my endeavour to expand the religion of Islam, I have, by the grace of Allah, been able to convert 60,000 non-Muslims in my region to Islam within a period of five month (November 1963 to March 1964)... there are over 1 million Kuranic schools ... my government has now created an Islamic Advisory Committee consisting of learned Sheikhs who advise me and my government on means of promoting Islamic religion, our culture and unity amongst the people. (cf. Kukah and Falola, 1996: 107)

This declaration by the Sardauna served as the last straw that broke the camels back in terms of the orchestrated unity of the North, following the Northern Peoples Congress’s (NPC) motto of “One North, One people”. The non-Muslims especially the Christian interpreted the Sardauna’s declaration as the beginning of a grand design to Islamise the North and by extension the entire country. Even within the Muslim Community many non-NPC members saw the whole conversion process as a grand design to extend and expand the political frontiers of the Northern Peoples Congress. Other prominent NPC members such as late Sir Kashim Ibrahim and Alhaji, Yahaya Kwande stood in principled opposition to the Sardauna’s tactics. Kukah and Falola (1996) opined that “the seeming success marked the beginning of the decline of the North, for the conversion campaigns to expand Dan Fodio’s empire contained the seeds of the distrust in the North, a distrust that set the pace for the tragic events which took the Premier’s own life” (cf. Kukah and Falola, 1996:108).
Barely two years after this declaration, the Sardauna and other prominent Nigerians, were assassinated in a bloody coup d’etat of January 1966 led by Major Chukwuemeka Kaduna Nzeogwu. Indeed, the assassination of the Sardauna was interpreted as an attempt to halt the progress of Islam and the Islamisation campaign he championed. Bunza (2007) buttressed this point thus, Major Nzeogwu invited Abubakar Gumi to his office shortly after the Sardauna was assassinated and asked him about the weapons imported by the Sardauna purportedly intended to be used to wage a Jihad against non-Muslims in the North and in Nigeria. From there Gumi “concluded that the principal motive behind the coup was religious and purely a struggle between Islam and Christianity” (Bunza 2007:138)

In addition to this, the fact that the leaders of the coup of January 1966 were all Christians and majority of those who were killed were Muslim leaders and military personnel gave the coup the religious colouration it had. The non-Muslims in the North and Southwest, who were killed during the episode, were killed as a result of their loyalty to the unwanted ‘feudalistic’ Muslim leadership (and) for non-Muslims …. The coup was liberation from an Islamic threat to their worldview” (Bunza, 2007:138) The coup of January 1966 unleashed other chains of events such as the counter coup of July 1966, the program in the North and the eventual thirty months civil war after the secession by Biafra (1967-1970), needless to emphasise, that this historical antecedent have influenced and defined the relationship between Islam and Christianity ever since.

Under successive military rule, Muslims and Christians continue to view one another with suspicion and each government action or inaction was viewed from the prism of religious affiliation and ethnic consideration. The military did not manage to reduce the impact of religious protests and acrimony, because of the minority ascendancy within it, was a necessary
mechanism for reducing the crisis and tendencies of domination which characterised political and economic competition among the elites of the dominant groups. (Kukah and Falola, 1996:109)

It was however, in the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) set up in preparation for the transfer of power from the military to the civilians that the bigotry of religion was to rear its ugly heads. At the CDC, the insersion of the clause ‘secular’ and the question of Sharia in the draft constitution created serious disagreements amongst the members. This has to do with the debate as to whether it was proper to describe Nigeria in the section on the State and it’s Fundamental Objectives as “one and indivisible Sovereign Republic, secular, democratic and social”. On this proposal, the country was divided along religious lines. Muslims arguing that “secularism refers to a doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in this present life to the exclusion of all consideration drawn from belief in God” but the constitution Drafting Committee used the word ‘secular’ to imply state neutrality in matters of religion.

While the non-Muslims saw this anti-secular position of the Muslims as another ploy to entrench and advance the cause of Islam, because to agree with description of Nigeria as secular is to perish Muslims desire and ambition to establish an Islamic State in Nigeria. The Muslims on the order hand argue that secularism has no place in Islam, since Islam is not “only a religion but a complete way of life” since politics cannot be separated from religion. Apart from this, the importance attached by law, to taking religious oaths and the fact that Nigerians do not want an “irreligious State”, Muslims wanted the phrase “secular’ state” omitted and description inserted in the draft constitution characterising “Nigeria as a multi-religious state’. At the end of the debate the term “secular” was dropped.
The Sharia debate was another tony issue at the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC). The Sharia debate was based on whether a constitutional provision should be made for the establishment of a Federal Sharia Courts of Appeal, and for Sharia Courts at the state levels where they did not already exist. The Sharia issue succeeded in opening up old wounds as it threw up fundamental questions concerning the consideration of Friday as a work free day, the nature and ethos of Nigerian judicial and legal system, such as arguing that their outfits and academic gowns are Christian heritage, the nature of Nigeria’s federalism, the removal of crucifixion symbols from government hospitals and the entire education system. Indeed, it was argued that the entire system by which Nigeria operates today is Christian. The constitution, the educational system, the economic framework, the military and every bit of government bear Euro-christian colonial legacy (cf. Bunza, 2007:135).

And according to the Jamaatal Nasiril Islam, the Christians have always been hostile to all the demands made by Muslims to better themselves and their religion. In a release issued by the JNI, they insist that

> On many occasions, the Nigerian Christians objected to the fundamental rights of Muslims. For instance, Shariah, which is a fundamental right of the Muslims and is applicable to Muslims only, has been consistently and vehemently objected to by the Christians. (cf. Bunza, 2007:148)

However Kukah and Falola (1996) cautioned that the Sharia issue should not be viewed from the prism of Muslim to Christian divides as “there were ethnic, socio-cultural and political underpinnings to the views and opinions held by different groups and individuals” (cf. Kukah and Falola, 1996:127). In spite of this note of caution, it is necessary to present the Muslim-Christian argument concerning the Sharia issue.
For the Muslims, they contend that the incorporation of the Sharia into the Nigerian constitution would help the Nigerian state to regain its moral consciousness and responsibility, generate necessary collective spirit and help solve Nigeria’s social problems. Muslims blame the society’s moral and spiritual bankruptcy and promiscuity on the absence of Sharia; they insist that Nigerian Muslims were backward because of the overthrow of Sharia by the British as it impeded Islam’s progress. More fundamentally, they argue that the present legal system in operation in Nigeria did not satisfy the Muslims in terms of “the general need for social justice among Muslims” and that the establishment of a Federal Court of Appeal would enable the development of a coherent and consistent body of Islamic law to operate throughout the federation (Clarke 1986)

The Christians on the other hand countered these arguments and maintained that the inclusion of the Sharia clause in the constitution is part of the grand design to Islamise Nigeria began under Uthman dan Fodio, which Sir Ahmadu Bello pursued and rationalised during his conversion campaigns. For the Christians, the demand for a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal and more Sharia Courts in Nigeria would make the separation of the Church and the State impossible and lead to discrimination against Christians. Others argue that the Sharia issue is one of the instruments being used by outsiders to divide Nigeria. The demand for Sharia Courts then gave rise to “the inevitable demand for an equal deal for all religious groups”. The proponents of equality argued that, if there were to be special courts for Muslims, then the same provision should be made for Christians and the Traditional religionists. They therefore concluded that serious problems would be created for Nigeria’s unity, should the provision be granted by the Constituents Assembly. Indeed, the Sharia controversy opened new vistas in political and religious intolerance between Muslims and Christians. Olupona (1991) underscored this position when he opines that,
(Shariah debates) brought into the open, dimension in the Christian Muslim relations in Nigeria. Although benign forms of religious intolerance had for a longtime been part of the Nigerian way of life since the coming of these religions, the debate on Shariah law opened up potent political force of religion as an instrument of disintegration (cf. Bunza 2007:147)

By the time the dust thrown up by the inclusion of Sharia in the draft 1979 Constitution subsided, the religious adherents in Nigeria have been further sharply divided but the controversy was not without some revelations such as, a high degree of political and religious consciousness between Muslims and Christians, the emergence of contending indices for self, ethnic and communal identities, the fragility of bloc/hegemonic contention, the ability of Nigerians to manage crisis and the realisation that Nigerians needed one another to survive the stormy sea of political transformation (Kukah and Falola 1996)

As the Sharia controversy was waning, the global resurgence of Islamic revivalism had reverberating consequences in Nigeria. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which brought about the Islamic Republic of Iran, the introduction of Sharia in Sudan and the adoption of Sharia by the Pakistan Constituents Assembly as well as its enforcement by the government of Ziaul Haqq served as impetus for the formation of several Islamic organisations making similar demands on the Nigerian state. It is within this context that the 1979 demonstration by the Muslim Students’ Society of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is to be understood. They were unsatisfied with the loss Muslim suffered in ensuring the inclusion of Sharia in the Nigerian constitution. Indeed, their slogan for the demonstration was “No Sharia, No Nigeria”. Closely followed by this, was the Maitatsine uprising which broke out in Kano in 1980 on the flimsy excuse of fundamentalist and abusive preaching of Mohammadu Marwa (Maitatsine).
The Maitatsine followers have as their aim the cleansing and purification of Islam as they are against compulsory prayer hours and the practice of facing Mecca while praying. They are also said to be against materialism such as private ownership of properties like houses and even the possession of wrist watches. Maitatsine followers were prohibited from mentioning the name of Prophet Mohammed whom they referred to as an Arab (Ojo, 1985:299). The causes of the uprising “range from the trivial and grotesque to the most serious, from the possible and plausible to the absurd” while some dubbed the riots as sheer religious fanaticism, others thought it was politically motivated, caused by outside interests like Mosad or Al-mafisa (Ojo, 1985:297)

On significant interest to us is that over the years Mohammed Marwa established himself as a great Islamic scholar, recognised and respected by the people and held in high esteem by political leaders of succeeding governments and regimes of the state from whom he was accorded special treatment (Ojo 1985:298). Little wonder therefore that despite the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry set up after the uprising, similar riots broke out in Balumkuta in (1982), Jimeta in Yola in 1984, and Gombe in 1985 there have been several similar uprisings ever since, these uprisings and riots have also been linked to the socio-economic crises associated with increasing industrialisation, modernisation and indeed Westernisation. Thus, Bunza (2007) argues that the socio-economic and political crisis which saddled the country in the last two decades compelled Muslims to return to Islam in order to save themselves from confusion and integration imposed on them by the West.

Muslims are now beginning to appreciate that the civilization they have been copying and cherishing does not posses the good qualities needed for sustaining a human organization. What the West has so far offered to the Muslims is nothing more than
continues (sic) decline and moral degeneration resulting in frustration as well as less purpose and direction (Bunza 2007:146)

The political and economic mismanagement of the Shagari administration brought back the military into Nigerian politics in 1983 but it was under the Babangida’s administration that religion became politicised to a level that has been unprecedented in the annals of the country. The administration was responsible for the emergence of religion as a significant factor in Nigeria’s politics and brought it to the fore of political discourse (Kukah and Falola, 1996). This was occasioned by the sudden upgrade of Nigeria’s observer status it had in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1971, to that of full membership in 1986.

The government premised the joining of the OIC on the need to benefit from loans and other pecks which member countries benefit from. From the background of the Christian’s suspicion and belief that there is a covert attempt to Islamise Nigeria, the joining of an Organisation whose programme of activities and raison d’etre were overtly for the propagation of Islamic religion seems to lend credence to the belief. This explains why the Christians under the platform of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) was very vehement and stood in principled opposition to Nigeria’s membership of the Islamic Organisation. Indeed, Bishop Bolanle Gbonigi, a prominent member of CAN believe that “Nigeria’s membership of the OIC is a development capable of engineering a religious war”. Similarly, Rev Moses Hivel declares that “to encourage religious harmony and peaceful co-existence in the country, Nigeria must withdraw from the OIC”. Rev Peter Jatau, the Archbishop of Kaduna opines that “my assessment of the implication of this admission of Nigeria into the OIC is that, this can trigger off a big misunderstanding between the Christians and the Muslims”. The Council of Bishops in Nigeria also called on all Nigerians to watch out “(as) there is danger ahead; if Nigeria should remain in the OIC” (cf. Bunza 2007:144)
Despite this threat and several criticisms, the Babangida administration responded by justifying Nigeria’s membership of the Islamic Organisation thus:

we shall not neglect any opportunity to serve our national interest in any reasonable international forum. The same policy of propagating our national interest have been pursued by many nations inside and outside African continent with very positive results to their national wellbeing and international standing. To this end, the Nigerian flag will be raised in every international forum to which we have sufficient reason to belong or to attend. Our attitude to the world must not be based on fear but on a spirit of engagement, discovery and cooperation (cf. Bunza, 2007:147)

Despite this staunch defence of propagating Nigeria’s national interest in international community, the seemingly genuine intention of the administration has been challenged on a number of grounds. First, non-Muslims especially the Christians could not understand the rationale for clandestinely taking the federal government into such a religious organisation without due and adequate consultations with all stakeholders in the society.

Second, the leaders of the two government Ministries; External Affairs and Finance, whose Ministers were incidentally Christians were not in the know when such as important state decision was to be taken and thirdly, since the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was the highest policy making organ of the regime, how come that even its head, who also happened to be a Christian did not know? (Kukah and Falola, 1996:152)

The Babangida reaction in order to ameliorate the obvious resentment of the Christians to Nigeria’s membership of the OIC was that the regime had to restore diplomatic ties with the State of Israel. This politicisation of religion by the Babangida administration had serious devastating consequence for Muslim/Christian relations as every action or inactions of government were henceforth viewed from the prisms and lens of Muslim/Christian antagonism.
From this episode, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) became more of a political pressure group than a religious association of Christian leaders. The organisation became more vociferous in their criticism of government especially its involvement and sponsoring of Muslims pilgrims to Mecca with the resources of the state. Enweren opines that

the Christian position is premised on the view that the state must play no role in religion since the country is constitutionally a secular one and therefore the state must not render any financial assistance to religious activity of any group. It became obvious that there was a disparity in favour of Muslims and it saw this as further evidence of the government unfairness to Christians. (cf. Bunza, 2007:142)

This demand by CAN has been relaxed since government also began to render the same financial assistance to Christians going to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. CAN also protest what it called the domination of Muslims in political and bureaucratic appointments especially in the northern parts of the country. According to CAN,

ministerial distribution, gubernatorial numbers, heads of parastatals, directors in the federal ministries and establishment show ‘domination’ of Christians by Muslims. All the ills and predicament which befell the nation were as a result of corrupt, insincere, greedy and ‘incompetent Muslim elites’ who considered ruling the country their birth right (cf. Bunza, 2007: 149)

After the brutal and malicious killing of innocent people in Kaduna in 1987, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) criticised the sudden and unjustifiable removal from office of some top government functionaries such as Admiral Ebitu Ukiwe, Professors Bolaji Akinyemi and Tam David West, the second in command to the President and Ministers of External Affairs and Petroleum Resources respectively. Two other top Directors at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Drs Onyia and Adams were also removed.

In the opinion of CAN, the removal of these top government functionaries were not unconnected with the fallout of the country’s membership of OIC, the “tenuous Islamisation programme” of the Babangida administration as well as the continued marginalisation and domination of
Christians by the Muslims. This is especially so because all the top government functionaries were replaced by Muslims from the North. In one of CAN’s publication titled leadership in Nigeria, the Christian Association avers that;

Since the Babangida Administration came to power it has unashamedly and in utter contempt for national unity manifested its naked discriminatory religious posture through overt and covert acts of patronage and preference for Islamic religion. One is therefore left with no alternative but to conclude that the Babangida administration is the principal agent for the Islamization of Nigeria (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:255)

It is instructive to note further, that when the highest decision making organ of the same regime the Armed Forced Ruling Council (AFRC) was dissolved in 1989, the new AFRC that was composed by President Babangida had far more Muslims than Christians. In a swift reaction in a release by CAN which it titled CAN’s Reactions to the Federal Government appointments, the organisation declared as follows

a government which fills the crucial position in the country in the way the recent appointments have been made is clearly going against the provisions of the constitution ……of the 39 to top functionaries recently announced by the Federal government, Muslims have a total of 26 positions…powerful positions go to the Muslims. While emasculated Ministries are assigned to Christians (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:255).

Meanwhile, the abortive coup of April 1990 led by Major Gideon Orkar further put an edge on Muslim/Christian relationship in the country. In his uncoordinated Coup address to the nation Gideon Orkar announced that the Coup was onbehalf of the marginalised, enslaved and oppressed people of the “Middle Belt and the South” by the Muslim North. Over ninety percent of Nigeria’s problems were caused by the so-called chosen few, who presided over the national wealth while contributing very little to it. Gideon Orkar declared inter alia that
It is our unflinching belief that this quest for domination, oppression and marginalization is against the wish of God and must be resisted with all vehemence … just as a decision has been made to excise out of the country the former Sokoto Borno, Katsina, Kano and Bauchi states (cf. Bunza, 2007:150)

Given the malice and hatred conspicuous in Orkars Coup speech against the North and by extension the Muslims, parallels were drawn by Muslim analyst between this Coup and that of the 15th January, 1966 Coup detat where the Sardauna and a large number of Muslim political and religious leaders were killed. The Coup no doubt had serious religious as well as political colouration for which CAN was held culpable by the Babangida administration.

The Orkar Coup exacerbated the tension between Muslims and Christians which characterised the rest of Babangida’s administration. After the manipulation of the transition to civil rule programme, the annualment of the freest and fairest election in the history of Nigeria, the self-acclaimed “Maradona and Evil genius” was forced out of office after the crisis which followed the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, won by Chief MKO Abiola. Bashir Ikara argues that;

in most cases disputes and misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians were not based on doctrinal differences or purely intellectual ground but on who gets what from the government, who should be deemed getting it, and who consequently gets an edge over whom? (cf. Bunza, 2007:150)

The annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election came as a rude shock to most Nigerians. Never before was the political activism of CAN became so pronounced than after the annulment, despite the fact that the winner of the election and his Vice, were both Muslims. In a broadcast on the 23rd of June, 1993,
Babangida announced that;

the candidates had resorted to buying their votes, that the judiciary was making an ass of itself and that there were evidence that Chief Abiola, who was ahead in the polls did not command the respect of the military and that the Chief’s personal and business interests were in conflict with the national interests (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:260).

The entire nation was thrown into pandemonium. CAN became more critical and antagonistic of the regime. In its own reaction to the annulment, CAN advised the Military regime to handover the reins of power to Chief MKO Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the election. In no unmistaken terms, CAN assert that;

we shudder to contemplate the enormity and gruesomeness of any deviation however slight from the handover date (August 27)… A government which bans today, unbans tomorrow and rebans the third day could make Nigerians feel that the entire nations is like a lifeless toy at the mercy of the military (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:261).

The Catholic Bishops Conference issued a statement signed by the President and the Secretary. The statement reads in part.

we are profoundly disturbed at how the sacred trust of governance is subjected to ridicule before the entire world. We find it incomprehensible that a national election held before the prying eyes of local and international monitors and generally pronounced to be the freest and fairest in the nation’s history can become so deeply flawed in the eyes of the authorities as to deserve an outright cancellation…. We appeal to Nigerians who have so far maintained a commendable calm in the face of excruciating tension and anxiety to continue to exercise patience. The Lord of history may intervene to change hearts and make the seemingly impossible (cf Kukah and Falola 1996:260).

In a swift reaction to the annulment, Archbishop Abiodun Adetiloye, Primate of the Anglican Communion wrote to the president urging him to leave the scene as promised and swear in Chief MKO Abiola as promised. The Primate warned that “it is perilous for you and this nation to ignore the voice of the people”. Reacting to the President’s claim that Chief MKO Abiola did not
command the respect of the military, Bishop Adetiloye stated that “even if the majority of the armed forces voted against the present winner, which is very much in doubt, it goes to show that the armed forces form a negligible proportion of the population of this country” (cf. Kukah and Falola, 1996:261)

Also, the Primate of the Methodist Church, Rev. Sunday Mbang observes that;

The Methodist Church finds it absolutely imperative to raise its voice vehement and total objection to the cancellation of the June 12th presidential elections. It is our belief that the annulment of the results and the subsequent maintenance of the status quo glaringly portend doom for the existence of Nigeria as a corporate entity…We categorically object to and without equivocation, a situation where the entire citizensy will be deliberately plunged into avoidable disaster (cf. Kukah and Falola 1996:262).

The Presbyterian Church in its own statement submits that;

In the absence of any convincing reason to the contrary, only a return to the June 12, 1993 election, the completion of the announcement of results, the declaration of the winner and a firm commitment on the part of the military to hand over the reins of government to a civilian president on August 27th will release tension, assuage tempers and break the political impasse (cf Kukah and Falola 1996:262)

While several Bishops, Primate and Archbishops and their umbrella body issued statements condemning the annulment and were politically active, the irony is that the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) under the leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto urged Chief MKO Abiola, a fellow Muslim to accept the injustice of the annulment as the act of Allah as “He (Allah) gives sovereignty to whomsoever He pleaseth and takes sovereignty away from whosoever He pleaseth” This clearly shows that the consideration of the SCIA is not so much religious but regional and ethnic. Since the political class in the North has once boasted that it is their birth right to rule and that they cannot contemplate any power shift to other parts of the country, even if the election was won by a fellow Muslim.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL ISLAM AND FUNDAMENTALISM IN NIGERIA

6.1 Political Islam and the Sharia Debacle

The optimism which followed the transition from military to civil rule occasioned by the handing
over of the reins of power by General Abdulsalami Abubakar to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on the
29th of May 1999 was soon short-lived by the declaration and full implementation of the Islamic
legal system called Sharia by the elected governor of Zamfara state, and its subsequent adoption
by some other states in the northern part of the country.

Given the plural nature of the Nigerian society and indeed the North, the declaration of Sharia
provoked a lot of reaction and counter reactions from individuals, groups and concerned
organisations. This is particularly so, because the introduction of the Sharia was viewed by some
Nigerians as a surreptitious means of Islamising Zamfara state as a prelude to the Islamisation of
the entire country.

This fear was amplified by Alhaji Sani Yerima who declared during the official launching of the
Islamic legal system in Gusau, capital of Zamfara state before a tumultuous crowd of about two
million people that the “event (launching of Sharia) will be marked in the annals of not only
Zamfara state but throughout our beloved country as a culminating point in the actualisation of
the hopes, ideals and aspirations of the majority of our citizens, the Muslims” (Director,
1999:12). In the same address, the governor of the first Sharia state in Nigeria opined that;

The Muslim Ummah in this nation had for too long been dormant, inactive and indeed in a state of slumber which had given the impression that we are a silent majority. The Muslims have for long yearned for freedom to exercise their full rights since the period they were invaded and colonised by the British...the
struggle had not gone in vain for the Islamic order we envisaged has now emerged. (Director, 1999:13)

As to be expected, the Sharia declaration sparked a constitutorial controversy as to the propriety or otherwise of the introduction and imposition of the Islamic legal system. What then is Sharia? Under what conditions should Sharia be declared and implemented? How is the implementation going to affect non-Muslims who are resident in the state where Sharia has been declared?

Sharia is said to be the laws, regulations and code of conduct that must guide the activities of a Muslim in its entire ramification. It includes spiritual, economic, political, legal, juridical and social prescriptions about how to live a completely pious life. Bidmos (2002) opines that Sharia is “another name for Islam as it represents Allah’s direct instructions and code of conduct for all Muslims. It is a divinely enshrined infallible law (or sets of law) because it is authored (sic) by the one who know everything fully well, Allah. It covers political, social, economic, judicial and legal aspects (cf. Harunah, 2002:4)

Sharia has defined as “the totality of God’s command that regulates the life of every Muslim in all aspects, it comprises as equal footing ordinances regarding worship and ritual as well as political and legal rules”(Schacht, 1979:392). In a more scientific approach to the classification of the Sharia law, Doi identifies four ingredients of the law, which he classified into primary and secondary sources. According to him

the primary sources of Sharia...(which comprised) the Quran (as “the book of Allah”)…the Sunnah (and the Hadith). The secondary sources... (comprised the following) al-Qiyas (analogical deductions)...al-Ijtihad (the use of human reason in the elaboration of the law)...(as well as al-Istihsan, al-Istsilah or Masalih al Mursalah (i.e. “just and equitable” decisions or solutions taken in overall public interest of the Muslim community – (all of which were) derived from the injunctions of the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet. Hence, the final sanction for all intellectual activities in respect of the development of Sharia comes from
nowhere else but (from) the Quran. Even any hadith which goes contrary to the Quran is not to be considered as authentic (Doi, 1984:24-28).

For the Islamic legal system (Sharia) to be declared and fully implemented, the society must first be Islamic because the overall aim of the Sharia is to ensure political, economic and social justice. It would therefore be an anathema to declare Sharia in a state that is yet to be Islamic and still relies on Judeo-Christian democratic architecture and political institution.

Section 1 subsections 1 and 3 of the 1999 constitution as amended expressly declares that “this constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 3 states that “if any law is inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution, this constitution shall prevail (emphasis mine) and that the other law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void”. While section 10 states that “the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion”.

Given the above constitutional provisions, it is clear that the action of the Zamfara state governor and other governors of Northern states who declared and implemented the Sharia, represents a direct affront on these provisions of the Constitution. Alhaji Sani Yerima feels otherwise, he believes that his actions were in line with the Constitution of the country. In his opinion section 6, subsection 5 also provides that “states can create Courts and assign jurisdiction to such Courts. And that a State House of Assembly can promulgate laws for the peace, security and governance of their State” (cf. Director, 1999:14) but can all these be in conflict with the overall objective, spirit and letters of the Constitution?

Similarly, the governor argues that “the introduction of the Sharia should not be misconstrued to be the islamisation of the state. If we are to Islamise the state, the Magistrate and High Courts
would have ceased to exist in Zamfara state. Secondly, let it be understood once more that Sharia is only applicable to Muslims”. For him, those who argue against Sharia tend to forget that the Nigerian Constitution, which they are talking about guaranteed freedom of religion as provided for under section 38 subsection (1) which states (that) “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom (either alone or in community with others and in public or private) manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. This is what we have done” (cf. Director, 1999:15)

In spite of this seeming conviction, assurance and avowed efforts by the Zamfara state governor to clad his action with the veneer of constitutionality, doubts still reign supreme amongst concerned Christians and even some Islamic adherents about the objectives, timeliness and even the correctness of his constitutional spring board. For instance, Jiti Ogunye, a constitutional lawyer and Human Rights activist while reacting to the full fledged implementation of Sharia in Zamfara state argues that;

there can be no Islamic state (in Nigeria under which this form of Sharia legal system operates) in the face of the nature of the Nigerian constitution which is seen as the basic law of the land upon which all other laws including those Sharia) are rested. The adoption and implementation of full fledge Sharia legal system is unconstitutional because it….amounts to an imposition on the people (cf. Haruna 2002:42).

In the same vein, Sheikh Ibrahim El Zak Zaky, a leader of the radical Islamic Brotherhood Movement based in Kaduna shares the sentiments of Jiti Ogunye in an interview published in Thisday Newspaper of October 21, 1999 where Ibrahim El-Zakzaky maintains that

a man like Yerima who derives his power from the constitution is not fit to pronounce Sharia laws. He asked rhetorically “is the
government (Zamfara) Islamic...? How then do we expect a government which is not Islamic to operate an Islamic law and Islamic legal system? Islamic legal system should only be operated by an Islamic government in an Islamic environment after an Islamic atmosphere has been created. Since Nigeria is not an Islamic state but has a constitution, which in today’s Nigeria is supreme to the Sharia (cf. Director, 1999:15)

The Sharia (legal system) cannot operate under a superior (legal) authority which the Nigerian constitution represents. The governor of Zamfara state is unfit (sic) to execute (Sharia) law (which is the law of Allah) because he…derives his (political) power from the (Nigerian) constitution. He (the governor of Zamfara state) is not a representative of Allah. He derived his power from the Nigerian constitution which he swore to uphold, protect and defend as the supreme law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (cf. Harunah, 2002:42).

In addition, Dr. Lateef Adegbite (a legal luminary and a former law teacher at the University of Lagos and the then Secretary General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) agrees with El-Zakzaky on the issue of the supremacy of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria when he asserts that “Sharia can only be adopted as a full fledged legal system in Nigeria through constitutional mechanism. To him, the Nigerian constitution remains supreme over other laws (including the Sharia law) in the country” (cf. Haruna, 2002:42).

Gabriel Osu, a Reverend Father of the Lagos Catholic Archdiocese further countered Yerima’s claim. He argues that though section 275-279 of the 1999 constitution gives powers to the states to make independent laws, but only in so far as they do not endanger the continuation of the federal government in Nigeria. That is why the states are not authorised to adjudicate on criminal laws which Sharia covers. Reverend Osu maintains that;

the enactment of Sharia law in any state of the country will erode the supremacy of the constitution, challenge its efficacy and authority and make a mockery of our constitution… and this may well be a recipe for disaster and chaos (Director, 1999:14).
Indeed the implementation of Sharia in the Northern states of the federation had far reaching political, socio-cultural, economic, religious and security implications for both Muslims and non-Muslims residents in these states. On the political plane, many analysts believe that the declaration and implementation of the Sharia is more for political and economic gains than for religious advancement.

Atiku Abubakar the then Vice-President and a political leader in the North opines that “the latest effort of the core North at destabilizing the government of President Obasanjo was the plot to diabolically employ Sharia law as a political tool”. The Sharia issue is being exploited by “disgruntled elements in the society” to foment trouble. You must expect there should be a number of them because of the attitude of this government in cleansing the system” (Suleiman, 2000:19).

At a meeting called by Atiku Abubakar to resolve the constitutional logjam that the declaration of Sharia has caused, the Northern governors told Sani Yerima that he indeed rushed into proclaiming Sharia for political and economic reasons. In fact, the Zamfara state governor was confronted with the exact sums of money he had received from a number of Islamic countries in the Middle East (Ugbolue, 2000:18). Apart from this assertion, Catholics under the aegis of Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria (CLCN) “insist that the Sharia adoption by these Northern states and others waiting in the wings, is a ploy to destabilise the country” (Asoya, 2000:23).

But why would some people want to destabilise the country? Some commentators believe that “the religious face-off in the country is either caused by politicians or contractors who were unnerved by the Obasanjo’s cleansing exercise, are trying to scuttle the democratic process, so that the military, under whose junta they can thrive, will have an excuse to come back to power”
(cf. Ogunjimi, 2000:15). Even Chief Olusegun Obasanjo the then President of the Federal Republic agrees with the above assertion when he argues that “I believe Sharia (is) being used as an instrument as some people have said” (cf. Ogunjimi, 2000:15).

On the socio-cultural and economic plane, the governor of Zamfara state assures that the Christians in the state need not nurse any fear since according to him “our own constitution (Sharia) has provided that there must be fairness and justice to everybody, we must ensure that Christians and Moslems are treated equally” (cf. Elesho, 2000:28).

But the Christians in the state believe otherwise. According to Venerable Peter Dambo, Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in the state, “Christians are denied their rights; freedom of religion is not allowed, land ownership is denied the Christians, just like open evangelism is no longer possible…there are over 60,000 Christians in the state, yet Christian Religious Knowledge is not being taught in schools” (cf. Elesho, 2000:29). Another clergyman, Right Rev. Samuel Bala observes that “Christians are now being denied accommodation by Moslem landlords; Christian programmes are not aired in the state electronic media, just as there is no Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board” (cf. Elesho, 2000:29). Also, the chairman of the Christian Indigenes, Masihiyawa (the followers of Christ) Joel Aliyu Sani sums up the general feelings of Christians in Zamfara state when he declares that “we are like orphans in our state, since we can't have anything” (cf. Elesho, 2000:29).

Meanwhile, if the declaration of the Sharia legal system was well intentioned, the implementation and its overall assessment leave much to be desired. For example, one Bashiru Sule was given eighty (80) lashes of the cane before a cheering crowd of about 500 people in Gusau for drinking alcohol in public. Another, Sanni Mamman, an eighteen year old boy was
given hundred lashes in Tsaye for indulging in premarital sex. While an unemployed farm worker one Dantamin, was fined N157, 933 for knocking out his wife teeth in a quarrel (cf. Ogunjinmi, 2000:14).

By far the most sensational aspect of the implementation of the Sharia was the amputation of the hand of Baba Bello Karegarke Jangedi who was caught and convicted for stealing a cow in the Talata-Mafara area of the state. Indeed Jangedi’s arm was amputated from the wrist according to section 144 and 145 of the Zamfara state Sharia Court Law No. 10 of 2000 and also the cases of Mallama Safiyah Hussoni Tungartudu of Sokoto state and Mallama Amina Lawal of Funtua in Katsina state who were convicted by their respective Sharia courts and were to be stoned to death. This decision sparked several controversy over the propriety and acceptability of such cruel, inhuman, primitive, barbaric and harsh system of justice administration in the twenty-first century, when emphasis is on the rule of law, especially with the enforcement of citizen’s fundamental human rights.

Professor Bidmos, a Professor of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Education and the Chief Imam of the University of Lagos Muslim Community argues that

Islam fully endorses the imposition and enforcement of capital punishment on any Muslim male or female found guilty of violation of any section of the laws stipulated under the Sharia criminal code under the right atmosphere and correct political environment. My main quarrel is with the heavy political undertone of the Northern brand of Sharia, and the anti-Sharia activities of (some of) the Northern leaders in the Sharia implementing states (Bidmos, Oral Interview in 2012).

Professor Bidmos further buttresses this assertion thus:

If the (Muslim) North and our Muslim Northern leaders are interested genuinely in Shariah, why the deliberate promotion (or sustenance) of poverty among the masses (i.e. the talakawa) through the instrumentality of Almajiri (which has continued to
turn out scores of street beggars among Muslim men, women and children in the North. Whereas, Shariah as prescribed by God emphasis the need for the alleviation or eradication of poverty among the economically and socially weak segments of the Muslim population by their leaders and rulers)? Why the promotion of VVF (a disease resulting from early marriage and early reproduction by underaged girls between 13 and 14 years, whose hands in marriage have continued to be sought (and secured) by some Muslim adult males in the North)? Why the patronage of prostitutes… (despite) the (plural) number of wives…kept at home by some of the Muslim men in the North? Why is the rate of alcoholic consumption higher in the North than in the South (where the new brand of Sharia legal system is not being implemented presently) (cf. Harunah, 2002:52).

Meanwhile, on the primitiveness or otherwise of the Islamic legal system (Sharia) Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne disagrees with such negative and ill informed description of the Sharia criminal code when he declares as follows:

Our judgment of Islam has been grossly distorted…for example people in this country (Britain) frequently argue that the Shariah law of the Islamic world is cruel, barbaric and just…the truth is of course different…the guiding principle and spirit of Islamic law, taken straight from the Quran, should be those of equity and compassion (cf. Harunah 2002:57).

Also Professor Bidmos supports the assertion by Prince Charles when he argues that

to describe Sharia as harsh and barbaric is very misleading and it speaks volume about how much this part of the Muslim way of life is misunderstood. The only aspect of the Sharia known to most of the Nigerian critics of the system is the punishment, but if and when taken holistically, Sharia…(would be seen to be) a civilizing force which tames the bestial and lawless aspects of the behaviour of men, women and children in the society (cf. Harunah 2002:58).

In putting a final seal to the Sharia debacle in Nigeria, Mr. Sanya Onayoade observes as follows;

Something ominous is inherent in this monster called (the) “Nigerian Shariah”. It is a monster because it has defied all reason and sensibilities. It is a monster because it is a Nigerian spec that does not conform to (universal) Islamic standard. If not, why is it applied to only the talakawas (i.e. the masses or the ordinary
people) when the fat cats in government (in the Sharia implementing states roam the streets with their loots or looted funds) from government (treasuries) and patronise slaughter houses (i.e. houses of mistresses, concubines and other “free” women are met for sexual relationship)…? Why are the contractors feeding fat from inflated contracts (with the active connivance of some) public officials (who demand and collect from contractors ten percent of the total funds realised from such illegally inflated contracts)...never arrested and brought to) the Shariah courts for trial. The point here is that the Shariah (criminal) laws on adultery and (on other subjects)...only entrap the poor and the illiterate people. If the application of these Shariah laws was genuine and administered without fear or favour on all classes of Muslims in the affected state since the introduction (of this system) why hasn’t it caught up with any political or business elite, who from creation are the least pious of all beings. (cf Harunah, 2002:68).

6.2 **Fundamentalism and the Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria**

Islam is a religion of peace, harmony and unity…extremism gives the religion a bad name

– Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar III, Sultan of Sokoto

This kind of assertion by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammed Sa’ad Abubakar pale into insignificance when one considers the activities of Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Maitatsine and the Jamatu Ah lil Sunnah Li’Da’awati wa Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram who continue to unleash violence and terror on innocent citizens especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Islamic religious fundamentalism and violence erupted in the once peaceful city of Kano in 1980 when a fundamentalist sect, the Maitatsine, founded by Muhammad Marwa, a Cameroonian who had resided in Kano for a long time used his base in the ancient city as launching ground for extremist views, one of which is the purification of Islam as well as the demand for the establishment of Sharia in the state. Indeed, the sect wanted Islam practised in Nigeria as it is done in Iran and Lebanon. The state’s resistance to the activities of the Maitatsine group led to an
unprecedented violence in Kano which led to the killing and maiming of innocent citizens in the mist of the fury.


6.3 **The Boko Haram Uprising in Nigeria**

The Boko Haram uprising started in Bauchi capital of Bauchi state on July 26, 2009 and within four days the senseless killing of citizens spread to the neighbouring states of Borno, Yobe and Kano. The failure of the police to put down the uprising led to the order by the late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, to the Army to crush it. The army did, but in the process between 800 and 1000 persons mostly innocent civilians were reportedly killed. Among those reportedly killed were the sect’s leader, Sheikh Mohammed Yussuf, his deputy Abubakar Shekau, his father-in-law, Baa Fugu Muhammad and the sect’s Chief financier Alhaji Bugi Foi, a former Commissioner for Religious Affairs in Governor Ali Modu Sherrif’s Borno state government.
What is the motive of the Boko Haram sect? Why have they continued to unleash terror on Christians and other innocent citizens? Is Western Education a sin as claimed by these proponents of this vicious and extreme brand of Islam? What is the cause(s) of this insurgency? And what is fueling the Boko Haram insurgency?

The Holy Quran chapter 96 commands all Muslims to “Read in the name of your Lord, who created man from a clot (of blood)”. The Prophet of Islam was reported to have said “seek for knowledge even if it is in China”. These two quotations clearly depict the importance of seeking for knowledge whether Western or otherwise in Islam. To therefore have a fundamentalist sect who brands a particular form of education as sinful is not only a misnomer but also an anathema. The Boko Haram we have come to know in Nigeria in the last few years acts contrary to all known Islamic norms. Its agenda too is unclear, making it difficult for its grievances, if any, to be addressed. For example it has asked President Goodluck to embrace Islam or resign and also attacked several Muslims and Emirs in the North contrary to Islamic injunctions. The Quran chapter 2 verse 256 says “there shall be no compulsion in religion…” Also Quran chapter 49 verse 13 directs thus “O mankind, we created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (not that you may despise one another).

The Prophet of Islam was categorical when he asserts that “a person is not a true believer whose neighbour is not secure from his evil or mischief”. Also he was quoted to have said that “he who believes in Allah and the Last Day does not harm his neighbour” (cf. Abubakar, 2010:39). This perhaps explains why Professor Wole Soyinka, a Nobel Laureate agrees that Boko Haram “is the handiwork of frustrated Northern oligarchy’ hell bent on making President Goodluck Jonathan
look clueless for no worse crime than supplanting one of its own in last year’s (2011) Presidential election” (cf Haruna, 2012:64). Supporting this view by Wole Soyinka, Emeka Omehie avers that “Boko Haram is nothing but political grievances masquerading under a religious garb. It has its roots in the way the last presidential primaries of the PDP were conducted” (Omeihe, 2013:22). General Andrew Azazi, former national security adviser (NSA) while addressing a recent economic summit organised by the South-south states said “Boko Haram had political undertones and that the refusal of the ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party’s (PDP) to throw the race for the presidency open in 2011 was a critical factor in the Boko Haram insurgency” (Suleiman, 2012:25). Even president Goodluck Jonathan agrees that Boko Haram has become very sophisticated when he classified them into “religious, criminal, political; they are mere rebels without a cause. They are purveyors of hate and bigotry which have no place in modern human society. They certainly cannot be true Muslims for this is the month of Ramadan, a period of peace, when true Muslims live in total penitence and perpetual supplication to Allah” (cf. Okwuofu, 2012:37).

Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) speaking at the opening ceremony of a six day meeting of the Niger Delta Christian Leaders Forum says that “the group (Boko Haram) was created and sponsored by those who want to create political space for themselves and if they fail to achieve that seek to divide the country along religious lines” (Oritsejafor, 2012:2).

When Boko Haram insurgency first came to light in 2009, it was a weak, poorly organised and inchoate movement. Since then, the sect has transformed into a powerful organisation with an impressive strategic strike capacity posing a serious threat to the nation and national security. Balarabe Musa, radical politician and former governor of Kaduna state agrees that “Boko Haram
could not afford the sophistication that had been witnessed in the spate of bombings. This is beyond Boko Haram” (Suleiman, 2012:25) While, Babangida Aliyu sitting governor of Niger state and the chairman of the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) believes that “some oblique forces” were behind the spate of bombings, stressing that the North suspected a plot to destroy the region economically and that targeting of churches was a tactic to divert attention away from the larger objectives of crippling the region” (Suleiman, 2012:25)

Indeed, the Director General of the State Security Services (SSS) Mr. Ekpenyong Ita describes Boko Haram “as a big business which has become a franchise spawning adventurous and autonomous terror cells” (Hardball a, 2012:64). From the foregoing, it is clear that the Boko Haram sect represents a group of miscreants, with a crop of educated and aggrieved leaders masquerading as zealots and murderous criminals using the name of Islam to perpetuate heinous and unprovoked killings and maiming of innocent citizens.

What factors fuel the Boko Haram insurgency? Social-economic deprivation such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, political alienation and exclusion, corruption, religious fanaticism and bigotry, pervasive injustice and failure of Nigeria’s security agencies have combined to fuel the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

Concerning the issue of poverty for example, an International survey – the Logatum Prosperity Index, has listed Nigeria among the bottom 15 poorest nations of the world. According to the 2012 survey recently released, Nigeria appeared among the last dozen on the list of 110 countries assessed. The survey indicated that in Nigeria, income is still quite low as about 60 percent of the population lives on less than two dollars a day; and the condition is even more severe in the rural areas and the Northern part of Nigeria is on top on this poverty plague. The rate of
unemployment is high as about 50 percent of Nigerian youths are without jobs, while the enabling environment that could drive investment and entrepreneurship like (steady power, security and transport infrastructure) is dismal. All the recipe for stunned growth and underdevelopment seem abound in Nigeria. It is quite instructive to note that Nigeria, a major oil exporting country is the only one on such a misery list.

Apart from the issue of poverty, wanton and unbridled corruption is another reason why the country has remained underdeveloped. The state is neck deep in corruption as those convicted of corrupt practices are rewarded and celebrated by the corrupt society. According to Bola Tinubu former Lagos State Governor and the National leader of the Action Congress of Nigeria, “you (the Jonathan administration) cannot fight corruption because the government itself is corrupt. Majority of the perpetrators (in the Boko Haram menace) made financial contributions to ensure the president wins the election, so he cannot prosecute them”. (cf. Yishau, 2012:4)

Religious intolerance is deep and troubling in Nigeria and it can be explained in terms of the distorted understanding of various religious adherents about the roles they should play in spreading the “good news” of their faith. The religious leaders on their part appear to have an instrumentalist conception of religion in terms of the material gains it affords. In the service of self interest, these leaders often turn religious messages on their head, believing that the more the adherents, the greater the good things of life they enjoy. Religion has therefore been turned into an irresistible source of wealth and primitive accumulation by many religious leaders in Nigeria today.

However, the former Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki tries to establish a connection between the extra-judicial murder of the sect’s leader and the indiscriminate carnage the sect
promotes. According to him “there is no doubt that the killing in police custody of the sects leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 is a major factor in fuelling the sectarian violence” (cf. Hardball b, 2012:64). Furthermore, the sect sometimes gives the impression that it is fighting an unjust state that sanctions brutality and extra-judicial killings but at other times it viciously fight innocent citizens opposed to its ideology, or those opposed to its leadership and sometimes attack and executes people its leaders claim misrepresent the sect. At some other times the sect targets Christians in their places of worship for no other reason than the fact that they belong to a different faith. What is obvious from the foregoing is that the inappropriate handling of the Boko Haram insurgency in its infancy is one of the reasons for the sect’s radicalisation.

6.4 Political Islam and Fundamentalism in Nigeria: The International Dimension

The political, economic, and hegemonic dominance of the United States of America in International politics during the post Cold War era has engendered and intensified conflicts all over the world. The United States of America pursues its National Interest in complete disregard of extant international rules of engagement. This has very serious consequences for the United States of America and indeed the global community. Since after the Cold War, the United States of America has been unrepentantly committed to exporting what it calls its core values associated with capitalism such as democracy, defence of fundamental human rights, free market enterprise, secularism and individualism. Given its military might, the United States of America has continued to ride roughshod over other countries in the pursuit of these values. The Muslim world, especially Islamic fundamentalists groups believe that America is “evil” and as such must be confronted at home as well as abroad. This perhaps explains why terrorist or would be terrorist are always targeting the United States of America (USA) in their deadly acts. In a recent book published by Christopher A. Prebley, Director of Foreign Policy Studies at the American
Cato Institute and a former commissioned officer in the United States Navy, titled “The Power Problem: How American Military Dominance makes its Less Safe, Less Prosperous and Less Free”, underscores the validity of this argument that “America’s over reliance on its military might abroad to secure its interests constitutes the greatest danger unto itself”. Also, Crose Vidal, an American Essayist, put it even more clearly and bluntly in a collection of essays titled “The Last Empire”, notes that America which labels the countries it does not like rogue state, has since become the largest rogue state of all. We strike unilaterally whenever we chose. We complain of terrorism, yet our empire is now the greatest terrorist of all. We bomb, invade, subvert other states…our Congress has been hijacked by Corporate America and its enforcer, the imperial machine” (cf. Haruna, 2010:64).

Indeed, another American William Blum in his book “Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions since World War II” reveals that

the United States has attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments, and to crush more than 30 populist/nationalist movements fighting against intolerable regimes. In the process, the US bombed some 25 countries, caused the end of life for several million people and condemned many more to a life of agony and despair” (cf. Haruna, 2010:64).

Apart from the use of its military might abroad, the unbridled support for the State of Israel is another factor fuelling international terrorism and conflict on a global scale. Bruce (2000) observes that with the active support of the United States, the State of Israel offends Muslims because “Islam lays claim to the same history and the same territory. It also offends because the formation of the State of Israel displaced many Muslims and constrained Muslim access to a number of their holy sites” (Bruce, 2000:3). But it particularly offends Arab Muslims because Israel has repeatedly defeated its Arab neighbour’s attempt to destroy it, most spectacularly
during the Six Day War of 1967, when Israel captured territories from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. All of these would not have been possible without the active support by the United States of America. This Israeli/Palestinian conflicts have continued to radicalise many more fundamentalist Muslims spurring them to attack the United States and many of their allies in the West.

During the George Bush’s administration, the United States supported Israel’s reliance on military might and ignored moral and international standards of warfare. The administration supported Israeli invasion and war against the Palestinians whose major victims were civilians mainly women and children. Indeed, Amnesty international criticised Israeli for” war crimes’ and declared that Israel like America has become a “rogue state” (Esposito, 2010).

Professor Avi Shlaim, an Israeli and a distinguished Professor of International Relations at Oxford University reveal that;

A review of Israel’s record over the past four decade’s makes it difficult to resist the fact that it has become a rogue state with “an utterly unscrupulous set of leaders”. A rogue state habitually violates international law, possesses weapon of mass destruction, and practices terrorism – the use of violence against civilians for political purposes. Israel fulfils all of these three criteria, the cap fits and it must wear it. Israel real aim is not peaceful co-existence with its Palestinian neighbour but military domination (cf. Esposito, 2010:86).

In the same vein, the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Nav Pillay once lambasted Israel’s “nearly total impunity” for its human rights violations including arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment, extra-judicial executions, forced eviction and home demolition, settlement expansion and related restriction of movement as well as restriction on freedom of movement and expressions (cf. Esposito, 2010:193).
Apart from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, another international dimension to the exacerbation of fundamentalist insurgency is the Sunni/Shiite divide in the Muslim world. Most often the Sunni Arabs of the Wahhabi conviction, led by Saudi Arabia are always antagonistic of the Shiite majority in Iran. This Sunni/Shiite rivalry have existed in the Islamic world for more than one thousand (1000) years and this plays itself out in both domestic and international issues relating to conflict and terrorism on a global scale.

By far the most significant factor that fuels domestic and international terrorism was the formation of an international terrorist group known as Al-Qaeda (The Base). Prior to its formation, President Ronald Regan of the United States of America, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had mobilised Muslim Mullahs and organisations against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and covertly funded a Jihad against the installed Communist government in the country headed by Babrak Kamal. With the active encouragement of the CIA and Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), who wanted to turn the Afghan Jihad into a global war waged by all Muslim states against Soviet Union, some 35,000 Muslims radicals from 40 Islamic countries joined the Afghanistan’s fight between 1982 and 1992 (Mamdani, 2004).

Eventually, more than 100,000 foreign Muslim radicals were directly influenced by the Afghan Jihad. The Islamic “Jihad” was supported by United States and Saudi Arabia with a significant part of the funding generated from the Golden Crescent drug trade (Mamdani, 2004).

It is instructive to note that in March 1985, President Regan signed the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 166, which authorised and stepped up covert military aid to the Mujahedeen, making it clear that the secret Afghan war had a new goal: to defeat Soviet troops in Afghanistan through covert action and thereby encourage a Soviet withdrawal. This new covert US assistance began with a dramatic increase in arms supplies and the “ceaseless stream”
of CIA and Pentagon specialists who travelled to secret headquarters in Pakistan on the main road near Rawalpindi, Pakistan. It was there that the CIA specialists and the Pakistan Intelligence Officers help plan the Afghan rebels.

The CIA using Pakistan’s military Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) played a key role in training the Mujahedeen while the CIA sponsored guerilla training was integrated with the teaching of Islam such that the “predominant themes were that Islam was a complete socio-political ideology, that holy Islam was being violated by the atheistic Soviet troops, and that the Islamic people of Afghanistan should reassert their independence by overthrowing the leftist Afghan regime propped up by Moscow” (Abbass, 2010:32).

While the CIA covertly sponsored Jihad was on-going, the Soviet Union tactically withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 but the Mujahedeen kept fighting until they succeeded in installing a Taliban regime. But just one year before the Soviet puppet regime was defeated by the Mujahedeen, Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi born Islamist who was recruited to lead the Afghan Jihad by the CIA, suddenly realised that the grand plan of the American led West was to take over the wealth of the Middle East which is one fifth (1/5th) of the entire wealth on earth and use Israel as its police. In order to prevent such a plan, Osama bin Laden then collaborated with some other Muslim activists in the region to form Al-Qaeda (The Base) with the intention of internationalising the jihad in Afghanistan so as to counter the anti-Islamic of the West. The Nigerian dreaded insurgency Islamic sect Boko Haram is believed to have strong links with Al-Qaeda. In a fatwa (public declaration of guilt or condemnation) published in 1998, Osama bin Laden had accused the Americans collectively of three crimes against God which are; “occupation of Arab sacred soil, support for Jewish occupation of Jerusalem and imposing
suffering on Iraqi people on account of the wars, ostensibly to discover weapons of mass
destruction” (cf Esposito, 2010:161).

The demonisation of Islam and Muslims especially Prophet Mohammed by hard line Christian
Zionists and preachers on the international scene also fuel domestic terrorism and violence. For
example, Franklin Graham, who gave the invocation at George W. Bush first inauguration,
declares that “Islam has attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God…Islam is a very evil
and wicked religion” Pat Robertson, a longtime leader of Religious Right was equally
provocative when he declares that “this man (Mohammed) was an absolute wild eyed fanatic… a
robber… a brigand….a killer” (cf. Esposito, 2010:165). Also in September 2006, Pope Benedict
XVI delivered a speech in Regensburg Germany, which dismayed and angered Muslims all over
the world including Nigeria. Pope Benedict cited a fourteen century Byzantine Emperor’s remark
about the Prophet Mohammad “show me just what Mohammad brought that was new, and there
you will find things only evil and inhuman such as, command to spread by sword the faith he
preached. Equally controversial and offensive to Muslims was the Pope’s assertion that the
Quranic passage “there is no compulsion in religion” (Q2v256) was revealed in the early years of
Mohammad’s Prophethood in Mecca a period “when Mohammad was still powerless and under
(threat)” but was superseded by instructions developed later and recorded in the Koran (Quran)
concerning holy wars”. (cf. Esposito, 2010:162)

Needless to point out, that these statements are historically and factually incorrect Quran 2v256
is not an early Meccan verse as erroneously cited by the Pope but in fact derived from the late
Medina period. Moreover, the Quran does not equate Jihad with holy war. This interpretation of
Jihad developed years later after Mohammed’s death when it came to be used by rulers (Caliphs)
to justify their wars of imperial expansion and rule in the name of Islam. (Esposito, 2010:188)
Muslims alleged that as part of the grand design to denigrate and defame the personality and the character of the Prophet of Islam several nude cartoons were published in Denmark and France. Even recently there was global violence in several Muslim countries including Nigeria on an “amateurish” film screened from the United States of America to malign the person of the Prophet. This trend is not new because for many centuries, the so-called orientalists have adopted this strategy of defamation of Prophet Mohammed’s character and denigration of Islam in a bid to score cheap fame and make easy money which such venture confers.

6.4 Political Islam and State Responses in Nigeria

Right from the Maitatsine uprising in Kano in 1980 through the Sharia debacle to the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos and more recently the Boko Haram insurgency, the responses of the state has been suspect, weak, inefficient, indecisive, uncoordinated, meddlesome and sometimes conspiratorial. For example, in the bloody Maitatsine riots in Kano where “no fewer than 4,177 people including policemen perished, no single individual has been brought to justice, twenty years later, Kaduna erupted with more than 500 casualties. In between Maitatsine and Kaduna, more than 10,000 Nigerians have been dispatched to an untimely grave” (Owolabi, 2001:36)

Indeed, from the era of President Shehu Shagari, the Nigerian state has treated ethno-religious violence with kid gloves. Even when panels of enquiry were set up, their reports merely gather dust on the bookshelves. And since nobody is tried and jailed, nobody is deterred from joining the band wagon. For instance, Owolabi (2001) reveals that “(some)Muslim youths arrested with large cache of arms during the Jos riots were allegedly freed on “orders from above” and that an influential resident in Kaduna housed and armed fanatics while the city was aflame, many of them disguised in fake military uniforms” (Owolabi, 2001:36)
Aside from this, Abimboye (2004:14) opines that the February 2000 anti-Sharia protest in Kaduna “escalated because of the lapses on the part of the police authorities” as there were no policemen on hand to guarantee a peaceful rally from degenerating into chaos. The state Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Hamisu Isa and his Command simply underestimated the problem” (Abimboye, 2004:14). It was revealed that the ineffectiveness of the police to combat the violence was due to “poor equipment and logistics as there are inadequate vehicles to convey our men to the nooks and crannies of the town while the ratio of arms was one gun to seven policemen” (cf. Nwajar and Kalejaiye 2000:16).

Most security agents including the Army said they were baffled about the use of sophisticated weapons and how the rioters got them. The police claimed they arrested two retired Army Generals and a former Minister over the crisis which broke out in Kaduna (cf. Nwajar and Kalejaiye 2000:16). This reveals some level of complicity at the highest level of government.

At the wake of the Sharia debacle, Professor Wole Soyinka opines that President Obasanjo’s inaction seems to have hastened the nations drift to chaos, even in war “it is better to take a firm action now than to have this country plunged into civil war through inaction. The roof is already burning over his head”. Rather than act to douse the flame, Obasanjo is hoping “that some accidental rain which is the act of God or Allah’ will put off the fire”. (cf. Nwajar and Kalejaiye 2000:21). No doubt this inaction by President Obasanjo led to the wanton destruction of lives and property in the Northern parts of the country.

In the same vein, during the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos occasioned by the indigeneship/settler dichotomy, the Police authority was accused of partisanship. The then Plateau state Police Commissioner Mr. Mohammed Abubakar, a Muslim from Zamfara state was
alleged to have delayed the release of policemen to quell the riots. “Mohammed was said to have
given full protection to the Central Mosque in the city, while all the Churches were left
unprotected, a situation that led to the burning of many Churches, especially those close to the
Central Mosque. These include the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), The Apostolic Church
and the Church of God (Aladura). Also, at Angwan Rogo, the Hausas reportedly had a field day
killing the natives and Southerners because there was no Police assistance” (Offi and Adeyi,
2001:26)

Like the Police, the Nigerian military especially the Army is not insulated from this partisanship.
In an address by Rev. (Dr.) Soja Bewarang, the Vice President of the Church of God in Nigeria
(COCIN) on the Jos crisis on Monday the 8th of February, 2010, the Reverend pointedly accused
the military high command of taking sides with the Hausa Muslims in the Jos crisis. According
to him

the Nigerian Army personnel that supposedly arrived to quell the
riots around areas of conflict were mostly Muslims. Initially, this
was a welcomed sight that turned sour and worrisome when the
army personnel began to shoot at Christians with their
sophisticated arms and ammunition …thus the Nigerian Army who
were supposed to be a neutral force were involved in the shooting
and killing of Christians…some of the Nigerian Army personnel
were even confronted and arrested by Christians and handed over
to the Army. The Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General
AbdulRahman Bello Danbazau and the General Officer
Commanding (GOC) Third Armored Division Jos, Major General
Sale Maina and the Commandant Police Staff College Jos
(Another Muslim) have questions to answer. Numerous COCIN
members, and indeed members of other Christian denominations
are witnessed (sic) to the wanton destruction of lives by members
of the Nigerian Army under the command of the GOC 3rd Armored
Division (Bewarang, 2010:A7)

More recently, the response of the state to the Boko Haram insurgency has not been stellar. The
state’s response has been weak, uncoordinated, controversial and conspiratorial. As was
indicated in another section of this chapter, the Boko Haram sect started as a one-sect show, but the extra-judicial killing of their leader Mohammad Yusuf and some of their financier further radicalised and emboldened the sect to confront state by carrying out terrorist attacks targeting security forces, Churches, Prisons and public schools. The sect also employed suicide bombings in their violent confrontation with the state. Some of their acts of terrorism include the 2010 New year eve attack on a Military Barrack in Abuja, 2011 Christmas Day bombings on the outskirts of Abuja, several explosions around the time of President Goodluck Jonathan’s inauguration in May 2011, the bombing of Police and United Nations headquarters in Abuja, the attacks at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla as well as the audacious attack on the prestigious Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC) Jaji and the home of the newly established Nigerian Army Counter Terrorists and Counter Insurgency Centre (CTCOIN).

According to the Chief of Army Staff, General Azubuike Ihejirika, Boko Haram fighters have killed about 3,000 people since 2009 (Omokhun et al, 2012:1). In a report released in Washington by the United States Country Reports on Terrorism 2011, Africa experienced 978 attacks in the year, an 11.5 percent increase over previous years. This is attributable in large part to the more aggressive attack tempo of Nigerian-based terrorist group Boko Haram which conducted 136 attacks in 2011, up from 31 in the previous year (cf. Yishau, 2012:4).

Just like the indecision and inaction of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the response of the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan has also been described as weak and lacking the political will to confront these insurgents. The public display of religiosity by wielders of state power and their partisanship in religious matters make it difficult for them to deal decisively with security breaches occasioned by religious bigots and fanatics.
For example, in a release by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) published in the Nation of Wednesday June 20, 2012, the Association avers that;

his (Jonathan) utterances after each bombing and killings even if unwittingly, seem to have cast a hallmark of weakness on his presidency and an escalation of the terrorist acts. What emerges now is the picture of a president who has been held hostage by conflicting intrigues woven around this matter of the extremist Boko Haram sect. The federal government also appears confused whether to fight it all out or to negotiate with the extremist sect. (Oritsejafor, 2012:44)

Apart from this attitude by the president, a number of top ranking government officials including serving Senators and former State governors have been implicated in one way or the other as sponsoring or supporting the Boko Haram sect. The first was Senator Alli Ndume, who was alleged to be a financier of the sect. Later Senator Ahmed Khalifa Zanna, a member of the ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party, representing Borno Central Senatorial District was alleged to have harboured at his Maiduguri home a wanted Boko Haram terror suspect by name Shuaib Mohammed Bama, who is believed to be the architect of some key bombings. Bama is said to be a dismissed Army Private who allegedly coordinated the bombings in Mogadishu Barracks, the Police headquarters, the United Nation’s Organisation (UNO) building, St. Theresa Catholic Church at Madalla and many in Jos.

The Senator immediately denied the allegation and instead explained that the suspect was in fact arrested at the home of the former Governor of Borno state Alhaji Ali Modu Sherrif. Sherrif has in turn denounced Zanna’s allegation as “spurious and escapist”. Indeed, the former state Governor, Ali Modu Sherrif believes that the state’s People’s Democratic Party (PDP) chapter is the “engine room of Boko Haram” (cf. Omotoso, 2012:64)
Meanwhile concerned with the incessant attacks and suicide bombings in some parts of the country, the federal government in January 2012 weilded the big stick by declaring a state of emergency in fifteen local governments in five out of the nineteen states in the Northern region. The states regarded as the hotbeds of the extremists’ insurgency are Borno, Yobe, Plateau, Niger and Adamawa states. More military troops were deployed to flush out the Boko Haram members and restore peace but since the declaration of emergency, the attacks have not abated (Suleian, 2012:22).

Also, as part of the response of the state to the deadly insurgency, the Joint Task Force (JTF) was also set up to quell the Boko Haram insurgency but their activities in the restive areas of Borno, Bauchi, Yobe and other parts of the North leaves much to be desired. As it is typical of Nigerian security agencies, when peace breaks down in any part of the country, the security agents often approach the crisis with the objective of pacifying the restive area.

This had proved not only to be a wrong approach, it has also been counterproductive. It would be recalled that the inappropriate handling of the Boko Haram crisis in its infancy, is one of the reasons cited by the current leadership of the sect for its radicalisation and terroristic inclination.

Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim, a former governor of Yobe state and now a Senator representing Yobe East Senatorial district in the National Assembly reveals that

Boko Haram is just like any religious sect. it has existed for ages. It is not a new phenomenon. But it is the activities of security agencies particularly the police that pushed the Boko Haram people to the wall by killing their leader (and) killing thousands of innocent people. That is what forced them to come out against the Nigerian state. (cf. Odusile, 2012:22)

Similarly, Senator Ahmed Zanna corroborated the assertion by Senator Ibrahim when he avers that:
The JTF had been engaging in extra-judicial killings, breached the Military’s rule of engagement. He cited the instance of a group of 15 school boys shot in cold blood… and the razing of a row of building in retaliation against the killing of an officer. The JTF tactics had been intimidatory and unfriendly (Hardball, 2012:64)

Also, a group which calls itself the Borno Elders Forum criticised the JTF and called on government to withdraw the military task force from Borno state on account of their indiscriminate killings that are exacerbating the revolt.

By far the most intriguing in the state’s response to the Boko Haram insurgency is the one that sounds more like a fiction, when a suspected Boko Haram member arrested by the Police in connection with the Christmas day bombing of St. Theresa’s Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State by name Kabiru Sokoto was allowed to escape. According to the Police, Mr. Sokoto was handed over to Zakari Biu, a Commissioner of Police, whose men took the suspect to conduct a search in the suspect’s home and there after visited a local chief, where they claimed they were attacked by an armed gang who aided the escape of Sokoto.

Mr. Biu was reported to have been dismissed from the police because he had been linked to a series of crime against humanity as one of the foremost torturers during the infamous Abacha regime. Obviously, many Nigerians would by this criminal negligence or direct act of sabotage by the police come to the conclusion that they are parts and parcel of the president’s alleged conspirators with the Boko Haram. It is worthy of note that another prime suspect one Aliyu Tishu also escaped under the custody of the police in similar complicit circumstances.

From the scenario depicted above, it can be safely said that Boko Haram was the creation of politicians especially some governors who needed them to win elections, intimidate opponents, score political points and extract relevance at the national level. Overtime, these groups became
larger, unweildy and difficult to control even by their creators and sponsors. According to a report in some major newspapers recently, which was said to have been curled from an online publication, 247ureports.com, a senior official of Boko Haram allegedly granted an interview detailing how the sect had been on the payroll of a few governors in the North. The two state governments specifically mentioned in the report were Kano and Bauchi.

The Boko Haram leader claimed that the stoppage of the financial support by the new government in Kano had warranted the massive bomb attacks on the state. “Most of them pay us monthly to leave their state alone” (Omotoso, 2012:19) Specifically, the Boko Haram leader alleged that way back in 2004, the sect reached an agreement with former Kano state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau to receive a monthly payment of N5million which was later increased to N10million in 2009. The agreement, just as the one reached in Bauchi state also included what was described as “infrastructural support”. Although, these grave allegations have been denied by the two respective state governments “but all these evidences point clearly to the fact that the Boko Haram sect is a Frankenstein monster created by some elite in the North” (Omotoso, 2012:19).

At the moment, some sitting Senators of the Federal Republic are currently undergoing trial for allegedly funding the terror group; so is a high court judge. Recently, the alleged master mind of the Christmas Day Madalla Catholic Church bombing Kabiru Sokoto, took refuge in his state’s Abuja Governor’s Lodge enroute to escaping abroad. A serving Air force officer was featured in the plot to sprit him abroad. When he was finally arrested, his escape from police detention in very suspicious circumstances suggests a classic case of official collusion traceable to those in the high hierarchy of state apparatuses especially in the security agencies.
Perhaps the failure to crackdown on the activities of this dreaded group through intelligence gathering and outright military activities prompted the thought of dialogue between the federal government and the group’s top command. As it is expected, opinion are divided about the propriety of a dialogue between the state and a terrorist group who have wantonly killed, maimed and destroyed lives and property worth several millions of naira.

Former Governor of Ekiti State Chief Niyi Adebayo argues that dialogue should be given a trial. According to him “it is my candid opinion that the federal government should dialogue with Boko Haram, I believe that it will lead to a lasting solution” (cf. Oladesu, 2012:53). Supporting this position a political scientist and Head of the Department of Political Science, Ekiti State University Professor Ajayi believes that “dialogue is a legitimate means of resolving crisis… since it is a tool for crisis resolution and peace-making by warring parties. Dialogue with the sect will enable government to know the real grievances of the sect, the reasons behind their actions and what can be done to appease the group and elicit from them solution possibilities” (cf. Oladesu, 2012:53).

But Engineer Olawumi Gasper, former Rector of Lagos State Polytechnic disagrees with the proponents of dialogue he “berated government for proposing dialogue with the enemies of the country and describes the move as defeatist, adding that it portends danger to the country. While supporting Gasper, Comrade Joe Igbokwe, a pro-democracy activist believes that “dialogue with the sect is ‘unwise and improper’ describing the members of the sect as criminals and murderers disturbing the peace of the country and bringing agonies to families. According to him they have murdered children, mothers, fathers and youths for a cause that is not only laughable but stupid. To engage them in a dialogue is to celebrate criminality because they are hardened
Corroborating this assertion a University of Ibadan teacher and a security expert Dr. Soji Aremu warned against embarking on a fruitless venture of dialogue. He doubts the success of any dialogue with the sect, arguing that lessons from other countries like Australia, India and Pakistan have shown that dialogue with insurgent groups have never produced the desired peace. What should be done as elsewhere is to rise to the occasion by raising combined military and police counter terrorism force driven by intelligence and well informed community. He opines that “Boko Haram is a home grown terrorism whose adventure has caused the federal government and the country much embarrassment. It is on record that the insurgency of Boko Haram sect is the worst security challenge the country has faced in recent times”. (cf. Oladesu, 2012:53). The pervasive opinion supported by Dr. Aremu is that it is out of place to dialogue with a faceless organisation because only a dialogue with a known organisation or an organisation that is fighting ideological, economic or political war is appropriate. The idea of dialogue in the first instance is a failure on the part of the state to curtail the insurgency through combined security agencies (Oladesu 2012:53)

Aside from all the responses by the Federal Government, the 19 Northern state governments set up a 41 member high powered committee which they christened Committee on Reconciliation, Healing and Security” (NSCRHS) to find a solution to what has been officially described as “disturbing state of insecurity” in the region. The main terms of reference of the Committee which is comprehensively representative of the plural nature of the region representing critical sectors considered to be the major stakeholders such as religious leaders, those knowledgeable in counter terrorism, those with military training, traditional institutions, women, education and
civil society organisations is to “engender the restoration of the most desired peaceful co-existence, unity and development in the entire region”.

Needless to point out that the inauguration of the Committee came on the heels of several and severe criticisms of the overall attitude of the governors, the elites, highly placed politicians and businessmen who all maintained a disturbing silence in the face of incessant bomb blast and suicide attacks across the entire Northern region sending scores of innocent citizens to their undeserved early graves. The toll which the Boko Haram insurgency has taken in the Northern region for both Muslims and Christians can best be summed up in the words of Alhaji Shettima Ali Munguno leader of the Borno Elders Forum, when he admits that:

our society was on the verge of breakdown. The people cannot perform the five obligatory prayers in congregation in mosques near their houses or perform Friday prayers in several mosques in the city. We no longer practice our religion as desired. Our markets and other places of business are no more. Many people can no longer access schools. All the things we held dear as a people; our tradition, culture, and pride are gone. Even going through the current farming season has become increasingly difficult and people can no longer move from one place to another (cf. Hardball, 2012:64).

Whether the 41 man highly powered, all inclusive committee set up by the Northern Governors Forum can find lasting solution to the spate of violence and wanton destruction of lives and property will remain to be seen in the coming days ahead.
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CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

The overall objective of this study was to interrogate the interface between religion and politics in Nigeria but specifically to examine the phenomenon of political Islam and how it is used to further non-sectarian interests and politics in the country. The study observes that the interface between religion and politics dates back to pre-colonial Nigeria with the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio and the establishment of the Caliphate in 1804. Ever since, religion has remained a significant factor in the formation, growth and the political development of the country. For example, the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida politicised religion to an unprecedented height when he registered Nigeria as a full fledged member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the restoration of diplomatic ties with the State of Israel when criticisms trailed his first action.

This study indicates that Political Islam refers to the belief that Islam has a guiding political doctrine and clearly stated injunctions about how state and society should be ordered, while fundamentalism has to do with a discernable pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled “true-believers” attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of their religious community and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviours.

While there is a very thin line of difference between Islamic fundamentalism and political Islamists, it bears emphasising that political Islamist are Muslims with avowed commitment and dedication to the establishment of an Islamically ordered society based on the principles of Sharia. Thus, while all Muslim fundamentalist are political Islamist not all political Islamists are
fundamentalists. There is therefore the need to distinguish between moderate and non-violent Muslims who are in the majority, who function effectively within society and a violently dangerous minority who are extremist and engage in terrorist activities in the name of Islamic propagation.

The Maitatsine revolt in Kano in 1980 is arguably the first religious uprising with a political Islamist agenda in modern Nigeria. Since then, there have been series of uprisings, riots and violent confrontation with the state especially in Northern parts of the country. Indeed, the Boko Haram insurgency which first came to light in 2009 represents the greatest security challenge to Nigeria in its more than fifty years of existence.

The study opines that religion plays a very crucial role in the socio-economic, cultural, religious and political lives of the people, such that when it becomes difficult or impossible to understand nature, events and life’s occurrences, they fall back on religion through the quest for divine intervention. The distinguishing feature of Christian and Islamic political thought lies in the separation of the State and Church in Christian political thought, while there is the fusion of the State and the Church in Islamic political thought.

At the international scene, the desire to shield Islam from the vitiating influence of Western culture and imperialism led to the phenomenon now famously referred to as political Islam. It refers to “an Islamic militant, anti-democratic movement bearing a holistic vision of Islam whose final aim is the restoration of the Caliphate” (Fuller, 2003:31) if need be through Jihad.

Esposito (2010) observes that Jihad is a concept with multiple meaning used and abused throughout history whereas it is not associated with the words “holy war” anywhere in the Quran. In this regard, Islamic scholars and Islamist have argued that Jihad against foreign
enemies can be regarded as *Fardkifayah* (collective obligation) which refers to a duty a group of people within the Muslim community may perform on behalf of others.

But in Islam, Jihad is not all about war. *Qital* and not *Jihad* means war and war is just one form of Jihad. Jihad in its broadest sense implies all forms of striving, struggle or exertion of effort aimed at improving a situation or reaching perfection or attaining excellence. It could also imply struggling against evil or against one’s limitations, weakness and excesses. To this end, all efforts aimed at attaining discipline, self improvement, self denial, self-restraint, excellence, patience and perfection for the sake of Allah constitute forms of Jihad.

It should be noted that it was Muslim rulers with the support of religious scholars that have historically used armed Jihad to legitimise their wars of imperial expansion. Even at that, the Islamic law (Sharia) is very clear on how wars are to be fought by Muslims. For a war to be morally justifiable, it must be fought in defence of their faith. Other stringent conditions are that “the war cannot be waged primarily for material gains and possession, the right of non-combatants, their safety, freedom and property must be respected, women, children, old people and invalids cannot be harmed, prisoners of war must not be tortured, places of worship cannot be demolished and religious leaders and priests cannot be killed” (cf. Esposito 2010:49).

Flowing from the above, it goes without saying that the killing, maiming, destruction of property, bombing and suicide attacks on Churches, Police and the United Nations headquarters by members of the Boko Haram group in Nigeria are clearly aggressions against the State for other reasons than religious propagation. The Holy Quran chapter 8V61 enjoins that “if your enemy inclines towards peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God”. Also, Quran 4V90 avers that “had Allah pleased, he would have given them power over you, so that they
would have taken up arms against you. Therefore, if they keep away from you and cease their hostility and propose peace to you God does not allow you to harm them” It is therefore unjustifiable for any Muslim to carry out acts of destruction and wanton killing of innocent citizens like the Boko Haram group has been doing in Nigeria.

With an eclectic theoretical framework comprising the Social Identity Theory, Structure, Chance and Choice and the Marxist Theory of State, plus a robust qualitative methodology, the study reveals that both Islam and Christianity have been enmeshed in local politics from the inception of the Nigerian state. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio and the involvement of missionaries in the politics of the people across their respective areas of influence have implications for the interface between religion and politics in the country.

In addition, it shows that the implementation of Sharia in some states of the federation led to sporadic rise in religious fundamentalism which resulted in some violent attack on the state by some self-professed “Islamic fundamentalist movements” but observed that this is yet to crystallise or approximate a push to Islamise Nigeria.

The study found that there is the “enemy perception” between Muslims and Christians especially in the Northern part of the country. This has a history of deep seated feelings of ethnic rivalry, marginalisation and domination. Thus, religion is often used to promote non-sectarian interests and sentiments. Furthermore, the study has shown that as religious movements concerned with and imitative of earthly powers, fundamentalists are also driven by their own ideologies which they often use to promote other non-sectarian interests within the Nigerian polity. In this regard, the response of the Nigerian state has been weak, uncoordinated, suspect and conspiratorial.
7.2 Recommendations

Since religion played a critical role in the formation of Nigeria and arguably quite a number of problems afflicting Nigeria today are traceable to this faulty foundation, it is apposite that this foundation be revisited. Indeed, the current upsurge in terrorism and terroristic violence weakens the ties that bind Nigeria together and needs to be comprehensively addressed, when this is combined with a succession of rapacious, inefficient and incompetent leadership, the reason why Nigeria has been unable to realise and maximise its potentials becomes very obvious. It is in this wise, that we join the call for a Sovereign National Conference to correct the mistake of 1914 and place the entity called Nigeria on a solid political architecture that would understand, appreciate, and harness the potentials in the country’s diversity for meaningful and sustainable development.

In order to be able to do these, there is the need to restructure Nigeria’s polity and revisit it federalism. Concerning the polity, it is observed that the “first past the post system” electoral system currently in use is antitectual to our diverse ethnic and religious plurality. That explains why electoral competition is conducted by the political elites as warfare. It is therefore recommended that the proportional representative form of electoral system be adopted by Nigeria so as to guarantee a place for all contestants in the polity. When this is done, it would reduce the volatility of the electoral process and engender an all inclusive platform for meaningful development. The Justice Muhammadu Uwaise Report on electoral reforms offers refreshing insights and recommendations on how to improve and restructure this aspect of our national life.

On Nigeria’s federalism, it is not only lopsided; it is convulsive (Mohammed, 2012). A functional federal arrangement is hereby recommended. By functional federalism, we mean an
arrangement where no federating units should be bigger or stronger than any other units, a fiscal arrangement that is based on the principle of derivation as was the case during the First Republic. A situation where the central government collects all revenue and rents and shares it with the federating units is not in consonance with the extant principles of federalism. It is instructive to note that at independence, the derivation formula was 50-30-20. That is 50 percent to the region originating the wealth, 30 percent into a central pool to be shared by all and 20 percent to the federal government. It was the decree 9 of 1971 that changed all these to a mere one percent. It should be recalled that the Niger Delta militant agitations caused it to be shored up to three percent and then to the current 13 percent. It should be noted that even the present derivation template has only enriched a few individuals while underdeveloping the people and most parts of the country. This study opines that when the restructuring of the polity is done in line with the recommendation above, it will no longer be business as usual in the disbursement and utilisation of funds by the federating units which is the latent reason behind the political warfare.

Also, the relationship between the last two tiers of government in Nigeria’s federal arrangement leaves much to be desired. A situation where local government leadership and finances are at the whims and caprices of the state governments negates the raison detre for setting up local governments. The idea behind local governments is to enhance local involvement and engender development at the grassroots. The present arrangement negates this lofty ideal. It is in this regard that we suggest a total devolution of powers from the federal to the state and then to local government. This study aligns its views with those currently agitating for local government autonomy within the polity.

Another major problem that must be resolved is the indigenship/settler dichotomy. This dichotomy is the bane of most violent ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, the Plateau state capital.
Large scale violence erupted in 2001 when tension between Christians and Muslims led to the Jos riots in which over 1,000 people were killed within one week. Indeed, a Nigerian government Investigative Committee found that between September 2001 and May 2004, the conflict resulted in the deaths of 53,787 individuals (Ahmed, 2012:64) With this huge loss of lives and property, this study recommends that a law be enshrined in the constitution granting indigeneship to any individual who have lived consecutively up to 10-15 years in any part of the country. Such individuals would have all the rights and privileges of indigenes of that particular area.

In order to find a means of peaceful coexistence in a country like Nigeria with such rich ethnic and cultural diversity, a level of tolerance, accommodation and understanding is required. In support of this position, Professor Akbar Ahmed the former Pakistani High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and the current Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at the American University in Washington DC suggests that with the Berom and Fulani of the Middle Belt caught in the circle of revenge, leadership that underlies compassion and non-violence from both respective faiths, Christianity and Islam is desperately needed, such as the August 2012 visit of the Catholic Archbishop of Jos Ignatius Kagama to the Jos central Mosque where he was hosted by its Chief Imam Sheik Balarabe Dawud. In the Archbishop’s words he intended “to dispel the notion that Muslims and Christians in Plateau cannot meet”. Only by heeding the message and example of their religious leadership and living up to the ideals of their respective faiths can peace return to the long suffering people of Plateau state and Nigeria (Ahmed, 2012:64).

In order to complement these fundamental restructuring of the polity, there is the need to revamp and diversify the economy. The Nigerian state should as a matter of urgency step up its war on corruption. A situation where those convicted of corrupt enrichment gets away with a slap on the wrist is not conducive to meaningful development. In this regard, government must strengthen
the anti-corruption agencies while embarking on value and ethical re-orientation of the generality of the people. There is the need to diversify the economy so as to stop the over reliance on oil as the only revenue earner for the country. Massive investment in agriculture will create employment for the teeming youths of the country who are currently unemployed and are usually used as cannon fodders and easy recruits for violence and terroristic activities of the fanatical and extremist religious zealots. Creation of wealth through employment which investment in agriculture would engender will also reduce, if not stall the excruciating poverty which today afflict majority of Nigerians. The Governor of the State of Osun, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola opines that “addressing poverty is not reducible to giving people handout alone, but empowering people in a way that their creative energy will be channeled towards wealth creation and self sustenance. Employment must mean full and equal opportunities for all, irrespective of sex”. (Aregbesola, 2012:15).

Hillary Clinton, the United States Secretary of State while on a visit to Nigeria also lends her opinion to this recommendation when she admonishes the state thus;

In the middle and long run, a sweeping revamping of the economy and the ensuring of an equal opportunity polity, aside from boosting productivity in agriculture, education and health as well as ensuring economic diversification. All these are tailored towards development and eventual mass prosperity likely to wean the societal hopeless from the doomsday brain washing and destructive philosophy of Boko Haram and allied religious anarchists (cf. The Nation Editorial, August 14, 2012:19).

In addition to all these, the State must develop the political will to be fair and just to the diverse people who make up Nigeria. Durable and sustainable peace cannot be fully established without a firm commitment to equity, fairplay and justice. It must be pointed out that the federal government has not taken any concrete and measurable step in the direction of promoting justice
at all levels. It has also done nothing substantial to promote reforms within the Nigerian security agencies, such reforms that would prevent a reoccurrence of the sort of injustice which the Boko Haram sect complained about (extra-judicial killing of its leader) and reforms that would stimulate the highest level of professionalism among those entrusted with law enforcement responsibilities. To be sure, the State has a responsibility to ensure that the conduct of its security agencies remain professional at all times, even in the face of incredible provocation. The former Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki supports this view when he suggests that;

Let governments from local government to Aso Villa declare justice and the problem of Boko Haram will finish. But if injustice continues I don’t think that the problem will be solved. The Boko Haram leader was killed and somebody who was responsible for it is still moving freely without any arrest. That is injustice. Only fairness, justice transparency and honesty will solve Nigeria’s problems including security challenges (cf. Hardball, 2012:64)

The State also needs to be more decisive and resolute in its fight against violence, bombing, suicide attacks and terrorism. If the State must win the war on terror, the present administration should stop playing politics with the security of the nation. Government must refrain from treating those identified as terrorists and sponsors of terrorism as sacred cows that are untouchable.

In addition to the above, the Nigerian state must depoliticize its polity. This can be done by ensuring that religious beliefs manifest only in the private lives of its citizens. The public display of religiously by public office holders should also be discouraged, just as government’s direct sponsorship and patronage of religion and religious leaders should stop. A situation where religious adherents from across the divide are sponsored on pilgrimage at the expense of the state is not only in congruous with the secularist posture enshrined in the constitution but also an anathema.
On the international scene, it bears emphasis that Muslims and Christians make up well over half of the world’s population. Thus, without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. It is perhaps the realisation of this fact, that led Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) to form what was regarded as the “Alliance for Civilization (AOC) which was co-sponsored by the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. In its final report, the AOC’s High Level Group (HLG) of twenty International leaders maintained that neither history nor religious differences were responsible for tensions and conflicts between Western and Muslim populations. Rather their primary roots are political (emphasis mine). In this instance, they cite the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a key symbol of the rift between Western and Muslim societies and one of the most serious threats to International peace and stability. In addition to this, Western military operations in Muslim countries and the spiraling death toll in Iraq and Afghanistan, plus the perception of double standards in the application of International law and the protection of human rights account for the enemy perception between the West and Muslims all over the world (Esposito, 2010).

Among the reports main recommendations for action were an International Conference to revive the Middle East peace process, noting that the absence of a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts “all efforts to bridge the gap between Muslim and Western countries are likely to meet with limited success” and making space for the full participation of peaceful political groups whether religious or secular in nature in the affairs of their respective states, because the suppression of non-violent political movements, is an important factor in formenting extremism in the Muslim world (cf. Esposito, 2010:184).

It is in this regard that this study recommends a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which will emphasize the legitimate claims, rights and responsibilities of both Israelis
and Palestinians. This assertion finds expression in the affirmation of a group called Evangelicals for Christ in an open letter to President Bush signed by many prominent Evangelical leaders and Pastors when they admonish as thus:

Historically, honesty compels us to recognize that both Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate rights stretching back for millennia to the lands of Israel/Palestine. Both Israelis and Palestinians have committed violence against each other. The only way to bring the tragic cycle of violence to an end, is for the Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a just, lasting agreement that guarantees both sides viable, independent and secure states (emphasis mine) (cf. Esposito, 2010:190)

Furthermore, America must end its military operations in Muslim countries while restraint must be exercised by both Muslims and Christians’ States in the pursuit of their respective National Interest in the interest of global peace, security and sustainable development.

### 7.3 Contributions to Knowledge

The research contributes to knowledge from both the critical and substantive perspective;

1. The research provides fresh insights into the politicization of religion and the complex interface between religion and politics in Nigeria.
2. It identifies and articulates the role religion plays in the socio-political development of Nigeria.
3. It establishes a causal relationship between the quest for political Islam as epitomized by the declaration of Sharia in some Northern states and the rise of religious fundamentalism in the country.
4. It shows that State weakness and its lack of capacity, ineptitude of political leadership, mismanagement of State’s resources by a coterie of individuals and the attendant...
consequences of poverty, unemployment and mass illiteracy in the Northern part of the country are actually the foundation of the quest for political Islam in Nigeria.

5. The study unravels the objectives, motives and strategies of those agitating for Political Islam in Nigeria as well as devising means and strategies of curtailing the violent expressions which frequently attends such agitations.

6. The research articulates the bases for harmonious co-existence of religious adherents in Nigeria and all over the world.

7.4 Conclusion

This study examines Political Islam: Fundamentalism and the Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria. The central argument of the research is that the upsurge in religious fundamentalism, extremism and unprecedented violence is not unconnected with the nature and character of the Nigerian State, its politics, the ineptitude in governance, corruption, unemployment, poverty and the unfavourable government policies that have impacted negatively on the generality of the people especially in Northern part of the country where illiteracy and religious bigotry abounds.

The study examines the interface between religion and politics in Nigeria. It observes that religion played a very crucial role in the formation of the Nigerian state, this perhaps explain why religion is often commonly invoked to justify what are essentially secular, national or ethnic interests. In Nigeria, religion is also often embedded in the sense of ethnic or national identity. It is in this light that the protracted and intractable ethno-religious crisis in Jos, the Plateau state capital should be understood.

The study establishes a causal relationship between the quest for political Islam and the use of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. It notes that all fundamentalists are political Islamists but
not all political Islamists are fundamentalists. Thus, although its ideology is religious, fundamentalism is not simply religious movements as they harbor ethnic, sectional, regional and political grievances which they give religious coloration.

The research demonstrates that the Maitatsine uprising in Kano in 1980 is arguably the first religious revolt with a political Islamist agenda but the dramatic declaration and implementation of the Islamic law (Sharia) by the Zamfara state government led by Alhaji Sani Ahmed Yerima and its replication by other states in the Northern part of Nigeria set the tone for modern day politicisation of religion in Nigeria.

The upsurge in the violent activities of the “Jamatu ahli Sunnah li’Dawati wa Jihad” also known as Boko Haram introduced the dimension of suicide bombing and terrorism to the agitation for political Islam in Nigeria. The United States Department of Defence defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or intimidate government or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological”. It can also be understood as” premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents”. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sees it as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (cf. Gbadejesin, 2012:64). It is the opinion of this study, that no religion sanctions the indiscriminate and unbridled killing, maiming and wanton destruction of lives and property of innocent individuals such as we have witnessed with the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Indeed, Holy Quran chapter 5V32 avers that;
Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption on earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind and whosoever saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind (Q5V32).

Flowing from the above Quranic injunction, Timothy Winter, a Cambridge University Professor and prominent Muslim leader rejects suicide bombing as well as killing non combatants for whatever reasons, noting that it is always forbidden in Islam to do so. He notes that some Islamic scholars regard it as worse than murder. According to him,

…an insurrectionist who kills non combatants is guilty of baghy “armed transgression” a capital offence in Islamic law. A Jihad can be proclaimed only by a properly constituted state; anything else is pure vigilantism (cf. Esposito, 2010:99).

Like Winter, Yusuff Quradawi, another Islamic scholar insists that Muslims are not allowed to kill anyone except those fighting Muslims directly in a war. Indeed, Qaradawi insists that it is immoral to kill innocent civilians for the actions of their government. He asserts that

Islam, the religion of tolerance holds the human soul in high esteem and considers attack against innocent human beings as a grave sin in line with Suratul Mai’dah C5V32 of the Quran (cf. Esposito 2010:100).

In the same vein, Abdul Aziz al-Shaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia opines that;

The act of shedding blood of innocent people, the bombing of building and ships and the destruction of public and private installations are criminal acts against Islam. Those who carry out such acts have deviant beliefs and misguided ideologies and are to be held responsible for their crimes. Islam and Muslims should not be accountable for the actions of such people (cf. Esposito 2010:104)

Also, Mohammed bin Adbullahi al-Subail, Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca declares that;

Any attack on innocent people is unlawful and contrary to Shariah (Islamic law)…Muslims must safeguard the lives, honour and property of non-Muslims who are under their protection and with whom they have concluded peace agreements. Attacking them contradicts the Shariah. (cf. Esposito 2010:104).
Today, religion hangs like a sword of Damocles over contemporary local and International politics. Religion plays an underlying role that gives value to the type of politics and security that emerges in every part of the world. The history of Christianity and Islam cannot be complete without reference to the crusades and Jihadist and the ensuring intolerance on both sides. These are motivated by the proselytizing injunctions fundamental to the two religion. There is religious violence and conflicts because the various devotees are intolerant of the views of the other. Not only this, in their primitive accumulation and the service of self interest, today’s religious leaders and prophets have turned the messages of Christ and Mohammad on their heads and have sown seeds of discord, hatred and war. In these circumstances, it is naïve to expect that adherents of these religious who listen to this distorted messages churned out by these religious leaders are going to be moved to promote peace among people of different faiths. This position is supported by Cardinal John Onaiyekan, the Archbishop of Abuja when he submits that;

Most of our problems are caused by the reckless utterances and activities of extremist fringe groups on both sides of the Christian/Muslim divide (cf. Orotabor, 2012: ).

What is to be noted is that it is not just the injunctions of each religion in the matter of peace that counts, the tragedy of our time is the politicisation of religion. The messages of Christ and Prophet Mohammad have been politicised beyond reason. Thus, for there to be religious tolerance, harmonious co-existence and peace in the country, the State must attenuate, if not eradicate the excruciating poverty, unemployment, inequality, youth restiveness, violence and the rejection of core values of honesty, equity, fairness and justice in our society. The State must therefore bring to end divisive tendencies of ethnicity, indigene/settler syndrome, Almajiri Syndrome in the North, bombing of innocent citizens, kidnapping and murder. Also, issues of religious extremism, intolerance, bigotry and mutual distrust amongst the diverse people should
be ameliorated. Unless all of these are done, the politicisation of religion with its violent and destructive consequences may go on for a long time unabated in Nigeria.
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