

KATHOLISCH-THEOLOGISCHE FAKULTÄT

**An Analysis of the Role of Religions in Politics in Nigeria from the perspective of Christian
Social Ethics.**

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vorgelegt von: **Anthony Okechukwu Ezekwu**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAACASOT.....	African Association for the Advancement of Catholic Social Teaching
AC.....	Action Group
ACF.....	Arewa Consultative Forum
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People’s Rights
ACID.....	Anti-Corruption Internet Data
AD.....	Alliance for Democracy
ADR.....	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AECAWA	Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa
ANPP.....	All Nigerian People’s Party
APC.....	All Progressive Congress
APP.....	All People’s Party
APGA.....	All Progressive Grand Alliance
APJN.....	African Peace and Justice Network
ASUU.....	Academic Staff Union of Universities
ATR.....	African Traditional Religion
AU.....	African Union
BPU	Biom Progressive Union
BYM.....	Borno Youth Movement
CAN.....	Christian Association of Nigeria
CASTO	Catholic Social Teachings Organization
CBCN.....	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CBN.....	Central Bank of Nigeria
CDHR.....	Committee for the Defence of Human Rights

CDRAT..... Centre for Democratic Research and Training

CIDJAP..... Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace

CLO.....Civil Liberty Organization

CMS.....Church Missionary Society

CPC.....Congress for Progressive Change

CSN Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria

CSO Civil Society Organization

CST.....Catholic Social Teaching

DBK Deutsche Bischof Konferenz

DIA Defence Intelligence Agency

DP..... Dynamic Party

DPNC..... Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon

DSSS Department of State Security Service

ECOWAS..... Economic Community of West African States

EFCC..... Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

EKD Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland

EMU..... Eastern Mandate Union

FCF..... Funtua Consultative Forum

FEDECO..... Federal Electoral Commission

FEPA..... Federal Environmental Protection Agency

FFS Federal Fire Service

FESTAC..... Festival of African Culture

FRSC Federal Road Safety Commission

GDP..... Gross Domestic Product

GNPP..... Greater Nigerian People’s Party

GSM..... Global System for Mobile

HMK..... Hilfsaktion Martyrerkirche

HND Higher National Diploma

HRW..... Human Rights Watch

ICPC..... Independent Corrupt Practices Commission

IDEA.....Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

IMC..... Interfaith Mediation Center

IMF.....International Monetary Fund

IMN..... Islamic Movement of Nigeria

INEC..... Independent National Electoral Commission

ING.....Interim National Government

IPCR..... Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

IPOB..... Indigenous People of Biafra

ITU..... Igbira Tribal Union

IU..... Igala Union

JAMB..... Joint Admission and Matriculation Board

JAPPIA..... Journal of Advance Public Policy and Internal Affairs

JDPC..... Justice, Development and Peace Commission

JNIJama’at Nasir Islam

LGA..... Local Government Area

MAMSSER..... Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social-Justice, and
Economic Recovery.

MAN..... Muslim Association of Nigeria

MBPP Middle Belt People’s Party

MCDF..... Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum

MDF Midwest Democratic Front

MOSOP..... Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People

MSS..... Muslim Students Society

MZL Middle Zone League

NAFDAC National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control

NANS..... National Association of Nigerian Students

NAP..... Nigerian Advance Party

NAPE Nigerian Alliance for Peaceful Election

NAPEP..... National Poverty Eradication Program

NARAB National Religious Advisory Board

NBA..... Nigerian Bar Association

NBS..... National Bureau of Statistics

NCCPC Nigerian Congress of Catholic Prisons Chaplains

NCNC..... National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon

NCNC..... Nigeria council of Nigerian citizens

NCS Nigerian Customs Service

NDC..... Niger Delta Congress

NDE..... National Directorate of Employment

NDF..... Niger Delta Forum

NDM..... Niger Delta Militants

NDRM..... Niger Delta Resistance Movement

NDVF..... Niger Delta Volunteer Force

NEC..... National Electoral Commission

NEF.....	Northern Elders Forum
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NEPA.....	National Electric Power Authority
NEPU.....	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NF.....	Ndigbo Federation
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organization
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NIIC.....	Northern Indigenes Interest Council
NIS	Nigerian Immigration Service
NIP.....	National Independence Party
NIREC.....	Nigerian Inter Religious Council
NITEL.....	Nigerian Telecommunication Limited
NJC.....	National Judicial Council
NLC.....	Nigerian Labour Congress
NPC.....	Nigerian People’s Congress
NPC.....	Northern People’s Congress
NPF.....	Northern Progressive Front
NPN.....	National Party of Nigeria
NPP.....	Nigerian People’s Party
NPS	Nigerian Prisons Service
NRC.....	National Republican Convention
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NSCIA	National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
NSO.....	National Security Organization

NMA..... Nigerian Medical Association

NNA..... Nigerian National Alliance

NNDP..... Nigerian National Democratic Party

NNPC..... Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation

NYM..... Nigerian Youth Movement

NY..... Northern Youths

NYSC..... National Youth Service Corps

OIC..... Organization of the Islamic Conference

OMPADEC..... Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission

OPEC..... Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

OPC.....Oduduwa People’s Congress

PCID.....Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

PDP..... People’s Democratic Party

PHCN..... Power Holding Company of Nigeria

POC..... Prisoner of Conscience

PPA..... Progressive People’s Alliance

PRP.....People’s Redemption Party

RP..... Republican Party

SAP.....Structural Adjustment Program

SCIA..... Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs

SDP..... Social Democratic Party

SEPTA..... Small-scale Entrepreneurs Promotion for Training Association

SMC..... Supreme Military Council

SON Standard Organization of Nigeria

SSCESenior Secondary Certificate Examination

SURE-P Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme

TLP.....Theology for Lay People

TMG.....Transition Monitoring Group

TPUTiv Progressive Union

UMBC..... United Middle Belt Congress

UMP United Muslim Party

UN..... United Nations

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNDP..... United Nations Development Project

UNDRD United Nations Declaration on the Rights Development

UNIP..... United National Independence Party

UPA..... United Party of Nigeria

UPGA..... United Progressive Grand Alliance

UPN..... Unity Party of Nigeria

UPN U.S. Energy Information Agency

VITTC..... Vocation and Industrial Technical Training Centre

WASU..... West African Students Union

WCG..... Western Consultative Group

ZCP..... Zamfara Commoners Party

Chapter One: Introduction

Politics is no doubt important for the common good, welfare of the people and the survival of the state. Politics affect everything that goes on in the country, in the states, in the towns, in the schools and even the churches, mosques and traditional shrines. It is relevant to note that religion respects politics and engages the political order. The Political engagement should serve as an indicator for social and political change. It is voluntary actions through which the people become politically responsible and directly or indirectly play their part in selecting their leaders. According to Weiner (1971), “political engagement is any successful or unsuccessful, organized or disorganized, periodical or continuous voluntary action including legitimate or illegitimate methods to influence selection of leaders, policies, administering public affairs in every local or national government.”¹

In this engagement, religion respects, supports and criticizes the political authority when necessary, and participate in the organised, voluntary and legitimate methods of electing leaders. This engagement between religion and politics leads one to the question of whether religion should play an active role in the political affairs of any society or stay away from the political affairs and concentrate on the spiritual affairs. Some scholars believe that the mingling of religion in politics leads to the creation of religious cum ethnic boundaries especially in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria with different religious confessions. Another group of thought argues that religion is necessary in politics to serve as a moral beacon and watchdog against abuse of office by the political authority. According to Losinger (2008), it is not easy for [religion] to operate in the world, but it must carry out its function of acting as servants and bringing healing as salt of the earth.²

Although religious, political, and cultural boundaries had been produced through various historical epochs and processes, these boundaries did not often lead to violence between the different religions and ethnic communities. The relatively peaceful co-existence that existed between Christians, Muslims and African Traditional religion before the coming of colonialism in Nigeria is an attestation. The exchange of foods, gifts and pleasantries during festivities like

¹ Weiner, M. (1971), *Political participation in crises and sequences in political development*. Princeton Press, Princeton. P. 164.

² Losinger, A. (2008), *Der soziale Lehrauftrag der Kirche*. In: Rausher, A. (Ed.), *Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehre*, Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle. Dunker und Humblot GmbH, Berlin. Pp. 93-101, (P. 94).

Christmas, Ramadan, traditional masquerade Festivals, etc. bear testimonies to the fact that Nigeria is an inter-religious environment with multi-ethnic diversities, and that religion can serve as an object of unification as it no doubt plays an active role in the lives of the people.

In human history, religion and politics have often co-existed and have also been misconstrued.³ One could also rightly view the pair as uncomfortable bed fellows because they do not always make a good mix, yet they must both co-exist with one impacting a greater influence on the other.⁴ Ironically Nigeria has suffered a sad history of corruption and irresponsible leadership surprisingly from leaders who seemed to be religious people. Indeed, Nigeria has experienced many politicians both men and women who profess the Christian, Islamic or Traditional religion, but their conducts in political affairs are contrary to the moral principles of the very religion they profess.

Although many scholars have argued that much involvement of religion in politics may jeopardize the spiritual status of the religious bodies or organizations, I agree with the view that religion “[...] has a substantial role to play in politics by acting as a principled guide, moral watch dog, spiritual counselor and conscience of the society.”⁵ Religion no doubt has a role to play in transforming the social and political order of any nation. However, looking at the current political situation in Nigeria one is convinced that the modern political models have not been sufficiently discovered, developed, and operated in the country. One thinks that the social and political behaviour of Nigerians conflicts with the present-day political structures and institutions. It is my view in this work that the political and religious actors have failed to harness the knowledge, attitudes, and responses with the indigenous values. Hence, one would logically inquire, ‘What is the relationship between religion and the state? Does religion play any role in the politics of Nigeria? If yes, what are the roles? If not, why not?’

1.1 Target of Study

The specific target of this research is basically designed to reflect on the role of religion critically but objectively in Nigerian politics from the perspective of Christian social ethics.

³ Uchegbue, C. O. (2013), The Place of the Church in the Socio-Political and Economic Liberation of Nigeria. Paper presented at: The 1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC, 24-26 Apr., Azores, Portugal. In: European Journal. European Scientific Institute. Pp. 141-154, (P. 141). Available online at: <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/download/1322/1331>. Retrieved on 01.02.2021.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. P. 142.

The researcher aims to achieve this through analysis of many works written on this subject and practical evaluation of the modus operandi of the three main religions in Nigeria. It is also the intention of the researcher that this work would enlighten the reader more on the meaning, impact and future of the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) in the Nigerian political and socio-religious environment. It is relevant to note that this work is written with Nigeria as its primary place of reference. I hope that it will help Nigerian Church leaders as well as engage Catholic lay people to better understand their obligations to take part in the political development of Nigeria and the way they could do so.

1.2 Motivation and Significance of Study

This research topic has been carefully selected because of its relevance to the Nigerian community. Nigeria and indeed other African countries are faced with enormous political and socio-economic challenges. A careful look at the achievements of the past leaders at the colonial and post-colonial levels is very revealing. The era of military dictatorship in the country did not help in the political and economic development. The return to democratic rule was conceived as a blessing for the nation. But careful research shows otherwise. This is reflected in the structural and systematic decay of the democratic, social and even the spiritual institutions which is influenced by corruption, ethnicity, and religious violence. Some have even lost hope in the country, resulting in massive migration to Europe and other developed countries in search of better life. The question at this point is what steps have been taken or should be taken to save the country from total collapse and give the citizens a better life?

The researcher was privileged to work as a deputy director in CIDJAP for three years and the experiences acquired played important role in his motivation for this research. As a Catholic organization, CIDJAP played different roles in the Nigerian society ranging from political sensitization/ awareness, to solving the social problems of the poor, homeless, sick, and jobless, to the provision of spiritual care to students, youths and prisoners. For this reason, this research is intended to make a Christian ethical evaluation of the role of religion in Nigeria especially in the socio-political challenges facing the country. This research will contribute positively towards establishing a culture and tradition of appropriate planning and input on the side of religion on one hand and the political gladiators on the other hand. Indeed, “the overall functioning of a system depends on and is so connected to the foundation upon which the

structures, physical, structural and immaterial are built.”⁶ And the foundation of any political system or structure is only “a physical reflection of the amount and depth of planning methodology put behind the scenes in cognizance of the given reality.”⁷

Hence, the motivation for this research is propelled by the desire for a better relationship between religion and politics in particular and a better systemic political strategy for Nigeria in general. It is hoped that the recommendations in this research would proffer an alternative methodology as a political reference point for the growth and development of Nigerian politics with good normative basis. The researcher is also motivated by the desire to search for a strong and lasting relationship between the religions in Nigeria. The constant inter-religious cum ethnic crisis have left nothing to be desired of a country once termed as the giant of Africa. A good relationship between the religions would no doubt reflect in the political development of the country because religion has a significant role to play in the progress of any nation. I shall consequently make a thorough study of the potentialities, capacities and the challenges facing religion in the political life of Nigeria with a desire towards a long-term success. This desire for a long-term success of the socio-political and economic life of Nigeria, propelled directly or indirectly by an active role of religion is the situation that motivated this work.

This research is also intended to invoke or reawaken a synergy between the people and the political authority. It is hoped that the gulf that has emerged between Christianity and Islam and the adherents of both faiths might be minimized by the creation of common grounds and the utilization of the spaces of dialogue. This would lead to a good relationship not only between the religions but between religion and the political system. Thus, a good relationship between religion and the political system would no doubt result in a society that respects the life and freedom of every individual in the society and upholds the rule of law. Such a relationship remains the dream of every society. The question however is, what role religion must play in such a political system? This would not be possible without first establishing the relationship between religion and politics. To have an objective view of this connection, one must have what the researcher refers to as a statement of the problem where certain basic questions are asked.

The basic questions the researcher shall investigate in this research include:

⁶ Anagolu, K. (2019), *The Relationship Hermeneutics in the Context of Pastoral and Catechesis – Locus for Dialogue with Culture in the Missio Ecclesiae*. LIT VERLAG GmbH and Co. KG Wien, Zürich. P. XI.

⁷ Ibid.

1. What do I understand by the terms “Religion” and “Politics”?
2. Does religion have any connection with politics?
3. What are the challenges facing Nigerian Politics?
4. What has changed between the politics in the colonial period and the politics in the post-colonial period in Nigeria?
5. What are the roles of religion in politics? Are there conditions for this role? What are such conditions?
6. Is there any necessity for the relationship between politics and religion?
7. What are the normative basis for development in Nigeria?
8. Has the government failed in providing development for the people?
9. What are the common responsibilities of both the citizens and the government?
10. What are the roles of the civil society organisations?
11. Are there common grounds/spaces of dialogue?
12. What are the scopes, principles and challenges of inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria?
13. What contributions can religion make for the further development of Nigeria?
14. Could religion be used as role model of best practices for politics?

These and other relevant questions are what this research intends to investigate and that would form the basis of this work. However, it is relevant to note that the implication of this research goes beyond Nigeria.

1.3 Current Status of the Research

A lot of work has been written by experts and researchers on the relationship between religion and politics, particularly in the aspects of Nigerian socio-political and economic development. However, it is important to note that no one has particularly focused on the engagement and cooperation of the three major religions in Nigeria, in the politics of the nation, with reference to the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) Enugu, as an example of the response to the structural and institutional failure. This may, however, not be

unconnected with the doubts by some scholars and writers as to whether religion should be actively involved in the politics of any nation.

Many of the Nigerian writers could have been possibly misled into believing that religion has no role to play in politics and as a result, religion should not be actively involved in politics. This view was influenced by the idea of politics being a “Worldly-affair”⁸ or “a dirty game.”⁹ Hence, most writers on the area of religion and politics, or the church and state relationships, hardly gave space for the practical engagements of religion in politics. Religion, in particular the Christian churches, has made giant strides in efforts to partner with the political authorities in Nigeria and the world at large. These could be seen in the areas of education, health sectors and social amenities, and in the human rights advocacy.

The question here is what is the difference in my research from what many other authors have written in this area of religion and politics? There has not yet been a particular focus on the structural and systematic failure in relation to the specific efforts of the three major religions in Nigeria. The researcher, therefore, intends to give a detailed examination of the structural and systematic failure of governance in Nigeria and how or to what extent religion could be involved in its revival. This is the area that has remained to be investigated.

Some writers like Vaughan (2016)¹⁰ who wrote on religion and the making of Nigeria, analysed how the three major religions in Nigeria provided the essential frameworks for the creation of Nigeria. He traced the history of Nigeria from the 19th century to the present, laying emphasis on the northern Nigeria, Sokoto jihad and the Christian-Muslim tensions. His work was very helpful in this research especially in the roles Islam and Christianity played in the shaping of modern post-colonial Nigeria, the religious conflicts and the problem of Sharia. However, he did not analyse the role of the three major religions in Nigerian politics. Ugwu (2017)¹¹ also wrote an extensive work on the Church and Civil Society in 21st Century Africa. His work was very helpful in the historical overview of Nigeria, the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and

⁸ Kukah, M. (2007), *The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility*. Lagos, Sovereign Prints Nigeria Limited. P. 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Vaughan, O. (2016), *Religion and the Making of Nigeria*. Duke University Press, Durham. Cf. Pp. 13, 112, 139 & 181.

¹¹ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), *Church and Civil Society in 21st Century Africa. Potentialities and Challenges Regarding Socio-Economic and Political Development with Particular Reference to Nigeria*. Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main. P. 22.

their activities in various aspects of the socio-political space of Nigeria, and the Church as part of the CSOs. He argued that religion has a vital role to play in politics as part of the civil societies. However, his focus was on the Civil Societies, and he did not discuss the roles of the three major religions in Nigerian politics. Other relevant works consulted in this regard include Aguwa (1993)¹² who argued that although the concept of religion and politics is problematic, the peaceful co-existence of both religion and politics in the Nigerian society is possible and realizable. He equally failed to discuss the three major religions and their roles in Nigerian politics. Nwafor (2002)¹³ also wrote extensive research on the relationship between church and state. He wrote on CIDJAP as a practical example to the possibility of a peaceful relationship between the church and state. This was very helpful in chapter six of this research where the efforts of CIDJAP as a response to the failure of the political system was analysed. However, his research was focused on the church and did not explore the aspect of the roles played by the three major religions in Nigerian politics. The dissertation of Chukwuma (1985),¹⁴ on Nigerian politics and the role of religion, was very helpful in this research. He discussed the national identity and factors militating against the national integration but did not contextualise the role of religion to a practical reality like CIDJAP in the Christian perspective. Although these older publications (1985, 1993, 2002) do not reflect the recent developments (2021 – 2022) in the Nigerian politics, I will include them in my research.

Indeed, a wide range of socio-cultural, anthropological, religious documents, Papal Encyclicals, theological commentaries, philosophical and psychological books, encyclopaedias, and internet sources, played important roles in this research. Data and other information were also collected from documentaries in magazines, newspapers, journals, and interviews, published and unpublished articles. Some relevant literatures examined in this research include the works of Afigbo, A. and Falola T.,¹⁵ and Olukoju, A.¹⁶ These works were given special attention because of their detailed approach on Nigerian history, affairs and

¹² Aguwa, J. C. (1993), *Religious Dichotomy in Nigerian Politics*. Fourth Dimension Publishing, Enugu.

¹³ Cf. Nwafor, C. J. (2002), *Church and State: The Nigerian Experience*. IKO – Verlag für Interculturelle Kommunikation Frankfurt am Main.

¹⁴ Chukwuma, M. (1985), *Nigerian Politics and the Role of Religion*. (Dissertation). Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn.

¹⁵ Cf. Afigbo, A. E. & Falola, T. (2005), *Nigerian History and Affairs*. The collected Essays of Adiele Afigbo. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press (Classic Authors and Texts of Africa). Pp. 16-38.

¹⁶ Cf. Olukoju, A. (1997), *Nigeria: A Historical Review*. In: F. U. Okafor (Ed.), *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu. Pp. 12-48.

politics. The works of Kukah, M.,¹⁷ Ike, O.,¹⁸ Omoregbe, J. I.,¹⁹ Afolabi, O.²⁰ and Maduagwu, M. O.,²¹ were given particular attention in religion and politics in Nigeria. Idowu, E. B.,²² Ngobri, B.,²³ Geertz, C.,²⁴ were also considered in religion and African Traditional Religion. Other important researchers considered include Enwerem, I. M.,²⁵ and Eze, D.²⁶ The Conciliar, Post Conciliar, and other Papal documents like *Gaudium et Spes*,²⁷ *Ecclesia in Africa*,²⁸ etc., contributed immensely to the clarification of some ecclesial position on politics. These encyclicals were inspirational.

¹⁷ Cf. Kukah, M. H. (1993), *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. P. 3.

¹⁸ Cf. Ike, O. (2016), *The Church and Contemporary Nigerian Society: Social Teachings of the Church; Past and present enunciation of relevant Theological Principles*. BEW-IT LTD. P. 53. Available online at: <https://www.obioraike.com/values-beyond-boundaries-essays-on-ethics-politics-and-corporate-governance.html>. Retrieved on 19.11.2020.

¹⁹ Cf. Omoregbe, J. I. (2003), *Religious ideals and the Question of Governance in Africa*. In: Oguejiofor, J. O. (Ed.) *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers. Pp. 15 – 33.

²⁰ Cf. Afolabi, O. (2015), *The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and its sustainability for political development*. An Article in *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 3 (2). Pp. 42-49.

²¹ Cf. Maduagwu, M. O. (2017), *State and Religion in Nigeria: Towards an Appropriate Relationship in the 21st Century*. Published in: *African Journal for Security and Development*, 2 (1). Pp. 104-117.

²² Cf. Idowu, E. B. (1973), *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London S.C.M. Press. P.66.

²³ Cf. Ngobri, B. (2013), *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. Pp. 160-275.

²⁴ Cf. Geertz, C. (1993), *Religion as a Cultural System*. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Fontana Press, London. Pp. 33-126.

²⁵ Cf. Enwerem, I. M. (1995), *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria*. Ibadan: IFRA.

²⁶ Cf. Eze, D. (2008), *Africa in Turmoil: A Reflection on Military Coups in Africa*. Linco Press, 19 Osadebe Street, Ogui New Layout Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria.

²⁷ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965): *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, December 7. Internet office of the Holy See. No page. Available online at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Retrieved on 20.11.2020.

²⁸ Cf. Pope John Paul II (1995a), *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. No. 108. Available online at: www.vatican.va/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents. Retrieved on 29.03.2018.

In social ethics, the works of Kruip, Gerhard,²⁹ Höffner, Joseph,³⁰ Sutor, Bernhard,³¹ were very helpful especially in the aspect of “Soziallehre” (Social teachings), “Sozialpolitik” (Social politics) and “Gesellschaftspolitik” (Public policy). They gave a wide range of different approaches in social ethics. Höffner (1966) generally argues that there should be “Christliche Weltverantwortung” (Christian responsibility) informed by the ethical responsibility of the individual in socio-political space. Sutor (1991) on the other hand gave a practical analysis of the socialisation of the individual as a person in the society and the social principles. His analysis of the principle of solidarity (Das Solidaritätsprinzip)³² in his second chapter was very useful in this research. The Handbook of the Catholic social teachings by Rauscher, Anton,³³ was very resourceful especially with the contributions of Losinger, Anton in his analysis on “Kirche in der Welt” (Church in the world),³⁴ Graulich, Markus in his analysis of the competence of the church in the question of its origin and end point, “woher und wohin,”³⁵ and Liedhegener, Antonius in his analysis on “Religion und Kirchen in der Bürgergesellschaft” (religion and the church in the civil society).³⁶ This research, however, goes beyond the Christian religion alone and the social teachings of the Catholic church in Nigeria. It encompasses in a systematic and detailed form, the three major religions in Nigeria.

²⁹ Cf. Kruip, G. (1999), Die Kompetenz der Kirche für die Politik – aus theologisch-sozialethischer Sicht. In: W. Lochbühler, J. Wiemeyer and J. Wolf (Hg.): Der Öffentlichkeitsauftrag der Kirche. Begründung - Wege - Grenzen. Münster: Lit, Pp. 112–126, (see Pp. 117, 118 & 120). See also: Kruip, G. (2018a), Ethical and Theological Aspects of Poverty according to Pope Francis. In: Schlag, Martin and Ortiz D. (Ed.), Poverty, Injustice, and Inequality as challenges for Christian Humanism. Duncker and Humblot, Berlin. Pp. 35-47.

³⁰ Cf. Höffner, J. (1966), Gesellschaftspolitik aus Christlicher Weltverantwortung: Reden und Aufsätze. Münster, Regensberg.

³¹ Sutor, B. (1991), Politische Ethik: Gesamtdarstellung auf der Basis der Christlichen Gesellschaftslehre. Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh GmbH, Paderborn. Translation is mine.

³² Ibid. P. 34.

³³ Rauscher, A. (Ed.) (2008), Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehre, Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle. Dunker und Humblot GmbH, Berlin.

³⁴ Losinger, A. (2008), Op. cit. P. 94. Translation is mine.

³⁵ Graulich, M. (2008), Naturrecht – Menschenrechte – Positives Recht. In: Rausher, A. (Ed.), Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehre, Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle. Dunker und Humblot GmbH, Berlin. Pp. 787-799, (P. 798).

³⁶ Liedhegener, A. (2008), Bürger und Zivilgesellschaft. In: Rausher, A. (Ed.), Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehre, Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle. Dunker und Humblot GmbH, Berlin. Pp. 887-897, (P. 894).

1.4 Method of Research

The nature of this research demands the utilization of several sources and methods because every standard work requires a systematic and detailed research. This thesis represents an effort to evaluate the nature and extent of the role religion should play in Nigerian politics. Hence, this research would attempt to access the nature and condition of the Nigerian polity in the view of proffering a workable and normative plan for an active engagement or synergy between the government and the people who are incidentally the adherents of the different religions in the country. This research began with the exploration of relevant written sources in the library of Johannes Guttenberg University of Mainz where this research was undertaken. The online library and inter-library loan system which I found very effective in Germany, played a critical role in accessing available resources, especially in the advent of Covid 19 pandemic. Apart from the resources available in local libraries within Germany, the researcher carried out research trips to Nigeria where libraries, archives, bookshops in Enugu and Abuja were extensively searched.

I engaged both primary and secondary literatures from different scholars in the process of my research. Therefore, I studied some social encyclicals of the Popes, the Compendium of the Catholic social doctrine, Communiques of bishops, some Islamic writings, and relevant materials in African religion. It is important to note that the literature materials are chosen according to their relevance to the theme of the research. Most of the works used in this research, were chosen from 1960 to date except some historical works on the early history of Nigeria. My choice of limit to the 1960s is because I shall be looking at the political situation of Nigeria from the period of independence to post-independence. The period of military involvement in the history of Nigerian politics between 1970 to the 1990s played important role in its development. The return to civil rule in 1999 was another critical stage in the political history of Nigeria.

It is often difficult to arrive at a consensus on the appropriate method of research because of the complex nature and plurality of methods. Therefore, my methodological approach is analytical, phenomenological, deductive, comparative, evaluative, inductive, and applicative. It is also sociological, ethical, and theological. The sociological analysis helps one to understand the problems and the conditions to resolve them. The ethical analysis introduces a normative perspective to determine where the ethical challenges lie and in what direction activities should be started. The relationship between the ethical and the theological perspective

is not easy to explain. However, it is relevant to note that one needs an ethical perspective independent from his or her religion, because only so can he or she invite people from other religions (or from no religion) to take part in the dialogue about necessary future changes for Nigeria. But on the other hand, the theological perspective of one's religion is necessary for the creation of perspectives for concrete actions which are the result of the sociological analyses and its conformation with ethical criteria. This methodical approach is intended to benefit different fields of political and social studies. The research is however not exhaustive because I am looking at the role of the religions in Nigerian politics from the Christian social-ethical perspective, and there are still other perspectives.

1.5 Delimitation

This work is research in the field of Christian Social Ethics and not political science. Thus, not every work written on politics was consulted. Also, this work is specifically directed at the efforts of religion to engage the political state in a constructive way that would yield positive results towards the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. Hence, the work is the role of religion in politics of Nigeria from the perspective of the Christian social ethics. It is important to note that there are many religions in Nigeria, but this work is limited to only the three major religions: Christianity, Islam, and the African Traditional Religion, with emphasis on the Christian perspective. Exhaustive research on the three major religions in Nigeria would be very voluminous. Hence, there is still room for more research in this regard and space for advancement and improvement in the future by scholars, especially on the topic.

Although this research makes effort to present the three main religions and their roles in the politics of Nigeria, the work does not treat every activity of the different denominations, brotherhoods, or sects, of the three different religions in politics. It is relevant to note that the research is from the perspective of Christian social ethics. Hence, there is room for other scholars to research from Islamic or Traditional religious perspective. The central focus of this research is Nigeria and how religion affects the politics of the country. References are however made to the universal contributions of religion in the global politics, especially Africa. At the end of the work, recommendations were proffered on how to improve the future relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria. The recommendations I made in this research are however not exhaustive, as there could always be room for more recommendations and improvements in the future.

1.6 Historical Overview of Nigeria until the 1960s

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a current estimated population of 213 million people³⁷ and it is the 7th most populous country in the world.³⁸ The country is in the west of Africa and has a landmass of 932,768 square kilometres.³⁹ It is often referred to as the Giant of Africa, with 36 states and 774 Local Government areas.⁴⁰ The Federal Capital is called Abuja.



*Map of Nigeria.*⁴¹

Nigeria is endowed with enormous abundant natural and human resources. It is one of the major crude oil producing countries in the world. At independence, it inherited a three region sub

³⁷ Varrella, S. (2021), Population of Nigeria in selected years between 1950 and 2021. Statista. No page.

Available online at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

³⁸ Cf. Eze, D. I. (2018), Nigerians Now 198 million: NPC Boss. In: Vanguard News Nigeria. April 11, No page.

Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/npc-puts-nigerias-population-198m/>. Retrieved on 13.11.2018.

³⁹ Cf. Nigeria Galleria, Information on Nigeria. No page. Available online at:

https://www.nigeriagalleria.com/Nigeria/Nigeria_Information.html Retrieved on 13.11.2018.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ibid.

⁴¹ Map of Nigeria, Available online at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nigeria_political.png Retrieved on 29.11.2019.

national government structure from the British colonialists:⁴² the Northern Region, Southern Region and Western Region. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA), there are about 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. They share various similarities in different ways like culture, tradition, economy, and politics. They also differ in some ways like religious beliefs and ideologies. The challenge that the leadership of the country has faced before and since independence is that of harnessing the similarities among the different ethnic groups for national unity and managing their differences for harmony in the political system. Streamlining their internal structures and inter-relationships to entrench a democratic culture is another challenge facing the Nigerian leadership. Unfortunately, these similarities and differences have often been ignored.⁴³ Falola (2008) also asserts that Nigeria has three major tribes speaking over 500 languages; Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba.⁴⁴ It has also three major religions; Christianity, Islam, and the African Traditional Religion (ATR).⁴⁵

Nigeria officially practices democracy and belongs to the membership of the United Nations (UN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Nations (OPEC), etc.⁴⁶ Lagos was the capital city of Nigeria until 1991 when the capital city was officially moved to Abuja. However, Lagos remains the commercial capital of Nigeria with a population of 11.223 million. The official language is English, and the average Nigerian speaks two or more different languages.⁴⁷

After the independence, the task of unifying a country with 250 ethnic groups and 500 tribes was overwhelming for the new government. The first republic did not last long. The collapse of the first republic in 1966 was caused by the “asymmetrical structure of the regional units as well as the political competition among ethnic elites for the control of the central government, where all the economic wealth was concentrated.”⁴⁸ Igbokwe (1995) in his own narration of

⁴² Cf. Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 32.

⁴³ Cf. IDEA (2001), Democracy in Nigeria. A Publication of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). P. 90. Available online at:
https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/reference_docs/annual_report_2000-1_screen.pdf. Retrieved on 09.06.2021.

⁴⁴ Cf. Falola, T. & Heaton, M. M. (Eds.) (2008), A History of Nigeria. Cambridge University Press, UK. P. 158.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁶ Cf. The Nigerian Embassy, Basic facts about Nigeria. No page. Available online at:
<http://www.nigerianembassy.or.kr/basic-facts-about-Nigeria/> Retrieved on 13.11.2018.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. Pp. 32.

the causes of the collapse of the first republic stated, “Since 1960 when independence came on a platter of gold, Nigeria had known no peace until the army struck [in 1963]. Regionalism, tribalism, nepotism, thuggery and political brinkmanship were the order of the day.”⁴⁹

In 1979, Nigeria returned to democracy after 13 years of military rule. The election was won by Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Despite the oil boom of the 1980s, Shagari could not manage the economy successfully. The military seized power again in 1984. On June 12, 1993, an election was annulled by the military head of state Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. This sparked off a nationwide protest that led to his stepping down for Chief Shonekon who was ousted by Gen. Sani Abacha.

In 1999, the country was returned to democracy after an election that was won by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Since then, “Nigeria’s stability has been repeatedly threatened by fighting between fundamentalist Muslims and Christians over the spread of Islamic law (Sharia) across the heavily Muslim North.”⁵⁰ It is relevant to note that more than 10,000 people have died in religious clashes since the civilian government took over in 1999.⁵¹ In July 2015, President Goodluck Jonathan was defeated in a presidential election by a former military head of state, Mohammad Buhari. It was the first time an incumbent president would be defeated in an election in the history of Nigeria. Jonathan handed over power to Buhari who has been battling to keep the insurgency of Boko Haram under control, in addition to his promised ‘crusade against corruption’.

Hence, one can sincerely agree that Nigeria as a country has passed through a lot of difficult challenges and still faces more challenges. There are also agitations by different groups to split the country along tribal lines. I agree with Ugwu (2017), that “the major concern of the majority of the citizens both in the early and current days is not necessarily how to split the country but how to make it work for the good of the present and future generation.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Igbokwe, J. (1995), *Igbos, Twenty-Five Years after Biafra*. Advent Communications Ltd. Enugu, Nigeria. P.11.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Cf. Harnischfeger, J. (2008), *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. Falola, T. (1998) also discussed the religious crisis caused by the introduction of Sharia Islamic law, in her book: *Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of Religious Politics and secular ideologies*. University of Rochester Press, Rochester, NY. P. 212.

⁵² Ugwu, S. U. (2017), *Op. cit.* P. 35.

However, it is unfortunate that in spite of the vast human and material wealth with which Nigeria is endowed and which could have given it a place of honour in Africa and the world, the country continues to face constant economic regression from boom to doom.⁵³ The history of Nigeria has been positively or negatively as the case may be, according to Uchegbue (1989), “[...] affected by external colonialism and the contemporary internal colonialism by a small group of rich and powerful Nigerians who control and maintain power at the expense of the misery of millions of the population.”⁵⁴

Nigeria has a lot of historic empires and cultures. “Inhabited for thousands of years, the region was the centre of the Nok culture from 500 BCE to 200 CE and of several precolonial empires, including Kanem-Bornu, Benin, and Oyo.”⁵⁵ Twelve kingdoms were in existence in Nigeria before the British colonization, Benin Kingdom, Borgu Kingdom, Fulani Empire, Hausa Kingdom, Kanem-Borno Empire, Kwararafa Kingdom, Ibibio Kingdom, Nri Kingdom, Nupe Kingdom, Oyo Empire, Songhai Empire and Warri Kingdom⁵⁶

In 1910 Nigeria became a British protectorate but the rulers in the North (the Emir of Kano and the Sultan of Sokoto) who had earlier not accepted the British rule were however subdued by Lord Lugard who was eventually made the Governor General of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1912, with a mission of merging the two regions together into one protectorate. In 1914, both the Southern and Northern Protectorates were joined together to form one country. This move according to Tamuno (1980), “was however, out of purely financial consideration so that the northern protectorate could get monetary support from the southern region to enhance colonial administrative purposes.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Cf. Achebe, C. (1983), *The trouble with Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu. P. 19.

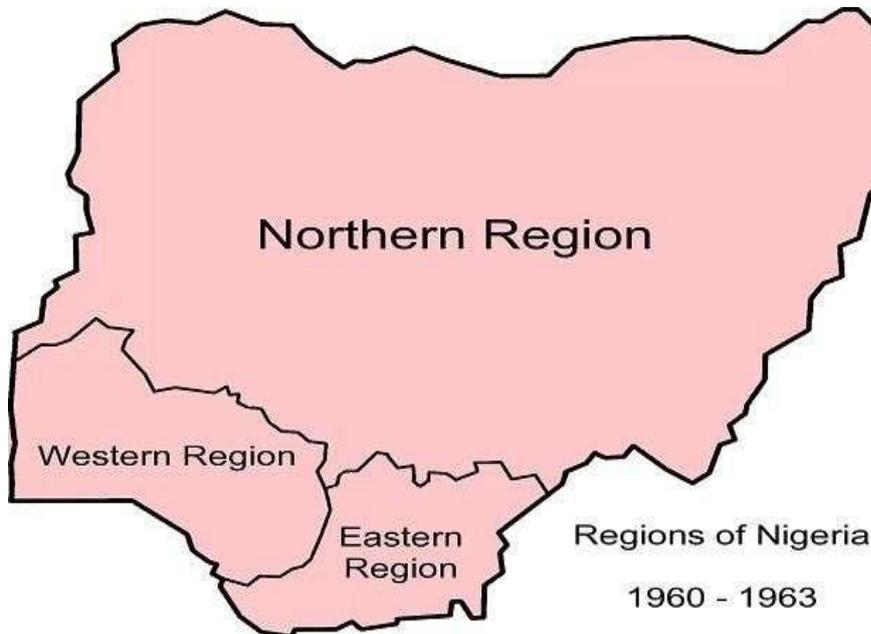
⁵⁴ Uchegbue, C. O. (1989), *Religion as a Mechanism for Liberation: A Critical Examination of Liberation Theology as an Anti-Thesis of the Marxian View of Religion*. (Unpublished M.A. Thesis), University of Ibadan. P. 206.

⁵⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021), Nigeria summary. In: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 21 Sep. No page. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Nigeria>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

⁵⁶ The history of the early kingdoms in Nigeria before the coming of the British colonial rulers was well narrated by Isichei, E. A. (1997) in her book “A History of African Societies to 1870”. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U. K.

⁵⁷ Tamuno, T. N. (1980), *British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the twentieth century*. In Obaro Ikime (Ed.): *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria by Heinemann Educational books. P. 394 – 409, (P. 394).

In April 1939, the Southern province was split into two by the Bourdillon administration, bringing the total number of regions in the country to three⁵⁸ as shown below.



Map of the three Regions⁵⁹

Nigeria was therefore divided into three regions: Northern region, Eastern region and Western region each with its own house of Assembly. But there was an overall legislative council for the whole of Nigeria. According to Olukoju (1997), “this division into three regions by the colonial government led to the formation of regional political parties like the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG), and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), to reflect the Western, Northern and Eastern regions respectively.”⁶⁰ These political developments gradually prepared the ground for the independence of the Nigerian State.

After a long difficult struggle and agitations by some Nationalist movements for self-emancipation from the British rule, Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960, and in 1963 adopted a republican constitution but elected to stay as a member of the British commonwealth of nations.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the coming of political independence in

⁵⁸ Cf. Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 31.

⁵⁹ Map of the three Regions in Nigeria (1960 - 1963). Available online at: <https://pasarelapr.com/map/map-of-nigeria-showing-states.html> Retrieved on 14.11.2018.

⁶⁰ Cf. Olukoju, A. (1997), Op. cit. P. 12.

⁶¹ Cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2020), Government and Society, Constitutional Framework. No page. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Independent-Nigeria>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

1960 did not translate into the effective transfer of power into the hands of the masses but into the hands of small elite. The masses, according to Hastings (1976), “have thus remained exceedingly poor, mostly illiterates, and probably even more remote from the mechanism of even local power than in colonial or pre-colonial times.”⁶²

Shortly after independence, there existed a political imbalance in the country as the Northerners controlled not only their own regional assembly but also the federal government in Lagos which was the capital of Nigeria. This was not accepted by the Eastern region, which felt marginalized, and this generated an anti-northern revolution. Some of the crisis that led to the collapse of the first republic were the 1963 census which brought serious controversy; the 1964 federal elections in which results were rejected by some party supporters, leading to riots in the Benue province; and lastly the election in the Western region in 1965 which brought more violence than ever. The Tafawa Balewa government did virtually nothing to halt the unrest.⁶³ Consequentially, in January 1966, a military coup was staged by five Majors of the Nigerian Army with an intention of salvaging the country. The coup was led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, who hails from the Eastern region.⁶⁴

However, “the feeling among the Northern elite then was that the coup was an Igbo plot to take over the country.”⁶⁵ This was because all the leaders executed in the coup were only Northerners (including the Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa and the Sardauna of Sokoto Sir Abubakar Mohammed) and two prominent Westerners. Incidentally, no Igbo leader was killed.⁶⁶ This feeling generated anger among the northern Muslims who resorted to riots directed at the Igbos. Thousands of people of Eastern Nigerian origin resident in the North were massacred.⁶⁷

⁶² Hastings, A. (1976), *African Christianity*. Geoffery Chapman Publishers. P. 78.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Siollun, M. (2009), *Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria’s Military Coup Culture (1966 – 1976)*. Algora Publishing. P. 237. Kirk-Greene & Millard (1971) also gave an extensive account of the Nzeogwu led Military coup in *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: a documentary sourcebook*, 1, Oxford University Press, New York. P. 124.

⁶⁵ Igbokwe, J. (1995), *Op. cit.* P. 11.

⁶⁶ Siollun, M. (2009), *Op. cit.* P. 237.

⁶⁷ Igbokwe, J. (1995). P. 12.

In July 1966, barely six months after the first coup, a counter coup was staged and Gen. Yakubu Gowon, a Northerner, was installed as the head of state. The “large scale massacres”⁶⁸ continued in the north against the Eastern Nigerians and this led to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra on 30th May 1967.⁶⁹ This resulted in a bloody civil war that lasted for 31 months. In January 1970, Biafra surrendered to the Nigerian federal government.⁷⁰ I shall stop the historical overview of Nigeria at this point because the further history is imbedded in the subsequent chapters.

1.7 A Summary of Chapter One

Historically, Africans were not under the same ethnic and cultural enclaves. They were traditional, religious and primitive but independent. The colonialists agglomerated them and imposed new states and systems that were both structurally and systemically different.⁷¹ This gave birth to the emergence of modern states in Africa, which were directed at meeting new ends. According to Post (et al) (1973), Nigeria which emerged from the rubbles of colonial domination as a multi-ethnic state, was inhabited by people distinguished by geography, ethnic and cultural outlooks.⁷² At independence, the merging of these different ethnic groups led to the emergence of ethno-cultural gladiators to struggle for state power and accumulation of resources. This led to the manipulation of ethnicity and cultural identity by the elites. Thus, Nigeria was further polarized into regional, religious and political interests and Nigerians were systematically made to see themselves as divergent ethnic nationalities with different interests and competing centres of powers for easy manipulation and mobilization of ethno-cultural identities.

Hence, in this chapter, the general information on the country Nigeria: its landmass, population, states, tribes, languages and political practice through its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods were analysed. The researcher also made a historical overview, which involved the basic history and origin of the country and a statistic of the past and present leaders.⁷³ In the statistics of the past and present leaders, one would be surprised to note that

⁶⁸ Uwechue, R. (2004), *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: Facing the Future*. Heritage Press, Abuja. P. 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* P. 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* P. 13.

⁷¹ Post, R. W. J. & Vickers, M. (1973), *Structure and Conflicts in Nigeria (1960-1966)*. Heinemann Publishers, London. P. 63.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ See appendix for a table of past and present Nigerian leaders. (P. 266).

out of the 62 years of political independence of Nigeria (1960 - 2022), the North has been in power for 45 years while the other three regions share the remaining 16 years among themselves with the Igbos having ruled only for six months (16th January – 29th July 1966).

At independence, many Nigerians and indeed friends of the country both dwelling inside or outside the country, hoped that Nigeria would be an example of democracy and political stability in Africa and her leaders would display a unique case of leadership excellence. The expectation was borne out of the abundance of human and natural resources. On the contrary, “Nigeria is today considered as country [...] besieged by election malpractices, widespread corruption, fierce and frequent religious riots, social and communal chaos, thuggery, tension arms built up; a country where the governed have lost confidence and hope in government and above all, its leadership.”⁷⁴ The contributions of religion in this struggle to stabilize Nigeria through a positive role in politics, forms a part of the desire of this research. Hence, the role religion has played and should play in the socio-political and economic development of the country, would be analysed in the subsequent chapters.

⁷⁴ Mile, T. J. (et al) (2013), History and the Shaping of Nigerian Leadership. In: IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 15 (2), (Sep. - Oct.). P. 31. Available online at: <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol15-issue2/E01523034.pdf?id=6940>. Retrieved on 19.01.2022.

Chapter Two: The Political System in Nigeria

In this chapter, the researcher shall take a brief look at Nigeria as a political community and the political reality in the country from the pre-colonial period, colonial period to the post-colonial period. This chapter shall also analyse federalism as a democratic system practiced by Nigeria with its attending conditions and challenges. The factors affecting the political system – corruption, electoral fraud & ethnicity – shall be analysed with some emphasis on the instruments and the causes of corruption and ethnic violence. Every legitimate political system receives its legitimacy through a process of election or selection. Thus, the researcher shall look at elections in Nigeria and its relationship with violence. Also, the religious, ethnic and electoral violence as factors inimical to the political system of Nigeria and the options for the youth in the political development, shall be analysed. This chapter ends with an analysis on the youths in political participation.

2.1 Nigeria as a Political Community

The term Community as used in this work is similar to a State which is derived from the Roman law concept of “Status rei Romanae,” that is, ‘the public law of the Roman people.’⁷⁵ This term replaced the original terms of the Greek word *Polis* and the Latin word ‘res publica,’ ‘Civitas’ and ‘regnum Corpus Politicum’.⁷⁶ The community in this context is seen as a body set up by the people, to guide them and to take decisions on their behalf for their own good.⁷⁷ It is in man’s nature to live in communities and man stands in further need of a political community, formed by coalition of families. This political community is necessary for both the preservation of peace between individual families and for the growth of civilization and culture.⁷⁸

The individuals, families and groups come together to create a wider community that would facilitate development, protection of rights, civil liberty, responsibilities, and the common good, because left on their own, they may not attain their full potentials. This coming together leads to the formation of a political community known as the state. According to Rommen (1967), there are three basic elements of a political community (state),

⁷⁵ Rommen, H. A. (1967), The State. In: New Catholic Encyclopaedia, Washington DC. The Catholic University of America, Vol. XIII. P. 644.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Agbilibazu, A. (1995), The Church – State Relationship in Nigeria (Towards a Peaceful Co-existence). CUJane Printers and Publishers, Enugu. P. 5.

⁷⁸ Copleston, F. S. (1985), A History of Philosophy. Image Books, New York, Vol. III. P. 393.

1. “A distinct territory with strictly determined boundaries.
2. A multitude of people already individualized by language, tribal customs, religion, or other cultural forms of living together.
3. A positive constitutional and legal order that determine legitimizes and limits the one political authority and the basic relations between the ruler and the ruled.”⁷⁹

The state according to Aristotle exists for the sake of a good life.⁸⁰ This can be achieved from three different perspective; unity, equity and defence. 1. *As a medium for unity*, the state works for the aim of unifying every citizen. 2. *As a medium of equity*, the state creates equal right and equal opportunity for every citizen to develop his or her capabilities. 3. *As a medium of defence*, the state defends her citizens everywhere, every time and in every cause.⁸¹ Hence, one can state that the state exists for the “achievement of the common good”⁸² and the protection of the individual. What then is the common good?

According to Messner (1965), “[t]he common good does not consist primarily in piece meal collection of goods from stores to which the members of the society have contributed. Rather the common good means that social co-operation makes it possible for the members of the society to fulfil by their own responsibility and effort, the vital task set for them by their existential ends.”⁸³ Njoku (2009) in the same opinion agrees that the common good “[...] is a task to be achieved and accomplished, and not a piece of cake to be devoured.”⁸⁴ Thus, the common good could be described as the material or institutional facilities shared by the community in common for the good of every member of the community. However, it is relevant to note that the principle of the common good flows from the dignity of the human person and it seeks to promote the good of all the individual members of a community and not just that of

⁷⁹ Rommen, H. A. (1967), Op. cit. P. 644.

⁸⁰ Stumpf, S. E. (1989), Philosophy, History and Problems. MC Graw – Hill Book Company, New York. P. 70.

⁸¹ Agbilibazu, A. (1995). Op. cit. P. 9.

⁸² Njoku, F. O. C. (2009), Politics and Religion: Perspective of the Social Teachings of the Church. In: West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies (WAJES), Vol. 8. Seminary Commission of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa, Ile Ife, Nigeria. Pp. 19 – 56, (P. 40).

⁸³ Messner, J. (1965), Social Ethics: Natural Law and the Western World. Herder Book Company, London. P. 124.

⁸⁴ Njoku, F. O. C. (2009), Op. cit. P. 52.

a particular person or group.⁸⁵ The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church also agrees with this opinion and adds that the principle of the common good “stems from the dignity, unity, and equality of all people. According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, the common good indicates the sum of those conditions of social life which allows social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment.”⁸⁶

The common good has three characteristics; 1. It is grounded in the well-being of the whole person, 2. It looks at the means to the end, 3. It is a good to be shared collectively.⁸⁷ It is relevant to note that there is no guarantee of the common good without the respect for the dignity of persons and human rights. The principle forbids the slow destruction of people’s lives for the financial gain of the state.⁸⁸ These characteristics of the common good should be some of the guiding principles that directly or indirectly influence the policies and goals of the political system in the community. From the above characteristics of the common good, a critical question would be, is Nigeria a political community? If yes, to what extent has the dignity and rights of all the individual members of the community been promoted? What are the conditions of social life in Nigeria that would promote the fulfilment of aspirations of the individuals in an equal platform? An analysis of the political development of Nigeria with relation to social question would give more insight to the above questions.

2.2 Political Development of Nigeria

It is the intention of the researcher in this part of the work to analyse the evolution of the political state called Nigeria and how this politics developed from pre-colonial era to the present-day democratic system of government called federalism with its consequent challenges. These challenges would give a better perspective on the conditions of social life and dignity of the individual members of the state. First, it is relevant to make a brief but distinct contextual clarification of the words: development and political development.

⁸⁵ Cf. Nothelle, W. (2008), Die Sozialprinzipien der Katholischen Soziallehre. In Anton Rauscher (Ed.); Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehrer. Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft und der Katholischen Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zentralstelle. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot. Pp. 5-6.

⁸⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2005), Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Citta Del Vaticana: Libreria editrice vaticana. No.163.

⁸⁷ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 148.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Development could be explained as “increase and improvement in the quantity and quality of output of goods, services, infrastructures and general well-being of the people living in a particular geographical entity over a specified time.”⁸⁹ The development could be visible in the institutions of the state, attitudes of the citizens and values that influence political decisions. Hence, “the various periods of representation by political office holders elected or selected by the people become a yardstick of measuring how far these developments have been achieved.”⁹⁰

These institutions (like the National Assembly, judiciary, etc.) enhance the states’ capacity to mobilize and allocate resources and process policy inputs into achievable outputs. These institutions require a well-developed political strategy towards greater structural differentiation and increased specialization in the policies they make on behalf of the people. This exposes the quality of the political system and the level of development. Nigeria has passed through various stages of development in politics and grass-root representation. It is the intention of the researcher to analyse these stages of political development from three different periods: the pre-colonial period, colonial period, and the post-colonial period.

2.2.1 The Pre-Colonial Period

Prior to the coming of the British colonialism, “there was no country called Nigeria. There only existed the tribes of Ijaw, Igbos, Urhobos, Itsekiri, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Kanuri, Ogonis, Gwani, Kataf, and so on. There were also in existence Kingdoms like Nri, Oyo, Lagos, Calabar, Brass, Itsekiri, Benin, Tiv, Borno, Sokoto Caliphate, Kano, Ilorin, Zaria, Bonny, Opobo etc.”⁹¹ These were independent tribes and communities with their separate Kings and

⁸⁹ Eshiobo, S. (2016), Political Representation and Grassroot Development in Nigeria: Process, Challenges and way forward. P. 3. Available online at:

https://www.academia.edu/4606870/POLITICAL_DEVELOPMENT_AND_GRASSROOT_DEVELOPMENT_IN_NIGERIA. Retrieved on 06.01.2019.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Sagay, I. (2003), True Federalism in an Emerging Democracy: A case study of Nigeria. A lecture delivered in commemoration of the inauguration of His Excellency Asiwaju Bola Tinubu as Governor of Lagos state (2003-2007) at Le’meridian Hotel, Lagos. In: Adedija, T. (2003), ThisDay Newspaper, Nigeria: Prominent Scholar Renews Call for True Federalism. 29, May. No page. Available online at:

<https://allafrica.com/stories/200305290113.html>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022. Also, the Encyclopaedia Britannica narrated a similar historical account in its ‘Kingdom and Empires of pre-colonial Nigeria’ Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/History>.

leaders. They were all independent of each other.⁹² Ogbaji (2012) observed that, “although controversies, claims and counter-claims characterize the traditions of origins and migrations of the different peoples of Nigeria, it is important to note that certain areas of Nigeria such as the Upper Benue Valley, the Niger-Benue Confluence and the central Highlands of the Middle Belt were centres of origin from which many groups in Nigeria branched out to their present abode.”⁹³ Burrage (2014) in a similar account highlighted the independence of the ancient kingdoms that existed before the creation of Nigeria. He stated that “the region of Nigeria itself has been in existence for a very long time and has been home to many different Africans and their different civilizations. From the 12th century up till the actual creation of Nigeria in 1914, many different groups have lived and governed in the area, but not all of them lived and obeyed the same rulers.”⁹⁴

However, their origins and migratory routes notwithstanding, the people “settled and consolidated in their present abodes, they began to develop and elaborate systems of governance which varied in scale and complexity depending on their geographical environment, available military technology, economic, spiritual and moral forces.”⁹⁵ Although “frictions and conflicts occasionally erupted over such matters as land and trade routes,” these different ethnic communities in the pre-colonial period were tolerant and accommodating to one another.⁹⁶

2.2.2 The Colonial Period

This is the period when the independent tribes and communities mentioned above, were subdued and amalgamated by the British colonial masters through “a combination of force and

⁹² Nande, M. (et al), (No date), Federalism and Political Development in Nigeria. In Academia.edu. P. 2.

Available online at:

https://www.academia.edu/32769660/FEDERALISM_AND_POLITICAL_DEVELOPMENT_IN_NIGERIA

Retrieved on 07.01.2019.

⁹³ Ogbaji, J. U. (2012), Political Development of Nigeria. A lecture note prepared for the Department of History and International studies, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria. In: Academia.Edu. P. 2. Available

online at: <https://www.academia.edu/people/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=Political+Development+in+Nigeria>,

Retrieved on 07.10.2019.

⁹⁴ Burrage, C. (2014), AFR 110: Introduction to Contemporary Africa. Pennsylvania State University. No page.

Available online at: <https://sites.psu.edu/afr110/2014/09/24/pre-colonial-nigerian-history/>. Retrieved on

07.01.2019.

⁹⁵ Ogbaji, J. U. (2012), Op. cit. P. 2.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

cunning”⁹⁷ despite their different religions, cultures and traditions. This amalgamation according to Iwuagwu (2017) “remains the major source of ethnic and tribal politics in Nigeria today.”⁹⁸ This is because the tribes had different social and cultural orientation. They had different traditions and spoke different languages. Consequentially, the amalgamation came with its own challenges like tribalism, regionalism, ethnicism, etc., which were because of the differences stated above.⁹⁹ Hence, it is my opinion that the amalgamation exposed Nigeria to lack of unity and social problems like nepotism and tribalism. Another important effect of the amalgamation was that it laid the foundation of federalism in Nigeria.

The British colonialists believed that federalism¹⁰⁰ was the best form of government to adequately address these diversities and challenges of ethnicity, language, culture, religion and tradition. Federalism was formally introduced in Nigeria through the McPherson constitution of 1951.¹⁰¹ However, this idea of introducing federalism in Nigeria did not seem to be the best option for the country because the regional heads had neither orientation on the imperial ideology of the British empire nor adequate training on the principles of federalism. The implication of such assertion is that the amalgamation was involuntary, and federalism posed a big challenge to the integration of the politicians which would also affect the political progress and socio-economic development of the federation. This, in my opinion, is because the amalgamation of Nigeria did not follow the normal method of establishing a federation.

According to Apadorai (1968) the normal method of establishing a federation is the coming together of several or a few states, formerly separate and sovereign, to establish a common government for their own mutual benefits in security and development.¹⁰² This was not the case with Nigeria because there was no case of coming together of the leaders from the different ethnic nationalities or regions to discuss the amalgamation. Rather, the amalgamation was imposed with its consequent constant tacit struggle for ethnic/racial superiority between the

⁹⁷ Ibid. P. 5.

⁹⁸ Iwuagwu, J. (2013), 1914 – 1960: Challenges of Amalgamation. (A Historical Review 1914 – 2014). 100 years of Amalgamation. P. 6. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/3461769/19141960_Challenges_of_Amalgation_Historical_review_1914-2013_. Retrieved on 07.01.2019.

⁹⁹ Nande, M. (et al), Op. cit. P. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Federalism would be discussed below (see: 2.3.1).

¹⁰¹ Ogbaji, J. U. (2012), Op. cit. P. 13.

¹⁰² Appadorai, A. (1968), The Substance of Politics. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. P. 11.

regions. It is interesting to note that these perceived sectional, tribal and regional sentiments of the different regions notwithstanding, the Nationalist leaders rallied together for independence.

The Nationalists were bound by one common goal, to take over leadership from the British and be independent. This desire for independence blinded the nationalists to the fact of the existence of (the very dangerous) strong ethnic/racial rivalry and that they were not fully equipped with sufficient knowledge of administration in a diverse country like Nigeria. Thus, the management and sustenance of the political structure of the country in the post-colonial period would later be marred by ethnic cum religious rivalry.

2.2.3 The Post-Colonial Period

This is the period when Nigeria gained its independence from Britain on the 1st of October 1960, after a long struggle by some great men and women like Sir Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Dr. Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Tafawa Balewa, etc. The struggle for independence was first influenced in 1920s by Herbert Macaulay¹⁰³ who is considered as the founder of Nigerian nationalism, which was intended to assert Nigeria as a Nation with emphasis to its cultural unity.¹⁰⁴ The chief aim of the Nigerian Nationalism was to be able to foster a unity among Nigerians.¹⁰⁵ The British government on its part had created structural imbalances within the colonial nation of Nigeria, in terms of socio-economic projects, social development, and the establishment of administrative centres.¹⁰⁶ This created mistrust from the people against the British colonial government.

However, after the independence, the founding fathers had wonderful dreams for the country, which were beautifully captured in the first national anthem (1960-1978) “Nigeria we Hail Thee.” Parts of the lyrics of the national anthem read: “Though tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand, that truth and justice reign, [...] To hand on to our children, a banner without stain, O God of all creation, help us to build a nation where no man is oppressed, and

¹⁰³ Uka, L. U. (1989), *Mass media, people, and politics in Nigeria*. Concept Publishing Company. P. 23.

¹⁰⁴ Guntram, H. H. (et al) (2008), *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview*. Santa Barbara, California, USA: ABC-CLIO, Inc. P. 1184.

¹⁰⁵ Falola, T. & Saheed, A. (2010), *Nigeria, nationalism, and writing history*. Rochester, New York, USA: Rochester University Press. P. 256.

¹⁰⁶ The issue of the structural imbalances was treated in detail by McKenna, A. (2010), *The History of West Africa*. Britannica Educational Publishing. See: Pp. 173-193.

so with peace and plenty [...] Nigeria may be blessed.”¹⁰⁷ These thoughtful phrases from the national anthem could be carefully divided into three points as highlighted by Falola (2010):

1. Unity in diversity
2. Justice, equity and truth for all
3. Peaceful and prosperous country.¹⁰⁸

The desire of the founding fathers was such that they would leave behind for the subsequent generations a nation with better opportunities to live a better life. Unfortunately, these dreams have not yet been realized 62 years after independence (1960-2022). It is my opinion that these dreams of Nigeria’s founding fathers were directly or indirectly affected¹⁰⁹ by the democratic system (Federalism) that was practiced in the post colonial era of Nigeria.

2.3 The Democratic System in Nigeria

Democracy is defined as “a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free [and fair] elections”¹¹⁰ Nigeria is today a democratic country and practices federalism as a political system of government. Every family is represented at the grass root level by the head of the family or any member of the family delegated on his behalf, in the village council. The village council is further divided into wards and zones for proper political representation and distribution of democratic dividends. These wards and zones elect or select Councilors by a simple voting process, to represent them at the Local Government Area (LGA). In the cities, families are also grouped into wards and zones. On another note, every LGA elects an individual who would serve as its representative at the state House of Assembly. At the National level, every state sends at least a representation each in both the Senate and Federal House of Representatives. The Senators in the National

¹⁰⁷ Obialo, M. (2020), First Nigerian National Anthem: Nigeria We Hail Thee. In: Nigerianguide. 18 April, No page. Available online at: <https://nigerianguide.com.ng/first-nigerian-national-anthem-nigeria-we-hail-thee/> Retrieved on 08.01.2020.

¹⁰⁸ Falola, T. & Saheed, A. (2010), Op. cit. P. 23.

¹⁰⁹ The dreams were affected in the sense that the desired unity and equity that would have propelled Nigeria into a prosperous nation were shattered by regionalism, tribalism and religion.

¹¹⁰ Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, Democracy. No page. Available online at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>. Retrieved on 24.07.2019.

Assembly are 109 while the House of Representatives are 360.¹¹¹ At the communal level, leadership is based mainly on election or selection as enshrined in the culture or custom of the people. Importantly, the general wellbeing of the family is the joint responsibility of every member of the family. There is a sense of responsibility among every member of the community from the eldest to the youngest. Below is a table of a well-structured political representation from the grassroots to the federal representation in Nigeria according to Eshiobo (2016).¹¹²

<i>POLITICAL UNIT</i>	<i>COMPONENT UNIT</i>	<i>ELECTED/SELECTED REPRESENTATIVE</i>
Communal level	Families, Village	Clan Head, Village Head, Family leaders.
Ward level	Community or village in a Local Govt. Area (LGA)	Councilor.
State Constituency	Wards in L.G.A.	Member of State House of Assembly.
Local Government Area	A number of wards of people of similar characteristics and culture.	Local Government Chairman, Legislators.
Federal Constituency	Each Local Government Area in the state.	House of Representatives, Legislators.
Senatorial Constituency	Two or more Local Government Areas in the state.	Senator.

¹¹¹ The National Assembly, Nigeria. No page. Available online at: <https://www.nassnig.org/> Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

¹¹² Cf. Eshiobo, S. (2016), Op. cit. P. 4.

The table above is an example of a well-structured political system. Every Political system requires a carefully well-planned political structure that develops from the grassroots to the centre of government. This structure in a political system arguably gives the people the opportunity to have a voice both as individuals and as a community on issues affecting their lives.¹¹³ This is called political representation and the essence of political representation is to give every individual the opportunity to have a say in matters affecting their welfare and existence through someone or a group of people elected for such purpose. The representative speaks and advocates for the people in the political system.

However, it is sad to note that “elections have been bedevilled by widespread fraud, multiple voting, ballot box snatching, masses or grass root disfranchisement, intimidation, violence, Judicial miscarriages, political Scheming/manoeuvring etc.”¹¹⁴ Indeed, this is an indication of failure on the part of the political system and distrust in the electoral process. This failure further creates a wide disconnect between the people and their representatives.¹¹⁵ This disconnect could be linked to two factors, party politics and regional identity.

1. Party Politics

In a democratic dispensation, political parties are indispensable and they play very important roles which include to articulate and project the interest of the party and the people, represent the people at the national, state and local levels; and as an opposition, act as a watchdog to the ruling party by continuously keeping it on its toes. Hence, a political party is practically “an organized attempt”¹¹⁶ to engage in party politics. It is a response to the desires of the people, which is organised and translated into a followership defined by commitment to clear ideals.¹¹⁷

Interestingly however, the party politics in Nigerian political scene present entirely different experience which possibly explains the failure of the democratic regimes of the past.¹¹⁸ The recent activities (party politics) of most political parties in Nigeria are far from the prescriptions

¹¹³ Ibid. P. 4.

¹¹⁴ Eshiobo, S. (2016), Op. cit. P. 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. P. 1.

¹¹⁶ Schattschneider, E. E. (1942), Party Government. Farrar & Rinehart Inc. New York. P. 35.

¹¹⁷ Ujo, A. A. (2000), Understanding Political Parties in Nigerian, Klamidas Books, M3 Ahmadu Bello Way, Kaduna, Nigeria, 2000. P. 11.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

of the constitution.¹¹⁹ Political thuggery, intimidation of opponents and even assassination are still prominent features bedeviling party politics in Nigeria. This is part of the failure/disconnect in the democratic system.

2. Regional Identity

This is another structural weakness which has adversely affected democracy in Nigeria. Political parties were formed without serious distinction between politics and ethnicity. Thus, they became symbols of ethnic/regional representations. In the first republic for instance, the ethnic bond between political parties and regional identity was very strong.¹²⁰ This meant that politics in Nigeria largely revolved around regional/ethnic-based political parties.¹²¹ Also, at the national level, there is a strong sense of regional identity fuelled by an ethno-religious division between the north (Muslims) and south (Christians). This division is manifested in the political parties of the current fourth republic where two major political parties dominate the political scene: PDP (South) and APC (North). Thus, party politics and regional identity serve as the two major factors that create a disconnect in the political system of Nigeria. This is further compounded by the system of governance, federalism.

2.3.1 Federalism

Federalism is understood as “the distribution of power in an organization [such as a government] between a central authority and the constituent.”¹²² According to Onah (2006), federalism is “the theory or advocacy of Federal political order where final authority is divided between sub-units and the centre.”¹²³ Generally, federalism in a democratic system connotes “the existence of two levels of government, each constitutionally empowered to make decisions independent of each other within the legislative sphere assigned to it.”¹²⁴ In the Nigerian context, this would mean the distribution of power between the federal government and the

¹¹⁹ Adegbariri, M. A. (2017), Challenges of Democracy in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. *Journal of Advance Public Policy and International Affairs (JAPPIA)*. 4 (7). Pp. 60-66. (P. 63). Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/35875029/Challenges_of_Democracy_in_Nigerias_Fourth_Republic. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

¹²⁰ Falola, T. & Oyebade, A. O. (2010), *Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa*. California: ABC-CLIO. P. 69.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, Definition of Federalism. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary. No page. Available online at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/federalism>. Retrieved on 22.01.2022.

¹²³ Onah, F. E (2006), *Fiscal Federalism in Nigeria*. Great Express Publishers, Nsukka. P. 26.

¹²⁴ Nande, M. (et al), *Op. cit.* P. 2.

different regional governments of the northern, southern, eastern and western regions. The distinctive feature of Federalism is the formal division of governmental powers by a constitution between the constituent units and the larger state which they compose.¹²⁵ Another fundamental and distinctive feature of federalism is that the regional governments are independent to each other but united by a common goal of unity, equity and defence.

2.3.1.1 Conditions for Federalism

The relevant question here is, what are the conditions necessary for the success of federalism? The researcher shall analyse four major conditions that would favour the practice of Federalism in any nation:

1. “The desire for union: unless some political units desire to unite and establish a common government for their common interests, there is no basis for federation.
2. The desire for local independence: a desire among the component states for the preservation of their independence in all but essential common matter is a precondition for this form of political organization.
3. Geographical contiguity: if the countries desiring to form a union are widely separated, the desire for union cannot easily emerge, as the advantages to be obtained do not appear real enough to make the necessary sacrifice worthwhile.
4. The absence of marked inequalities among the component units: if there is any state so much more powerful than the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined, it will insist on being master of the joint deliberations.”¹²⁶

2.3.1.2 Challenges of Federalism

The independence of the regional governments in a federal system comes with its own challenges that directly or indirectly affect the democratic system. There are three main challenges of federalism as it affects Nigeria; 1. Indigene versus migrants, 2. Resource control, and 3. the problem of equity in the distribution of wealth and appointments.

2.3.1.2.1 Indigene Versus Migrants

Nigeria has a very sad history of indigene versus migrant’s conflict. This has often been manifested in the form of fatal religious, ethnic, cultural and communal clashes. This is because

¹²⁵ Appadorai, A. (1968), Op. cit. P. 11.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

of the settlement patterns in which indigenes do not begrudge about the influx of migrants' groups but frown at letting them build houses side by side with them, which force the migrants to settle in exclusive areas of their host communities.¹²⁷ An example are the Hausa communities in the North where migrants settle in "Sabon Gari"¹²⁸ As a result of development, fuelled by the advent of colonialism, migrants came into Hausa land for different reasons especially trade. These migrants/traders were never integrated in the communities because of little or no concrete interaction with the indigenes.

Unfortunately, this has resulted in communal conflicts in many villages of Nigeria.¹²⁹ The recent crisis between the Hausa migrants and the Birom indigenes of Plateau state,¹³⁰ the Benue indigenes versus Fulani herdsmen,¹³¹ and many other similar crises especially in the 'Middle Belt' region of Nigeria are practical examples.¹³² This is a problem for Federalism because the migrants/settlers are often seen as outcasts and are neither fully integrated nor voted into any political office by their host communities. Hence, there is no desire for union which gradually develops into agitations for self-actualisation or independence from the dominant community.

2.3.1.2.2 Resource Control

The challenge of resource control came with the discovery of oil in Niger Delta of the Southern region. The federal government shifted its economic focus from agriculture to crude oil. According to Omotosho (2010), the principle of derivation was adopted in revenue sharing

¹²⁷ Danjibo, N. D. (2009a), Indigene – Settler conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for Nation Building and National cohesion. In Isaac, O. A. (Ed.) Praxis of political concepts and ditches in Nigeria's fourth republic. Essays in honour of Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Bookcraft, Ibadan. Pp. 2-17, (P.7).

¹²⁸ Sabon Gari means new town in Hausa language. Almost every state in the Hausa land in Nigeria has a settlement reserved for non-indigenes and it is the same name.

¹²⁹ The details of communal violence resulting from the indigene-migrants problem shall be discussed further under Ethnicity and Ethnic violence, (see p. 62).

¹³⁰ Hegarty, S. (2018), Nigeria's Plateau state clashes leave 86 dead. BBC Online News: 25th June. No page. Available online at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44597409> Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

¹³¹ Duru, P. (2018), 26 Killed as Herdsmen sack Benue Village in a Fresh Attack. Vanguard Nigerian Newspaper: 26th March. No page. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/26-killed-herdsmen-sack-benue-village-fresh-attack/> Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

¹³² The Fulani Herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farm plants of the indigenous farmers who have no other source of livelihood, thus resulting into severe crisis between the farmers and the Herdsmen which has led to many deaths.

before the discovery of oil.¹³³ This principle allowed the regions to have adequate control over the resources located within their territories.¹³⁴ At that time the Hausa in the Northern region had Groundnuts, the Igbo in the Southern and Eastern regions had cassava and Palm oil, and the Yoruba in the Western region had Cocoa.¹³⁵ These were Nigeria's major resources and they were all independently controlled by the regions.¹³⁶

However, the system changed after the discovery of oil.¹³⁷ The implication was enormous both for the citizens and for the nation in general because the country "drifted from agro-based economy to an oil one."¹³⁸ Crude oil became the strong hold of the nation's economy and revenue generated from the same, is shared based on established sharing formula¹³⁹ which allocated more money to the north than the oil producing south. This has directly or indirectly generated agitations for separation and independence. The Niger-Delta armed struggle is an example of such agitations. This has led to kidnappings and frequent pipe-line vandalism which affect the daily oil production.¹⁴⁰ These activities directly affect the economy of Nigeria.

2.3.1.2.3 Quota System

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly states that "the composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the Federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in

¹³³ Omotosho, F. (2010), Nigeria Fiscal Federalism and Revenue Allocation for Sustainable Development in Niger Delta. *Medwell Journals*, 5 (3). Pp. 246 – 253. (P. 246).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid. Pp. 247.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Pp. 249.

¹³⁷ Nande, M. (et al), *Op. cit.* P. 8.

¹³⁸ Ibid. P. 9.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Okolo, P. O. & Etekpe, A. (2010), Oil Pipeline Vandalization and the Socio-Economic Effects in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region. P. 2. Available online at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228275767_Oil_Pipeline_Vandalization_and_the_Socio-Economic_Effects_in_Nigeria%27s_Niger_Delta_Region. Retrieved on 15.06.2021.

that government or any of its agencies.”¹⁴¹ This provision of ‘Federal Character’ in the constitution could be considered as one of the most controversial provisions of the constitution. This is because the federal character principle satisfied the quest for a quota system in representativeness and appointment among various groups on one hand but arguably compromised quality and professionalism on the other hand.¹⁴²

However, in the application of the quota system, choices are often made based on religious or ethnic affiliation rather than on merit. “For example, the quota system as applied in education leads to lowering standard against National interest. In the army, it leads to the production of sub-grade soldiers and officers. In the civil and public services of the federation standards and professionalism are compromised by eschewing meritocracy without recourse to standards, the quota system becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice.”¹⁴³ A practical evidence is an examination required for admission into the university in Nigeria for undergraduate course, conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Often some students from the educationally disadvantaged region are granted admission into the University based on the quota system despite their poor performance in the examination. It is painful that qualified students are left out of the admission list while students with inferior scores are admitted because of a ‘quota system.’ This could lead to agitations and riots from the youths.

Indeed, the Quota system and the federal character principle, carry the treachery and unprofessionalism from the lowest levels to the apex of all federal offices when people get promoted based on quota system rather than qualification. It is the opinion of the researcher that inclusiveness is good but could breed tension among colleagues, and inefficiency in the system when it becomes arbitrary. Also, quota system has the tendency of promoting mediocrity and reinforcing negative stereotypes about mental handicap when it is not properly implemented.¹⁴⁴ The quota system becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice when

¹⁴¹ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), The Government and the People. Chapter II, Section 14, sub-section (3). Available online at: <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>. Retrieved on 13.11.2018.

¹⁴² Cf. Nande, M. (et al), Op. cit. P. 10.

¹⁴³ Ibid. Pp. 10-11.

¹⁴⁴ Egbujo, U. (2016), Quota System and the Menace of Mediocrity. In: The Vanguard Nigerian Newspaper April 16. No page. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/04/quota-system-menace-mediocrity/> Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

it is not properly managed and implemented.¹⁴⁵ Hence, there is the presence of marked inequalities among the component units in the country which could lead to strike and civil disobedience among workers including the desire for separation among the affected group or region(s).

2.3.2 Factors Affecting the Democratic System in Nigeria

The return to a democratic government after many years of Military rule was greeted with jubilation because the citizens presumed that democracy was a beacon of hope for the growth and development of the country. This presumption is because of the understanding that democracy is run on basic guiding principles of justice, equity, freedom, accountability, transparency and inclusiveness unlike the dictatorial government of the military. A reflection of the situation in the country shows that the lack of such principles has created a gap between civil rule and democratic rule. The failure of governance brings to light certain issues challenging democratic governance in Nigeria. Such factors like bad leadership, corruption, violence, electoral malpractice, poverty, insecurity, etc, have posed serious challenges to democracy in Nigeria. The researcher would analyse four factors that are affecting democracy in Nigeria: Corruption, electoral fraud, electoral violence and ethnicity. These factors have contributed to the structural and institutional collapse of the political system in the country.¹⁴⁶

2.3.2.1 Corruption

Corruption implies the following terms among others, ‘putrid matter, impunity, bribery’.¹⁴⁷ It is the theft and embezzlement of funds or the appropriation of state property and granting of favours to personal acquaintances. According to Aluko (2003), corruption “is the single most debilitating factor that has stalled the progress, growth and development of Nigeria.”¹⁴⁸ Ehusani (2017) gives a practical description of corruption in Nigeria. It is “[...]”

¹⁴⁵ The Guardian News Editorial Board (2017), Nigeria, Osinbajo and the Quota System. The Guardian Newspaper. 14 November. No page. Available online at: <https://guardian.ng/opinion/nigeria-osinbajo-and-the-quota-system/>. Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

¹⁴⁶ This would be addressed in detail later in chapter five of this work (see p. 139).

¹⁴⁷ Oyeshile, O. (2017), Corruption and Underdevelopment in Nigeria. In Research Gate. P. 2. Available online at: <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/280495098>. Retrieved on 11.01.2018.

¹⁴⁸ Aluko, M. A. & Adesopo, A. A. (2003), Bureaucratic Corruption in Nigeria: A General Sociological Insight into the Problem. Journal of Social Science, 7 (1). Pp. 47-54, (P. 53). Available online at: <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSS/JSS-07-0-000-000-2003-Web/JSS-07-1-001-03-Abst-PDF/JSS-07-1-047-03.pdf>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

referred to by such euphemisms as kickback, egunje, cola, ten percent, family support and settlement. But corruption manifests itself in such other widespread practices as the various forms of election rigging, falsification of census figures, examination malpractice, sorting, certificate racketeering, visa racketeering, extortion by public officials, nepotism, advance fee fraud, the forging of or issuance of fake medical certificates without medical tests, yellow card without necessary inoculation, driver's license without driving test, false affidavits, false age declaration, multiple international passports, inflated contracts, over-invoicing, under-invoicing, etc.”¹⁴⁹

Obasanjo, a former president of Nigeria, gives another perspective of corruption. He asserts that “corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud and other related offences which can include award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justices, misuse of public offices, embezzlement of public funds, inclusion in the payroll of non-existent workers known as ghost workers, amongst other numerous offences. Broadly put, the dishonest and illegal behaviour exhibited, especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption.”¹⁵⁰

Corruption is associated with a range of problems which include lack of transparency, lack of accountability, lack of trust in political and judicial institutions, weak democratic structures, etc. According to Transparency International in its 2020 corruption index report, Nigeria ranked 149th position out of 179 listed nations in the world (only less corrupt than Zimbabwe, Chad, Congo, Sudan and Somalia, in Africa).¹⁵¹ This is not an encouraging report for the nation that was often called ‘The Giant of Africa.’ Indeed, corruption “has almost become a way of

¹⁴⁹ Ehusani, G. (2017), Reflections: Sustaining the war against corruption in Nigeria. No page. Available online at: <http://www.georgeehusani.org/index.php/other-articles/175-sustaining-the-war-against-corruption-in-nigeria>. Retrieved on 12.01.2019. “Rev. Fr. George Ehusani is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Lokoja, Nigeria. He is the Executive Director and Lead Faculty of the Lux Terra Leadership Foundation - an institute committed to the training of present and future leaders of church and society in the dynamics of purpose-driven sacrificial leadership for the positive transformation of corporate, religious and political entities.”

¹⁵⁰ Ezeamalu, B. (2017), How Nigerian churches are encouraging corruption – Obasanjo. In: Premium Times Newspaper, April 8, No page. Available online at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/228306-nigerian-churches-encouraging-corruption-obasanjo.html>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

¹⁵¹ Transparency International (2020), Corruption Index Report. No page. Available online at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nga>. Retrieved on 31.12.2020.

life in Nigeria. It is also the bane of Nigeria's political development and a major cause of social conflict.”¹⁵²

In 2016, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in a communique accused the politicians of corruption stating that “[...] far too many politicians in [Nigeria] have continued to use politics merely as a platform for self-enrichment, oppression and the pursuit of goals that are totally at variance with our common good, collective well-being and aspirations. The result is that ordinary citizens have lost confidence in the political class.”¹⁵³ In a reaction to the seriousness of the situation of corruption, the CBCN composed a prayer against bribery and corruption in Nigeria. Part of the prayer reads, “God of the heavenly virtues, [...] we are deeply sorry for the wrong use of these your gifts through acts of injustice, *bribery and corruption*.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, corruption is a major factor affecting the democratic system because no country thrives amid bribery, embezzlement, dishonesty, nepotism, lack of trust and social conflicts.

2.3.2.1.1 The Instruments of Corruption

According to Oyeshile (2017), “[t]he instruments of corruption in Nigeria include money, position, contracts, and gifts of all kinds. These instruments are used to bribe, pervert, manipulate, fasten, reverse and favour unnecessarily.”¹⁵⁵ For instance, someone can offer bribe to a panel of interview to be awarded a contract or to be given an employment. Politicians bribe electoral officials to win an election and offenders bribe law enforcement agents to evade arrests.¹⁵⁶ Also, “Nigeria is assessed as a neo-patrimonial state, where power is maintained through the awarding of personal favours and where politicians may abuse their position to extract as many rents as possible from the state.”¹⁵⁷ There are two main purposes of corruption in Nigeria; “(i) to steal from the state, which includes forms of corruption such as

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria [CBCN] (2016), Restoring Confidence in Nigeria. A statement of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria on the state of the Nation. 15thSeptember, P. 2. Available online at: cbcn-ng.org/docs/g23.pdf. Retrieved on 03.06.2021.

¹⁵⁴ Ezeamalu, B. (2017), Op. cit. No page.

¹⁵⁵ Oyeshile, O. (2017), Op. cit. P. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Aluko, M. A. & Adesopo, A. A. (2003), Op. cit. P. 51.

¹⁵⁷ Maira, M. (2014), Nigeria: Evidence of Corruption and the Influence of Social Norms. Transparency International. P. 2. Available online at:

https://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Nigeria_overview_of_corruption_and_influence_of_social_norms_2014.pdf. Retrieved on 09.01.2019.

embezzlement, bribery, nepotism and cronyism, among others; and (ii) to preserve power, which includes electoral corruption, political patronage, and judicial corruption.”¹⁵⁸ Hence, people are often motivated to indulge in corruption either by their greed for the acquisition of wealth or the desire to retain power at all cost. These form part of the causes of corruption which shall be analysed in the subsequent page.

2.3.2.1.2 Causes of Corruption

It is relevant to note that there is no moral justification for corruption. There are six main causes of corruption in Nigeria, greed, lack of functional social security system, unemployment, poverty, lack of adequate justice system and illiteracy.¹⁵⁹ Let us briefly view these causes of corruption in Nigeria as listed out by Oyeshile (2017).

1. “Greed: This is the tendency to crave for what does not belong to one and to take undue advantage of people in the desire to acquire wealth or power.
2. Lack of functional social security system: Many Nigerians are uncertain of their future. Thus, they take bribes and steal money to enrich themselves in case the government fails to pay the retirement benefits after the retirement.
3. Unemployment: A lot of people remain at home for many years after graduating from school. The joy and hope of a good education gradually turn into frustration. In the state of frustration, the individual is willing to give bribe just to get employment.
4. Poverty: Many people in Nigeria cannot afford the basic needs of life which should have been provided by the government, like water, electricity, good roads, housing, etc. For such people, they are ready to do anything to survive.
5. Lack of adequate justice system: It is not easy in Nigeria to get a just hearing in court, especially when the person is very poor. Sometimes one must pay heavy fees to the lawyers who would process the case. There have also been cases of Judges guilty of taking bribes especially from politicians to favour a particular candidate in a post-election judgment.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Oyeshile, O. (2017), Op. cit. P. 5.

6. Illiteracy: Many people cannot read and write in Nigeria. Thus, they do not know their rights and some of the educated people take undue advantage of such illiterate people.”¹⁶⁰

Arguably, corruption is the strongest factor militating against the democratic system in Nigeria. It is like a malignant tumour, a cancer that eats its hosts to death. This calls for urgency and practical solutions. The policies of government should be re-examined. The importance of moral education should be re-instated at every level of educational programme to remodel the children and youths, instil morality and change of attitude especially among the students who would eventually become the future leaders.¹⁶¹ The government must implement serious changes in the value-system, erring public servants and politicians should be severely punished to serve as a deterrence to others. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (EFCC and ICPC)¹⁶² must be independent, and finally the National Ethics Commission should be empowered to embark on the re-orientation and education of the citizens on the negative effects of corruption.¹⁶³

2.3.2.2 Electoral Fraud

Electoral fraud is another major factor affecting the democratic system in Nigeria. “The concept of Election and Democracy are two sides of the same coin, in the sense that in democratic setting, election can be regarded as the major feature of democracy.”¹⁶⁴ This is because a democratic regime without an election would be unimaginable. It is the opinion of some political analysts that free, fair and credible elections would serve the purpose of empowering the voters to demand practicable agenda and accountability from the prospective

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria [CBCN] (2015), Communique: A Call for True Conversion of Heart. A Communiqué at the End of the Second Plenary Meeting of the CBCN at the Pastoral Centre, Igwuruta, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, September 10-18. P. 3, §.8, 9. Available online at: (<https://www.cbcn-ng.org/docs/g21.pdf>), <https://www.cbcn-ng.org/communiques.php>. Retrieved on 09.01.2022.

¹⁶² Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), were established in Nigeria and tasked with the responsibility of investigating and prosecuting financial crimes and corrupt practices.

¹⁶³ Cf. Oyeshile, O. (2017), Op. cit. Pp. 2-5.

¹⁶⁴ Ajayi, A. K. (2015), Elections and Democratic Practice in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Challenges and Prospects. In: Academia.edu. P. 1. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/24812807/ELECTIONS_AND_DEMOCRATIC_PRACTICE_IN_NIGERIAS_FOURTH_REPUBLIC_CHALLENGES_AND_PROSPECTS. Retrieved on 12.02.2020.

politicians. “In other words, free, fair and credible election bestow on government, the legitimate authority to initiate and implement policies on one hand, while on other hand, they empower the citizens to hold governments accountable for their actions and inactions.”¹⁶⁵ Also, election serves as a tool for checking the independence of the judicial organ of the government from the legislative and executive organs.¹⁶⁶ It can be argued that free, fair and credible election provide the basis for emergence of democratic accountability and legitimate governments with the capacity to initiate, implement and articulate clearly development programme.¹⁶⁷

Holding elections in Nigeria presents many challenges, because of the large size of the electorate, the difficult analogue method of casting and counting of votes, low literacy levels, and an environment that is characterized as complex, violent and corrupt.¹⁶⁸ Sadly, a review of elections in Nigeria since independence reveals that electoral fraud has been a constant factor in Nigeria’s democratic process.¹⁶⁹ Electoral frauds include among others, illegal printing of voters’ cards, falsification of election results, illegal thumb-printing of ballot papers, compilation of fictitious names on voters’ lists, illegal compilation of separate voters’ lists, illegal printing of forms used for collection and declaration of election results, deliberate refusal to supply election materials to certain areas, announcing results in places where no elections were held, harassment of candidates, agents and voters, change of list of electoral officials, as well as box- inflation of figures.¹⁷⁰

Indeed, electoral fraud is a threat to the democratic system in Nigeria because it has been linked with the phenomenon of bad governance. It is perpetrated by politicians and aided by the electoral umpires in some cases. Unfortunately, politicians who initiate or are involved in this criminal act of electoral fraud are neither arrested nor prosecuted for their involvement. Also,

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. Pp. 2-3.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Omilusi, M. (2016), *Elections with Tribal Marks: Interrogating the Primordial Sentiments in Nigeria’s Electoral Democracy*. LAMBERT Academic Publishing, Moldova. The concept and meaning of election were discussed extensively in his work, cf. Pp. 152-153.

¹⁶⁹ Durotoye, A. (2015), *Nigeria’s 2015 Presidential Election: Between Democratic Consolidation and Change*. European Scientific Journal, July edition, 11 (19). Pp. 169-178, (P. 173). Available online at: <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/5936>. Retrieved on 24.01.2022.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. P. 175.

it is relevant to note that the desire to win ‘at all costs’ is one of the driving forces of electoral fraud in Nigeria. This desire is directly or indirectly linked to electoral violence.

2.3.2.3 Electoral Violence

Violence is another factor that affects the democratic system in Nigeria. Generally, violence could be described as the direct/indirect physical or psychological expression or manifestation of anger, intimidation or hostility against another. Thus, electoral violence could be described as the expression or manifestation of anger before, during or after an election for the purpose of intimidation, expressing dissatisfaction or influencing of the result of an election. Electoral violence has been a re-occurrent problem in Nigerian politics because of political campaign, balloting and contesting of results. This view was supported by different scholars like: Post, k. & Vickers, A. (1973), and Osaghae, E. (2002).¹⁷¹ Post (1973) addressed the steady collapse of Nigeria’s democratic institutions without any politician taking responsibility for such steady collapse. He reviewed the political event between 1960-1966, especially the 1964 general elections that led to deadly violence and opined that politics of election and sectionalism have put a great strain on Nigeria’s democratic system. Osaghae on the other hand, described Nigeria's political history from two perspectives, ‘the best of times and the worst of times.’ He believes that Nigeria's past glory is still restorable, but the constant challenge of electoral clashes and violence have hampered the prospects of such restoration.

Indeed, the use of violence as a political tool has been common in Nigeria both before and after her independence from Britain. Between the periods of June 2006 and May 2014 alone, “there were about 915 cases of election violence resulting in about 3,934 deaths. A further breakdown of the figures showed that the North Central geopolitical zone had the highest casualties among the country’s six zones, recording 1,463 deaths. It was followed by the North-West with 911 deaths and the South-south with 644 deaths. The South-East had the least figure of 152 deaths, the North-East and South-West recorded 319 and 386 deaths respectively.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Cf. Post, R. W. J. & Vickers, M. (1973), *Op. cit.* P. 63. See also, Osaghae, E. (2002), *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since independence*. John Archers Publishers, Ibadan.

¹⁷² Familusi, O. O. (2017), *Electoral Violence in the Context of Religion and Development in Nigeria*. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. 19 (1). Pp. 96-105, (P. 100). Available online at: <file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/ElectoralViolenceintheContext.OlumuyiwaOlusesanFamilusi1.pdf>. Retrieved on 04.03.2022.

In 1964, the first general elections were conducted by the leaders of the Nigerian state after the independence. “Before the elections, the contested results of the national census and intense political campaign by the political parties had increased the tempo of the political stake and this affected the outcome of the elections.”¹⁷³ The outcome was fatal. According to Ladan-Baki (2016) “[t]here was a high level of violence such as maiming, kidnapping, arson and murder. The electoral violence reached a climax by 1965-1966 during the Western Regional Elections which emanated from the tense electoral battle between the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) for the control of the government of the Western Region.”¹⁷⁴ On the polling day, two electoral officers and two polling agents were killed at Mushin Constituency in Lagos following allegations of attempts to manipulate voting. This action sparked off violent demonstration which spread to virtually all the sixteen administrative Divisions of the Western Region.¹⁷⁵ The numerous electoral violence reached to a tipping point that led to the eventual collapse of the First Republic through a military coup in 1966.¹⁷⁶

In the Second Republic of 1979, “the election was not also devoid of [violence and] malpractices which ranged from victimization, intimidation by security agents, manipulation of results, bribing electoral officers and the use of thugs.”¹⁷⁷ The level of rigging was beyond people’s expectations, and this resulted in violence which led to killings and destruction of properties. Four years later, “in the 1983 general elections, it was a similar rigging pattern under the electoral superintendent of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) which was to serve as the electoral umpire in the processes actually connived with the Northern Party of

¹⁷³ Ladan-Baki, I. S. (2016), Electoral Violence and 2015 General Election in Nigeria. In: *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: F. Political Science*, 16 (1). Version 1.0. Global Journals Inc. (USA). Pp. 22-30, (P. 23).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. P. 24.

¹⁷⁵ Orji, N. & Uzodi, N. (2012), Post-Election Violence in Nigeria: Experiences with the 2011 Elections. Policy and Legal Advocacy centre (PLAC). P. 22. Available online in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270215621_post-election_violence_in_Nigeria_Experiences_with_the_2011_Elections, Retrieved on 06.03.2022.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ugoh, S. C. (2007), Electoral Violence and Rigging in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis of 2003 and 2007 General Elections. Being a paper presented at the Conference on ‘Contending Issues in Nigeria’s Electoral Process: The 2007 General Elections.’ 26th - 27th September. Department of Political Science University of Lagos. P. 172.

Nigeria (NPN) which was the ruling party to rig and manipulate elections.”¹⁷⁸ It is my opinion that the rigging in this period was heightened because of the desperate ambition of the politicians to win at all cost.

During the Military rule in 1993, under General Ibrahim Babangida, another election was organized for what was called the third republic which was eventually conducted and majority of observers both local and foreign confirmed that the election was the most transparent of all times.¹⁷⁹ The election was surprisingly annulled, a transitional government was set up by General Babangida and power was handed over to Chief Ernest Shonekan. The annulment of the June 1993 presidential election sparked off violent protests mainly in Lagos and a few other states.¹⁸⁰ Once again people were killed and properties were destroyed.

In 1999, the fourth republic was born and a general election was conducted. However, the 1999 presidential election was a continuation of previous electoral frauds in Nigeria. Elections were monitored by over 15,000 electoral observers and the final report from the US-based Carter Centre and the National Democratic Institute concluded that the elections were marred by high level fraud and it was impossible to give an accurate judgment about the outcome of the presidential election.¹⁸¹

The 2003 elections bear the same resemblance with the previous elections. "The highest level of violence during the 2003 elections was in the south and the southeast, where PDP governors and their supporters universally succeeded in resisting opposition bids for office. These were also the areas where the greatest rigging and fraud were recorded by independent electoral observers."¹⁸² Thus, the Human Rights Watch 2004 Report concluded that “all the federal and state elections conducted in 2003 and 2004 were marred by serious incidents of violence, which

¹⁷⁸ Ladan-Baki, I. S. (2016), Op. cit. P. 24.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ The New York Times (1993), Rioting in Nigeria Kills at Least 11. In: New York Times Magazine, July 7, P. A3. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/07/world/rioting-in-nigeria-kills-at-least-11.html>. Retrieved on 11.03.2020.

¹⁸¹ NDI/The Carter Centre (1999), Observing the 1998-1999 Nigeria Elections: Final Report, Peace Review. The Carter Centre/National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Atlanta/Washington. P. 32. Available online at: <http://www.cartercenter.org/documents/1152.pdf>. Retrieved on 11.10.2021.

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch (2004), Nigeria's 2003 Elections: The Unacknowledged Violence. P. 6. Available online at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/06/01/nigerias-2003-elections/unacknowledged-violence>. Retrieved on 11.10.2020.

resulted in the death of many citizens. The scale of the violence and intimidation witnessed in the elections, questions the credibility of these elections.”¹⁸³

In the April 2007 elections, “elected officials, alongside with the government agencies charged with ensuring the credibility of polls, reduced the elections to a violent and fraud-riddled farce. There was mass rigging, violence, arson, voters’ intimidation and complete anarchy predominantly in the northern part of the country where the two dominant candidates Umaru Musa Yar’Adua of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) hail from.”¹⁸⁴ Surprisingly both the former and the later are indigenes of Katsina State but from different local government areas. When the results were finally announced the candidate of the PDP was announced the winner and returned president elect.

In the 2011 general elections, there was a high level of desperation from the politicians. The election was best described as “a do or die affair.”¹⁸⁵ This led to violence that “erupted in the northern states of Nigeria such as Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Bauchi etc. there was a high degree of rigging in the north because to win the presidential polls in Nigeria the 19 northern state and the states of the south-west had to be captured by the ruling party. This led to the imposition of dusk to dawn curfew in most northern states of the country.”¹⁸⁶

The 2015 general elections were not different as “violence was recorded though it was mostly exhibited at the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria in states like Rivers and Akwa Ibom. The ruling party the PDP and its agents were accused of deploying all means necessary including barbaric methods to clinch victory at the polls. In Akwa Ibom state prior to the elections, candidates were even murdered by unknown gun men and in some cases maimed.”¹⁸⁷

Despite the shift from military to civilian rule, electoral violence has remained prevalent in Nigeria. According to the 2004 Human Rights Watch report, the electoral violence is often “facilitated by the wide availability of small arms and a large population of unemployed young men who are willing to be hired and armed by politicians to intimidate their opponents.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Ibid. P. 45.

¹⁸⁴ Ladan-Baki, I. S. (2016), Op. cit. P. 25.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch (2004), Op. cit. P. 4.

From the experiences of Nigeria as discussed above, one can argue that electoral violence is deeply rooted in the historical, political, and socio-economic configurations of the country. According to Orji & Uzodi (2012), “[a]ll the eight general elections conducted in Nigeria since independence in 1960 (including 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections) have been marred by various degrees of violence”¹⁸⁹ and it is often triggered by the outcomes of the elections, including verifiable and unverifiable claims of rigging and falsification of results. This also suggests that the bone of contention is not necessarily about the people’s perception of the integrity of elections, but their ethnic inclinations, religious affiliations and reaction to the wider implication of the outcome of the electoral process. There was hardly any election where the results of the outcome were not contested and this often led to violent protests.¹⁹⁰ Violence has never been and can never be a solution to any dispute. This is a major factor affecting the democratic system in Nigeria.

2.3.2.4 Ethnicity and Ethnic Violence

Ethnicity is another factor affecting the democratic system in Nigeria. The word ethnicity is defined as “social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries.”¹⁹¹ The important communal factors of the ethnic groups may be language and culture.¹⁹² Also, an ethnic group can be analyzed as people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind, united by emotional bonds and concerned with the preservation of their type with few of them speaking divergent languages but largely sharing the same culture and tradition.¹⁹³ It is the opinion of the researcher that ethnic pluralism is necessary but an insufficient condition for ethnicity. There must be an emotional unity fueled by language, tradition, culture and custom. An ethnic group should not be just an identity group aimed at achieving some political or social goals. The group is bound by cultural, traditional, emotional and even spiritual identities.

From the above definitions, two observations can be made. The first observation is people’s self-identification to one ethnic group or the other.¹⁹⁴ The criteria for determining one’s self-

¹⁸⁹ Orji, N. & Uzodi, N. (2012), *Op. cit.* P. 8.

¹⁹⁰ Ladan-Baki, I. S. (2016), *Op. cit.* P. 25.

¹⁹¹ Nnoli, O. (1980), *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu. P. 5.

¹⁹² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Shibutani, T. & Kwan, K. M. (1965), *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach*, The MacMillan Publisher, London. P. 47.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

identification with a group include: (a) “unique cultural traits” such as language, clothing, and religious practices (b) a sense of community (c) a feeling of ethnocentrism (d) ascribed membership from birth, and (e) “territoriality” or the tendency to occupy a distinct geographical area by choice and/or for self-protection.¹⁹⁵

The second observation can be located within the given characteristics, or cultural traits which distinguishes one ethnic group from other ethnic groups. At this point, the individual and the group find expression within these identity traits to assert social, economic and political inclusion in the larger multi-ethnic society.¹⁹⁶ Emphasis here is on the use of ethnic consciousness to define “in-group and out-group relations” and could be situated within the context of the culture of a people.¹⁹⁷

One would agree that ethnicity/ethnic politics is usually intense in countries where there are many different groups or tribes and have unequal sizes and unequal development. An example is the case of Nigeria where certain minority tribes are left out of the developmental plans of the government because they have no access to resources and power. These minority tribes stimulate, articulate and direct ethnic feelings against the state and its ramification for failure to provide the people with equitable means of livelihood. This means that the tense nature of ethnicity in divided countries like Nigeria could generate into ‘ethnocentrism’ or ‘ethnic nationalism’ which supersede national identity.¹⁹⁸ The danger is that this often breeds anger and resentment towards the government and could transform into armed struggle. Nigeria with so many ethnic, religious and sectional groups paint the picture of a potentially vulnerable society to conflicts.¹⁹⁹

Ethnicity has continued to define and characterize party politics in post independent Nigeria. On a practical reality, most Nigerians vote for leaders based on ethnic affiliation and this can have significant effect on the electoral outcomes in Nigeria. According to Horowitz (1994),

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Giddens, A. (1971), *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writing of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom. P. 389.

¹⁹⁷ Osaghae, E. E. (1994), *Ethnicity and its management in Africa: the democratization link*. Malthouse Press Limited, Lagos & Port Harcourt. P. 68.

¹⁹⁸ Osaghae, E. E. (1986), *On the Concept of Ethnic Group in Africa: A Nigerian Case, Plural Societies*, Hague, XVI (2). Pp. 161-173, (P. 162).

¹⁹⁹ Shettima, K. (2012), *North as Hotbed for Conflicts*. In: *National Trail Newspaper*, Lagos. Monday 17-Sunday 23, December. P. 56.

“[I]n severely divided societies, ethnic identity provides clear lines to determine who will be included and who will be excluded.”²⁰⁰ It is understandable that in such societies, majority rule would be a problem, because it permits the domination of one group which is in the majority, over the others. This creates a natural anxiety among the dominated groups, which could develop into ethnic crisis. Indeed, the ties of ethnicity directly or indirectly influences the electoral behaviour in societies that are ethnically divided, which in the long run develops a psychological sense of party loyalty among the people. Thus, casting a vote becomes an expression of ethnic identity.²⁰¹ Although, ethnicity could lead to animosity and violent conflicts when it becomes the focal point of political struggle, it is the opinion of the researcher that ethnic differences are not intrinsically conflictual. They lead to strife only when they are politicized, and it is the elites who politicize ethnicity in their quest for power and political support.

Ethnicity is undoubtedly a very powerful weapon to produce political leaders in Nigeria. As tension and ethnic consciousness becomes very high, people with political motives gradually emerge and insist on fanning members of ethnic identification, these politicians sooner or later gang along ethnic lines to gain cheap popularity and win elections. On the other hand, when elections are lost, these same politicians often rally their subjects and paint electoral failure as ethnic victimization. These people are thus, manipulated into instruments for protests and violence. No democratic system achieves development in an atmosphere of ethnic violence. One observes that different factors are responsible for ethnic violence in Nigeria. The researcher would analyze four of these factors: Poverty, economic marginalization, indigene/settler conflict, and the collapse of social institutions.

1. Poverty: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) painted a vivid report of the poverty in Nigeria in its 1998 Human Development Report. It states that in Nigeria, “life expectancy is 52 years compared to 75 years in developed countries, while one-third of the people live not up to 40years. Infant mortality is 79 out of 1000 births, compared to 10 in

²⁰⁰ Horowitz, D. (1993), *The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict: Democracy in Divided Societies*. In: *Journal of Democracy*. 4 (4), Oct., Pp. 18-38, (P. 18). Available online at: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-challenge-of-ethnic-conflict-democracy-in-divided-societies/>. Retrieved on 04.02.2021. Also, Agbu (2011) wrote extensively on ethnicity and its disadvantages to the political system. Cf. Agbu, O. (2011), *Ethnicity and Democratization in Africa: Challenges for Politics and Development*, Discussion Chapter 62, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2011.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

developed countries, mortality rate of children under five years are stunted due to malnutrition; only 44 percent of adult population are literate; 49 and 70 percent, respectively, have no access to safe portable water in the urban and rural areas; 49 percent have no access to basic health facilities; and 48.5 percent live in poverty compared to 43 percent in 1985.”²⁰² Unfortunately, between 1998 and 2022, the situation has worsened with the ever increasing cost of living.

It is sad to note that Nigeria is scored low in terms of human development despite all its abundant human and natural resources. The huge income from the sale of crude oil is an added advantage. Unfortunately, many still live in poverty and “this is considered as one of the major causes of ethnic crises in Nigeria.”²⁰³ This is because a lot of youths who engage in ethno-religious violence are usually not meaningfully engaged through the provision of employments and opportunities for capacity building and development.”²⁰⁴ Such poor and hungry youths become vulnerable instruments in the hands of mischievous leaders for selfish aims.

2. Economic Marginalization: The constant violent struggles, killings and insecurity attributed to the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People MOSOP, and the Indigenous People of Biafra IPOB, are reactions to decades of exploitation by foreign multi/national oil companies, environmental degradation and marginalisation.²⁰⁵ Although, the leader of the MOSOP, Ken-Saro Wiwa was executed by the Military in 1995, “the Ogoni people continued with their request through violent means by the kidnapping of many foreign workers of the oil Companies.”²⁰⁶

3. Indigene-Settler Conflict: In many parts of Nigeria especially in the urban areas, there have been various violent conflicts attributed to indigene/settler factor. The crisis of “Kasuwan Magani (1980), Zango Kataf, Gure Kahagu (1984), Kafanchan, Kaduna, Lere (1987), Ilorin,

²⁰² Human Development Report (1998), Published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Oxford University Press, New York. P. 23. Available online at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/259/hdr_1998_en_complete_nostats.pdf.

²⁰³ Zhakom, N. I. (2014), The effects of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on Economic Development of Nigeria: A Case Study of Langtang North L.G.A. Plateau State. P. 32. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/37129241/THE_EFFECTS_OF_ETHNORELIGIOUS_CONFLICTS_ON_ECONOMIC_DEVELOPMENT_OF_NIGERIA_A_CASE_STUDY_OF_LANGTANG_NORTH_L.G.A._-PLATEAU_STATE. Retrieved on 25.05.2020.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 34.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Jere (1987), Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi (1991), Zango Kataf (1992), Tiv and Idoma (1993)”,²⁰⁷ are all practical examples of indigene/settler conflicts. These conflicts often start as minor misunderstandings and later generate into a full-blown conflict spreading to other villages.

An example is the Yelwa crisis of 2004, between the indigenes of Yelwa community and the Hausa-Fulani settlers. Kaigama (2012) in his attempt to find out the causes of the 2004 Yelwa massacre stated that “Major disagreements over land, cattle and traditional rulership have been at the roots of the disaffection, precipitating serious crises. The Tarok and the Goemai claim that Hausa-Fulani migrated to Yelwa area for farming purposes. The indigenes claim that the Hausa-Fulani do not pay proper allegiance to the traditional chiefs and seem to have made Yelwa an Islamic enclave.”²⁰⁸ This resulted in a conflict that claimed many lives and properties.

4. The Collapse of Social Institutions: The social institutions like education, family, religion, law, etc. are important instruments of social control that cares for and guarantees the well-being of every member of the society.²⁰⁹ It is important to note that “the school system in Nigeria today is in shambles and cannot impart even sound knowledge, let alone instil discipline and desired type of morality. The religious institution is also not playing its expected roles, while the law enforcement agents indulge in crimes, demand bribes and collect illegal levies from motorists openly and shamelessly.”²¹⁰ The malfunctioning of such important institutions like education, has led to increased number of ignorant and unemployed youths, thuggery, robbery, ethnic and communal conflicts in Nigeria. Incidentally, these vices are predominant among youths. An important question at this point would be, what is the option available for the youth in the political system?

2.4 Option for the Youth

The youth stage is located between the period of childhood and adulthood.²¹¹ They are considered as a set of young, spirited, and lively individuals with great vitality and zeal for getting things done. “[T]he African Youth Charter of 2006 defines youth as persons between

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ Kaigama, I. A. (2012), *Peace, Not War: A decade on Interventions in the Plateau State Crises (2001-2011)*: Hamtul Press Ltd, Bisichi-Jos, Plateau. P. 58.

²⁰⁹ Zhakom, N. I. (2014), *Op. cit.* P. 37.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ezekwu, A. (2014), *Crisis of Morality Among Youths; with practical stories.* De-Verge Agencies Limited, Enugu. P. 8.

the ages of 15 and 35 years. On a similar basis, Nigeria's 2009 National Youth Policy chronologically defined youth as persons of age 18 to 35 years."²¹² It is my opinion that the age of 35 is very high for a youth. In the developed countries, such age would be considered as young adults. In Nigeria, this age bracket of 15-35 is regarded as adolescent period. However, the age of 35 marks the end of childhood and ushers one into adulthood.²¹³ According to the United Nations, youths are people within "the age range 15 to 24 years, but this age bracket is largely considered as too narrow for countries in Africa, given their political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances."²¹⁴

In the statistics of 2012 undertaken by the National Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development and the National Baseline Youth Survey, the population of Nigerian youths was estimated as 64.1 million.²¹⁵ Also, in 2019 the United Nations estimated of the world's population of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years as 1.2 billion. This indicates that one in every six persons is a youth. The number of youths in the world is projected to grow by 7 per cent to 1.3 billion by 2030."²¹⁶ Specifically, Nigeria has "the largest populations of youth in the world, comprising 33,652,424 Youths."²¹⁷ As a result, Nigeria has one of the most treasured and most enviable assets in the world.²¹⁸ This demographic strength is enough to instigate political change and to determine the direction of policies and socio-political discourse and outcomes of democratic projects in Nigeria.²¹⁹ The

²¹² National Youth Policy (2019), Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ministry of Youth and Sports Development 2019 Edition. P. 24. Available online at: <https://ndlink.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/National-Youth-Policy-2019-2023-Nigeria.pdf>. Retrieved on 01.12.2020.

²¹³ Ezekwu, A. (2014), Op. cit. P. 8.

²¹⁴ National Youth Policy (2019), Op. cit. P. 24.

²¹⁵ National Youth Policy (2019), Op. cit. P. 26.

²¹⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019), World Population Prospects 2019, International Youth Day, August 12. Online Edition. Rev. 1. Available online at: <https://population.un.org/wpp>. Retrieved on 12.12.2020.

²¹⁷ National Youth Policy (2019), Op. cit. P. 24.

²¹⁸ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), Youth and political change in Nigeria: Historical note and critical discourse. *AFFRIKA: In: Journal of Politics, Economics and Society*, 6 (2), December. Pp. 119-137, (P. 120). Available online at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317717969_Youth_and_political_change_in_Nigeria_Historical_note_and_critical_discourse. Retrieved on 12.02.2021.

solution in my opinion is the active integration of the youths in politics for a proper political change and nation building.

2.4.1 Youth in Nation Building

The role of youth in nation building has become a topical issue in academic discourses. Scholars, commentators and policy makers have tended to support the argument that youth occupy important position within the structure of any society and are important players in national development and nation building. “The relevance of the youths to the development of any society is beyond contest. It is the segment of the population that keeps all other segments of any society going. And across time and space, no society had ever been created nor attained development without the glorious and heroic contributions of its youths.”²²⁰ The history of Nigeria confirms the assertion that young people are the custodians of change. Prior to 1960, the Nigerian youths have been the prime agents of change and are usually the most affected by such changes. This is because the youth constitute an overwhelming majority of the working/active population of Nigeria.²²¹

“The political culture and values predominant amongst the youth in this epoch were such ideals that informed the right political attitude and behaviours like tolerance, patience, patriotism, the spirit of togetherness and general good conducts exhibited by the youths in the political space. These were the hallmarks of the Nigerian youth.”²²² Umar and Danjuma (2008) also agreed that the Nigerian youths played important roles in the country’s political space in the colonial era before the independence.²²³ This goes back to the period when the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was founded in 1936 by J. C. Vaughau, H. O. Davies, Kofo Abayomi and

²²⁰ Akinrinde, O. & Bolaji, O. (2020), *The Nigerian Political Culture and Youths' Participation in Grassroots Politics: A Theoretical Discourse*. Pp. 697-712, (P. 698). Available online at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340629134_The_Nigerian_Political_Culture_and_Youths'_Participati_on_in_Grassroots_Politics_A_Theoretical_Discourse. Retrieved on 02.12.2020.

²²¹ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), *Op. cit.* P. 120.

²²² Akinrinde, O. & Bolaji, O. (2020), *Op. cit.* P. 703.

²²³ Umar, M. Z. & Danjuma, I. A. (2008), *The youth, political violence and prospect for democratic deepening in Nigeria. A Paper Presented at the International Conference on Nigerian Youth, Political Participation and National development, August 5-6. Centre for Democratic Research and Training (CDRAT) Mambayya House Bayero University, Kano. P. 4.*

others.²²⁴ Indeed, NYM was the first political party with national outlook²²⁵ and with a major aim to foster political advancement and enhance socio-economic well-being of Nigerians.²²⁶ It is noteworthy that the vibrant figures in all the parties were mostly youths who later became the nationalists that fought for independence. The youths such as Anthony Enahoro, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa, Ahmadu Bello were the vibrant figures who pioneered Nigeria's independence. For instance, late Anthony Enahoro (1923 - 2010) was less than 30 years old when he moved the abortive motion for Nigeria's independence in 1953 and when he later served as Federal Commissioner for Information.²²⁷

It is relevant to note that, "the increased level of activism, and the nationalistic drive as well as the patriotism, unity of purpose, constructive criticism, sense of public and societal duty exhibited by the Nigerian Youth at the colonial times, which as a consequence, ultimately led to Nigeria's independence were basically the reflections of the political culture and value of self-government, nationalism, selfless and disciplined politics that the youth were indoctrinated with in Nigeria's colonial epoch through the agents of socialization, notably the mass media."²²⁸

In the immediate post-independence era, the youth also played significant roles in national development. This was especially the youths who took over the government from the colonialists. This period was remarkable in the history of Nigeria.²²⁹ At a critical period in the history of Nigeria, General Yakubu Gowon born in 1934 became the head of state in 1966 at the youthful age of 32.²³⁰ Shortly before the second republic, the "youthful" good leadership of Gen. Murtala Mohammed (1938 - 1976) who became president at the age of 38 years is still part of the great history of Nigeria.²³¹ Sadly, the Second Republic marked the beginning of the decline in youth participation in Nigerian politics because of their new role.²³²

²²⁴ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), Op. cit. Pp. 120.

²²⁵ Nnoli, O. (1980), Op. cit. P. 5.

²²⁶ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), P. 125.

²²⁷ Ibid. P. 126.

²²⁸ Akinrinde, O. & Bolaji, O. (2020), P. 704.

²²⁹ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016). P. 126.

²³⁰ Padoe, G. R. (1980), Nigeria's Return to Civilian Rule: An Assessment of corrective Military Government. *Scientia Militaria*, South African Journal of Military Studies, 10 (3). Pp. 28-39, (P. 33). Available online at: <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za>. Retrieved on 11.02.2021.

²³¹ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016). P. 126.

²³² Umar, M. Z. & Danjuma, I. A. (2008), Op. cit. P.6.

It was observed that the roles of the youth were relegated to the creation of “youth wings” in political parties.²³³ Umar and Danjuma (2006) observed that “[...]as the country’s political process especially electoral contest became progressively mired in heightened conflict and chaos, the role of the youth also took on a new dimension, with political parties recruiting and maintaining... youth as political thugs [...]”²³⁴

2.4.2 The Youth and Political Participation

Political change is a systematic transformation in political setting. There are various dimensions to the notion of political change. Although political instability has been linked to political change, it is important to note that change is also embedded in political stability.²³⁵ Every political order requires dynamism. The dynamic aspect of the polity may be positive or negative or described as advancement or regression.²³⁶ While the youth have always been instrumental to political change, they have often been confronted with dashed hopes/aspirations. The average age of the Nigeria cabinet is usually over 50 – with a substantial number in their 60s and a few in their 70s. For instance, between the years of 1999 and 2016 [up till 2020], no minister of youth has been a youth.²³⁷ The Nigerian youths want to be the leaders of today not tomorrow, to channel the course of development.²³⁸ The human resource, such as youth population, constitutes vital assets for the achievement of developmental goals in Nigeria.²³⁹ Indeed, the role of youths in the creation, sustenance and development of every society is invaluable.

The option for Nigeria to succeed lies in the hands of the youths. The country needs to make a choice between success and failure, and this choice rests on Nigeria's ability to harness the power of its single greatest asset: not oil, but youth. This calls for the need for a political change in the direction of youths. For instance, the history of youth involvement in Nigerian politics is gradually moving from the forefront to the backstage of politics. This is perpetuated by circulation of power among the older generation. The political system is filled with a lineage of political actors that have been in power from 1960 to the current Buhari administration. For

²³³ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016). P. 126.

²³⁴ Umar, M. Z. & Danjuma, I. A. (2008). P.6.

²³⁵ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016). P. 125.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid. P. 128.

²³⁸ Ibid. P. 134.

²³⁹ Ibid.

example, the current President, Muhammadu Buhari was a minister in the second republic, a governor in the era of military rule, a Head of State, and now re-elected as president after 30 years of his first tenure as a Head of State.²⁴⁰

Although huge population of youth in Nigeria signifies a great asset for a socio-political transformation within a democratic space, the challenges of negative politics have tended to inhibit active participation of Nigerian youth in economic and political transformation agenda.²⁴¹ These challenges are gradually becoming the new political culture. Arazeem (2005) rightly described the challenges as “the political culture of violence, money politics, electoral manipulation, ethnic politics, vote buying, vote selling, political assassinations, winner-takes-all-syndrome, win-at-all-cost syndrome and God-fatherism among others have become the enduring norms in grassroots politics and Nigeria's body polity as a whole.”²⁴²

This negative politics is fuelled by the fact that Nigerian universities produce thousands of graduates every year without the government taking the responsibility of creating the corresponding jobs or the trainings corresponding to the necessities in the labour market. This is also worsened by the growing general desire to ‘get rich quick’. This attitude may have prevented inventiveness. Therefore, some of the youths engage in prostitution, drug peddling and other illicit acts.²⁴³ Kidnapping, touting, terrorism, political violence are some of the emerging businesses among some of the Nigerian youth. Such youths lack the patience to engage themselves in grassroot politics and grow to the national level. This attitude would negatively affect the development of grassroots politics in Nigeria.

Sadly, the most disturbing threat to democratic stability is the involvement of youths in electoral violence. Different youth associations are often employed by the political class to perpetuate violence in various regions of Nigeria at the slightest provocation. The “area boys” of southwest, the militants of south-south, “alahie boys or agbero” of south-east, “Yan Daba” or “Yan Kalare” or “sara-suka” in the north are examples of the frightening associational life among youths. Expectedly, the rapid growth of youth unable to find a gainful employment, may partly explain the series of unrest in Nigeria.²⁴⁴ In view of this, the government of Nigeria,

²⁴⁰ Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), Op. cit. P. 128.

²⁴¹ Ibid. P. 132.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid. P. 130.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. P. 128.

especially at the Federal level, established different agencies and programs aimed at improving the lot of youth in Nigeria. Among these are the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP).²⁴⁵ Unfortunately, these agencies have become avenues for embezzlement, nepotism and the settlement of party loyalists as directors or members of the board with little or no experience.

According to the National Youth Policy (2019), “Young people are the most important and valuable resource of the nation, and strategic investment in their education, health, security, and overall development carries the potential for demographic dividends. As such, the government shall recognize and harness the needs, interests, issues, aspirations, ideas and capacities of young people and youth, and make appropriate provisions for their optimal growth and development.”²⁴⁶ It is painful to note that “[a]n estimated ten million out of the 30 million school-aged children are not enrolled in school in Nigeria. The National Youth Survey conducted in 2012 indicated that 17.5 percent of youth have never been in school and that a higher proportion of male youth (51.5 percent) attend formal school compared to females (48.5 percent).”²⁴⁷ This calls for action in five key areas;

- **1.** “Quality education and skills development, opportunities for productive development and successful entrepreneurship.
- **2.** Appropriate health systems and accessible health care.
- **3.** Inclusiveness and equal opportunities for every youth in the country, political process and in governance at all levels to their ability and experience.
- **4.** Promotion and protection of fundamental human rights of every youth, security of lives and properties.
- **5.** Co-operation and collaboration through the enhancement of effective synergy among all stakeholders and youth bodies.”²⁴⁸

Therefore, it is my opinion that young people should be encouraged to participate in politics. The youths need to be directed on the paths of getting engaged in the society. As young people,

²⁴⁵ Ibid. P. 133.

²⁴⁶ National Youth Policy (2019), Op. cit. P. 31.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 24.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. Pp. 93-94.

they should be encouraged to take part in students' union meetings and contribute to discussions that concern the school. Also, political education should be taken seriously in schools to expose them to the seriousness of political leadership. It is important to create spaces of dialogue for the youths where they could be free to express their grievances, create and discuss new ideas. This would help in curbing electoral, ethnic and religious violence. The government should involve young people in all decisions and projects that concern them. Indeed, no youth project should be initiated without youth participation.

2.5 A Summary of Chapter Two

In this chapter, the researcher analysed the political system in Nigeria with focus on the political development through pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Attention was paid to federalism as a democratic system and the factors affecting the democratic system; corruption, electoral fraud/violence and ethnicity. Some factors responsible for ethnic violence were also highlighted. The chapter was concluded with an analysis on the option for the youth and the need for active participation of the Nigerian youths in political decisions and policies.

However, it is the opinion of the researcher that the democratic system is not the problem. The actual problem is the people, especially the elites, who are drivers of public psyche. The youths are often manipulated and divided along the lines of ethnic and religious differences. Electoral violence does not just destroy the people, but it also destroys the nation. The state becomes backward, and this affects even the economy. Hence, ethnicity and religion must be de-emphasized in all affairs of the country and true federalism should be practiced for Nigeria to attain a commendable level of political growth and development. This is very important for the post colonial Nigeria, especially as it concerns the election of leaders for different political positions. The credibility of the system is as important as the choice of candidates to be chosen by the electorates. This choice should not be influenced by religion or ethnicity, hence, the importance of political awareness and education especially for the youths.

Chapter Three: The Role of the Military

The democratic system had collapsed after the military coup of 1966. Nigeria has never recovered from the devastating effects of the military rule and the Biafra civil war of 1967-1970. The military leaders drifted the country away from its democratic system of true federalism into unitary system of government for their own selfish reasons. The constitution was abandoned and new constitutions written at different periods to suite the military leaders. This only led the country on the part of systemic collapse.

Within this period, the challenges of federalism that was discussed in the last chapter became more obvious as ethnic minorities in Nigeria intensified their struggles against perceived injustices meted out on them by ethnic majorities. This resulted to dozens of political violence and the inevitable military intervention of 1966.²⁴⁹ In this chapter, it is the intention of the researcher to trace the reasons for the collapse of democracy in Nigeria, only six years after gaining her independence from the British rulers and how the intervention of the military into the political system further contributed to the structural and institutional failure. The characteristics of the military and the role religion played in the military regimes, ending with the eventual return to democracy and the challenges faced by the different democratic governments up to the fourth period known as the fourth republic shall also be analysed.

3.1 The Military in Nigerian Politics

The genesis of the military into politics in Nigeria and most African countries could be traced to the way the colonial rulers granted independence to most African countries. In Latin American countries, independence was acquired through protracted wars. But in most African countries, independence was granted through constitutional negotiations. This peaceful transfer of power was an advantage to political system. One would understand political system to mean stakeholders or key players in the political arena like the religious groups, civil society organizations, the military, etc. The military had more advantage and the interest in political power, which they utilized when the opportunity came.

The Military often refer to themselves as “Constitutional Caretakers”²⁵⁰ whenever they take over political power in developing societies. The army often steps in to take political action in

²⁴⁹ Ademoyega, A. (1981), *Why we struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup*. Evans Printers, Ibadan. The details of the preceding violence that resulted in the coup were discussed from Pp. 15-22.

²⁵⁰ Von der Mehden, F. R. (1964), *Politics of the Developing Nations*. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey. P. 97.

moments of crisis, confusion or corruption that is perceived to be paralyzing the political institutions, to carry out what it believes to be necessary political intervention. The genesis of the Military in Nigerian politics was on the 15th of January 1966, when a section of the army conducted a coup, abducted and killed the federal Prime Minister, Finance Minister and several other senior political office holders and military officers, in an attempted coup d'état or "military revolution"²⁵¹ as the coup plotters termed their action. The military came into power and suspended the popular participation of the civilians in the political affairs because in the military hierarchy of authority, the Head of State appoints all the state governors. The emphasis in this situation is on hierarchical authority and minimum accountability to the people. Also, the chain of command in all military organizations is hierarchically arranged. Command, obedience and respect are not based on character or place of primary assignment but on seniority in rank.²⁵² This hierarchical arrangement consequently affects the character of the military regime.

3.1.1 Characteristics of the Military

The problems that lead to military intervention often remain long after the military has handed over to a civilian government. Such problems like poor economy, corruption, unemployment, poverty, apathy to work and laziness in the civil service, civil unrest and unstable political situation, are more likely to be compounded by the inexperience of the military officers.²⁵³ A brief look into the characteristic of the military government would help us to understand why the problems are rarely solved leaving the democratic structures/institutions further destroyed.

²⁵¹ The officers who planned the coup considered their action a revolution. See: Madiebo, A. A. (1980), *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. At the time of the coup, it was also widely viewed as a "military revolution" which aimed to establish a "revolutionary regime". See: Siollun, M. (2009), *Op. cit.* Pp. 31, 55, and 70. See also Nnamdi Azikiwe's (Nigeria's deposed president who was abroad on medical treatment when the first military coup/revolution happened) statement commenting on the coup by referring to it as a "violent revolution": Siollun (2009), P. 71. Also, the Federal Military Government's "Supremacy Decree" of 1970 which explicitly refers to the coup as a "military revolution which took place on January 15, 1966." The supremacy decree provided the legal underpinnings for the three military regimes (Aguyi Ironsi, January-July 1966; Gowon, August 1966-July 1975; Murtala/Obasanjo, July 1975-October 1979) which followed the failed January 15, 1966, coup d'état. See: Siollun (2009), P. 74.

²⁵² Ndoj, C. A. (1997), *The Military and Politics in Nigeria*. Achugo Publications Limited, Owerri. P. 28.

²⁵³ Okran, A. K. (1977), *Politics of the Sword. A Personal Memoir on Military*. Rex Collins Ltd. London. P. 12.

3.1.1.1 Suspension of the Constitution

There was usually a suspension of the constitution of the country by the military. This is usually announced by the soldiers during the coup. For instance, the announcement of the first Nigerian military coup over the radio summarizes this point; “In the name of the Supreme Council of the revolution of Nigeria, the constitution is suspended and the legal government and elected assembly are hereby dissolved. All political, cultural, tribal and trade union activities together with all demonstrations, and all unauthorized gatherings, [...] are banned until further notice.”²⁵⁴ This is equivalent to setting the progress of the country in a backward motion.

3.1.1.2 It is Dictatorial

The military government is not a democratic government. The Commander in chief has no regard for due process of law. The decrees of the Head of State were always obeyed and the Judiciary had little or no power because they controlled the Judiciary. Thus, the head of state interferes with judicial proceedings and cases are tried in Kangaroo courts. The principle of “Rule of Law” is not observed in most military regimes.²⁵⁵ In the case where their dictatorial tendency is challenged in court, the head of state enacts a decree to override the court ruling.

3.1.1.3 There is Centralized Government

The military administration usually operates a unitary system of government. This is because the military structure is hierarchical and obedience to higher commands is considered fundamentally important.²⁵⁶ There is no separation of powers among the various arms of government since the legislative arm is disbanded. The soldiers, with little or no experience become the law makers, enacting decrees and edicts to aid them in policy execution. The people are not consulted on policies that concern them and the wish of the Head of State is considered as the wish of the people even when it is contrary to their development and well-being.

3.1.1.4 Intolerant to Criticisms

Critics of the military regimes are regarded as opposition and “subversive elements.”²⁵⁷ Such critics are often arrested and detained without trial. Journalists and news media had no freedom of expression under the military regime of Gen. Buhari. Some University lecturers were

²⁵⁴ Ojiakor, J. O. (1981), *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, and.....* Africana Educational Publishers, Onitsha. P. 224.

²⁵⁵ Ndoh, C. A. (1997), *Op. cit.* P. 20.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

dismissed, and others detained for criticizing the military regime. In some cases, soldiers were sent to monitor private activities of certain individuals. An example is the case of Fela Kuti the popular Nigerian musician who was considered as Buhari's worst critic. Fela was arrested 451 times in 1984 alone.²⁵⁸ Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested by Gen. Abacha for protesting the oil spillage and destructions in Ogoni land.²⁵⁹ Numerous examples of such intolerance abound.

3.1.1.5 Suspension of all Forms of Political Activities

The military regimes usually dissolve all political parties, national and state assemblies. Every form of political activity was usually suspended and the Supreme Military Council made up of the coup plotters becomes the ruling body to take over the affairs of the nation.²⁶⁰ All the country's entry points would be temporarily closed and all former political office holders are often branded as corrupt. Thus, the former civilian leaders are arrested and tried in Kangaroo military courts and almost certainly convicted and sent to jail.

3.1.2 The Military and Religious Politics

The religious sector has not been spared militarism just like in the areas of economics, social well-being and politics. It is the intention of the researcher here to seek the involvement of the military regimes in what could be considered as religious politicking, manipulation, meddlesomeness and abdication of powers and functions in the face of religious threat to the polity. The question here is whether the military has anything to do with religion since the function of the army is to protect the country and its citizens from internal and external aggression. The Military being a component of the society, is only conforming and following the line of the other sectors of the Nigerian society in which religion has suddenly emerged as a dominant factor to be reckoned with in almost every affair of the nation.

Religion played an important role during the regime of Gen. Obasanjo in 1976. When Obasanjo took over as head of state, there were other very senior officers following him like Lt. Gen.

²⁵⁸ Denselow, R. (2015), Nigeria's New President Muhammadu Buhari, the man who jailed Fela Kuti. In: The Guardian Online Newspaper. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/apr/01/nigerias-new-president-muhammadu-buhari-is-the-man-who-put-fela-kuti-in-jail>. Retrieved on 25.10.2020.

²⁵⁹ Kriesch, A. (2015), Why Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed. In: DW Online, Africa. 09 November. No page. Available online at: <https://www.dw.com/en/why-nigerian-activist-ken-saro-wiwa-was-executed/a-18837442> Retrieved on 25.10.2020.

²⁶⁰ Ndoh, C. A. (1997), Op. cit. P. 21.

Danjuma but he chose Lt. Col. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and promoted him to Brigadier and made him his second in command, the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters.²⁶¹ When Obasanjo was asked why he made such a decision, his response was that he considered it important to appoint a northern Muslim as his deputy since he himself and Danjuma were Christians.²⁶²

The regime of Gen. Babangida could be described as a regime of religious controversies. He was first accused by the Muslim North, of favouring the Christian South with his appointments. His deputy (Ebitu Ukiwe) was Chief of General Staff and a Christian, his foreign Minister, the Internal Affairs Minister, the Minister for Information, were all Christians from the South. Babangida's status as a Muslim was questioned. According to Nzeribe (1998), Gen. Babangida "[...] had to recognize that even within his military constituency, he has to establish his credibility as both a northerner and an authentic Muslim. He was forced by this reality to make a gesture of reassurance of his religion and origin."²⁶³ The first of this reassurance came in the form of his secret admission of Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). This sparked off a chain of reactions from the Christians who saw such a move as a move to declare Nigeria an Islamic State. This action generated a lot of debate between Christians and Muslims who turned their sermons into opportunities for political enlightenments and debates.

The Christians insisted that Nigeria should withdraw from the OIC that the contrary would mean that Nigeria was no more a secular state and that the government itself has by commission favoured one religious group to the detriment of the other. Prominent Muslims like the then Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki and some clerics like Alhaji Abubakar Gumi argued that it was in the best interest of Nigerians that the country formalized its membership of the OIC, since that would enable Nigeria to access low-interest loans and other developmental aids provided by the organization for its members through the Islamic Development Bank. After watching the people's outrage, the government came with "a crisis management gimmick" by setting up an advisory committee on how to deal with the situation.²⁶⁴ According to Kukah (1993), the council was not conceived to succeed because government had handpicked the members without reference to the religious groups in the country and not all religious persuasions were represented like the African Traditional Religion and some sects in Islam.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Ndoh, C. A. (1997), *Op. cit.* P. 75.

²⁶² Okele, O. (1992), *Hausa-Fulani Hegemony*. ACENA Publishers, Enugu. P. 89.

²⁶³ Nzeribe, A. (1988), *Nigeria I Believe: A Manifesto for the Third Republic*. Kilimanjaro, London. P. 59.

²⁶⁴ Kukah, M. H. (1993), *Op. cit.* P. 236.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* P. 234.

Above all, the government promulgated a decree where it reserved the right to appoint the secretary of the council. It became obvious that “both the government and the members of the council were engaged in a theatrical game of deceit.”²⁶⁶ The consequence was an inevitable battle line drawn between the Christians and the Muslims. It was just a matter of time.

It is relevant to note that the military in her search for moral claims to power, resorted to the use of sentiments like religious cleavages as a means of holding to power. This they achieved through the help of individuals both Christians and Muslims who rally round the military leaders as advisers, informers, scholars, or pundits, and manipulate religion to their own benefits. The religions and their adherents can coexist in harmony. The military government did not need religion to govern; all they needed was to maintain justice, equity, fairness and sincerity of purpose. Unfortunately, these were not available as evident in the characteristics.

3.2 Return to Democracy

Military rule is often condemned by world leaders because a generally accepted political system is such a system that is governed, directed and controlled by a civilian political class which has been elected to government by popular choice. With the help of religious groups, civil rights organisations and the international community, the Nigerian military government was under pressure to hand over power to a civilian elected government. This transition happened three different occasions (1979, 1993, & 1999). The researcher shall analyse the different occasions/phases of democratic governance from 1960 to 1999.

There have been four phases of democratically elected government between 1960 and 2019. The first phase lasted for 6 years (1960-1966), the second phase lasted for 4 years (1979-1983), the third phase ended abruptly after the June 12th presidential election that was annulled (1993), and the fourth phase has so far lasted for 23 years (1999-2022).²⁶⁷ These four phases (also referred to as Republics)²⁶⁸ of democratic government are:

- (i) First Republic, from 1960-1966

²⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 236.

²⁶⁷ Falola, T. O. (et al) (2015), Military Regimes 1983-1999. In: Encyclopaedia Britannica. No page. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Military-regimes-1983-99>. Accessed 2 January 2022.

²⁶⁸ These phases are technically referred to as republics because each phase operated with its own republican constitution. The first (phase) republic operated with the 1963 constitution (when Nigeria became a republic), the second republic operated with the 1979 Constitution and the third republic had the 1993 constitution while the fourth republic is operating on the 1999 Constitution.

- (ii) Second Republic, from 1979-1983
- (iii) Third Republic, which was aborted at birth with the annulment of the June 1993 election
- (iv) Fourth Republic, the current democratic order which came into being in 1999-2020.²⁶⁹

The return of democracy after a prolonged military rule should have been the beginning of a new era for the nation if only the politicians that took over the leadership of the long-tortured nation were prepared to tow the part of honesty in governance. A leader that is honest and sincerely committed to the task of rebuilding his country on the path of truth would assemble a cabinet of men and women who would help him achieve his goal. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case with Nigerian leaders. This lack of honesty from the politicians notwithstanding, the four different Republics in the history of Nigeria encountered other different challenges that have not been favourable to the development of the country. The researcher shall briefly analyse these challenges faced by the different republics.

3.2.1 The Challenges of the First Republic

The first Republic was also known as the republican government of Nigeria because it was governed by the first republican constitution. It encountered several challenges like, un-equal regions, ethnicity and tribalism, bribery and corruption, electoral fraud/malpractice, incompetent leadership, etc. These challenges directly or indirectly led to the downfall of the first republic. The researcher shall analyse two of the challenges.

3.2.1.1 Unequal Ethnically Based Regions

A major challenge that affected the First Republic was the political crisis caused by its ethnically based federal regions and the asymmetry in size and power between them. Upon independence, Nigeria practiced a federal system of government.²⁷⁰ Thus, the country was composed of three federating regions: Northern, Eastern and Western regions. These three regions were largely autonomous from the federal centre and were constitutionally very

²⁶⁹ Usman-Janguza, M. (2017), The Fall of the First Republic. In: Academia.Edu. P. 2. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/6198062/The_Fall_of_the_First_Republic. Retrieved on 06/05/2020.

²⁷⁰ This has already been discussed in this work, see Chapter Two (See: 2.3.1).

powerful.²⁷¹ Each of the regions was dominated by one of the country's three largest ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani in the North, Igbo in the East and Yoruba in the West. This tripod ethno-federal arrangement presided over by the dominant ethnic groups placed minorities at a considerable disadvantage in the competition for jobs and resources at the regional level.²⁷² It also allowed the elites of the three largest ethnic groups to monopolize access to federal patronage, which they leveraged for political support.

Of the three regions, the North was much larger demographically and geographically. Consequently, it was allocated more than half the seats in the federal parliament. This meant that a party could potentially govern the country by winning votes from the North alone. This had the double effect of reinforcing the regional outlook of the Hausa-Fulani elites and heightening the fear of northern hegemony amongst Yoruba and Igbo elites. The fact that the country's federal regions broadly coincided with – and reinforced the nation's ethnic cleavages, the exclusion of minorities from each region's political and economic structures, and the structural tensions which resulted from the Northern region being large enough to dominate its two southern counterparts in parliament, set the scene for the political conflicts which led to the fall of the First Republic.²⁷³

3.2.1.2 Ethnic Domination

The third challenge faced by the first republic was the political crisis caused by the fear of ethnic domination. This was the deepest of the structural weaknesses that pulled down the politics of the First Republic and it still plays a negative role in the fourth republic. In the first republic, the Yoruba and Igbo in the two southern regions feared that the Hausa-Fulani would use the North's demographic preponderance to perpetuate northern hegemony and monopolize federal resources for their region; Hausa-Fulani in turn feared that in an open contest, the Yoruba and Igbo, being the more educated, would dominate the political and economic structures of the federation. This led to manipulation of figures that were contradictory.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Osaghae, E. E. (1998), *Cripple Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. C. Hurst & Co. Ltd. U.K. P. 34.

²⁷² Falola, T. (1999), *A History of Nigeria*. Greenwood Press (Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations), Westport. P. 99.

²⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.* The inequality among the ethnic regions was extensively discussed by Falola, T. (1998), *Op. cit.*

²⁷⁴ Sklar, R. L. (1965), *Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3 (2), Aug. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 201-213 (P. 210). Available online at: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Contradictions-in-the-Nigerian-Political-System->

Similarly, within the south the powerful undercurrent of tribalism placed the Yoruba and Igbo elites at logger heads. And within the three regions, minority ethnic groups lived under the suffocating embrace of the three dominant groups. Thus, upon independence in 1960, Nigeria had a tense, fractured and conflicting socio-political landscape which resembled what Crawford (1976) has characterized as a “three-player ethnic game.”²⁷⁵ This ethnically charged political competition for dominance hindered national unity and progress.

3.2.2 The Challenges of the Second Republic

The Second Republic was filled with high expectations following the civil war and the 13 years of military rule. Its initial challenge was the replacement of the regional system of government (that was practiced in the first republic) with the new complex centralised federal system of government. Shortly before the collapse of the second republic, “[t]here were many signs of tension in the country. The Bakalori Project, an irrigation scheme in Sokoto, for example, became the focus of serious unrest in the late 1970s when thousands of farmers protested the loss of their land, and police retaliated by burning villages and killing or wounding hundreds of people.”²⁷⁶ Another incident that generated tension between the ruling party and the opposition party was the widespread dissatisfaction in the areas of security which became apparent with the Maitatsine riot, a Muslim group that sparked religious riots in Kano, Kaduna and Maiduguri between 1980 and 1982. In Kano alone 4,177 people died between December 18 and 29, 1980.²⁷⁷

The creation of more states which was intended to temper sectoral competitions, in fact increased ethnic conflicts, tension and unrest. In 1981, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)

Sklar/900bfea1710e8b43358d15538af9514c1b362bfc. Retrieved on 02.01.2022. Sklar, for example, noted that: “In 1963 there were 2,485,676 pupils in the primary schools of southern Nigeria – i.e., the Eastern, Western, and Midwestern Regions, and the Federal Territory of Lagos – compared with 410,706 in Northern Nigeria. At the secondary school level, including general education, technical, vocational, and teacher training schools, 231,261 pupils were enrolled in southern Nigeria compared with 20,312 in Northern Nigeria.”

²⁷⁵ Crawford, Y. (1976), *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. P. 289.

²⁷⁶ Metz, H. C. (Ed.) (1991), *Nigeria: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the library congress. No page. Available online at: www.countrystudies.us/nigeria/. Retrieved on 12.02.2020. This story of Bakalori Irrigation protest was also narrated in Yahaya, K. M. (2002), *Development and Challenges of Bakolori Irrigation Project in Sokoto State, Nigeria*. In: *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(3). Pp.411-430.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

contributed to the growing tension by embarking on a strike because their salaries were not paid.²⁷⁸ The ethnic, linguistic and regional identities were growing deeper. These three identities; ethnic, linguistic and regional, played important role in the escalation of tension in the second republic. “As the political situation deteriorated, the federal government looked for scapegoats and found them in the large number of foreign workers who had come to Nigeria in response to the jobs created by the oil boom. In the crackdown on illegal immigration, many foreigners were expelled. "By 15 February 1983, at the peak of the expulsion exercise, about one and half million foreigners had officially left the country: 700,000 Ghanaians, 180,000 Nigeriens, 120,000 Cameroonians, 150,000 Chadians, 5,000 Togolese, 5,000 Beninese,"²⁷⁹ and others undocumented.

3.2.3 The Challenges of the Third Republic

The third republic was short-lived and had unique aspects of the transition program. One of such was “the blanket ban placed on all former politicians and top political office holders, especially those found guilty of abuse of office. In effect, the new political order was to be built around the ‘new breed’ politicians, namely, those who supposedly had not been affected by corruption, ethnicity, religious fanaticism, and other vices that characterized the ‘old brigade.’ A corollary of this was the government's opposition to the participation of ideological and religious ‘radicals’ and ‘extremists.’ To participate in the Third Republic, each prospective politician needed a clearance certificate from the National Electoral Commission (NEC).”²⁸⁰ This placed the politicians (especially those considered to be ‘radicals’ and ‘extremists’), at the mercy of NEC which was under the control of the military government. This created more politically ‘experienced’ enemies for the government than friends.

“The second important factor was the decision to create in October 1989 two parties wholly run and financed by the state.”²⁸¹ The Federal government needed a reason to cut off all other existing political parties. Thus, NEC lifted the ban on political activities in May 1989 to allow the registration of new parties and thirteen new political associations/parties applied for registration. However, “the requirements for registration were very strict and almost impossible

²⁷⁸ Gary-Toukara, D. (2015), A Reappraisal of the Expulsion of Illegal Immigrants from Nigeria in 1983. In: *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*. 9 (1). Pp. 25-38, (P. 28).

²⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 30.

²⁸⁰ Metz, H. C. (Ed.) (1991). No page.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

to fulfil in the time allotted: the submission of the names, addresses, and passport photographs of all members of the association in the federation was required to facilitate physical confirmation of the claims by the NEC. This was not a welcomed idea for many who felt caged by the government-controlled parties.”²⁸²

In 1993, presidential election was conducted between the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidate chief M.K.O Abiola (from the South) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) candidate Alhaji Bashir Tofa (from the North). In what most observers considered as the best elections in Nigeria, early results showed that chief M.K.O. Abiola was heading to victory. On June 23, 1993, the military president, Gen. Babangida, annulled the election, throwing Nigeria into turmoil. More than 100 persons were killed in riots before Babangida agreed to hand power to Ernest Shonekan, who was neither unable to reverse Nigeria's growing economic problems or handle the political tension. The country was sliding into chaos when the Defence Minister Gen. Sani Abacha forced Shonekan to resign on November 17, 1993. Thus, the country went back to military rule.²⁸³

3.2.4 The Fourth Republic

Following the sudden death of the dictator, General Sani Abacha on the 8th of June 1998, the Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General (later General) Abdulsalami Abubakar became the Head of State of Nigeria for a very short period, starting from June 09, 1998.²⁸⁴ During his regime, which lasted for 11 months and 19 days, General Abdulsalami Abubakar freed Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (a former Military head of state) and some other political prisoners incarcerated by General Sani Abacha. He also lifted the ban on political parties.

The presidential election of February 27, 1999, saw the AD/APP's Chief Olu Falae and his running mate Umaru Shinkafi pitched against the PDP's flag-bearer, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and his running mate Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. At the end of the election, Chief Olusegun

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ The Guardian News Editor (2021), June 12 presidential election was annulled to prevent coup – Babangida. In: The Guardian Newspaper, August 6. Available online at: <https://guardian.ng/news/june-12-presidential-election-was-annulled-to-prevent-coup-babangida/>. Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

²⁸⁴ Mckenna, A. (2021), Biography of Abdulsalam Abubakar. In: Encyclopaedia Britannica. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abdusalam-Abubakar>. June 9. Retrieved on 27/03/2021.

Obasanjo emerged the winner.²⁸⁵ On the 29th of May 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn-in as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with his Vice, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.²⁸⁶ That was the birth of the fourth republic which eventually brought an end to the 16 years of consecutive military rule in Nigeria.

According to some scholars, the president-elect, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, believed that reforms and privatization was crucial for the resuscitation of the ailing Nigerian economy. “Obasanjo took a bold step in the fight against corruption by initiating anti-corruption strategy involving a wide variety of measures, three of which were particularly outstanding. The first one was the creation of specialized anti-corruption agencies, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in September 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in April 2003, to investigate and prosecute corrupt individuals. The other two included a comprehensive reform of the public service with particular reference to recovering funds stolen and stashed away in Western banks”²⁸⁷ and the reformation of the power sector to improve electricity. Obasanjo was re-elected for another four years.

“In 2007, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, the presidential candidate of the PDP, was declared the winner of the controversial election by the electoral umpire, INEC.”²⁸⁸ Following his inauguration on May 29, 2007, “President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua with strong determination, brought out a 7-point agenda as his goals for the country; 1. Power and energy, 2. Food security, 3. Wealth creation, 4. Transport sector, 5. Land reforms, 6. Security, 7. Education.”²⁸⁹

President Yar'Adua had a great vision for Nigeria which if his administration had actualized, would have made Nigeria one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020.

²⁸⁵ Norimitsu, O. (1999), Former Military Ruler Wins Nigerian Presidential Vote. In: New York Times, March 1. No page. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/01/world/former-military-ruler-wins-nigerian-presidential-vote.html>. Retrieved on 11.05.2020.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Adeola, G. L. & Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2015), The Pursuance of Nigeria’s Domestic and Foreign Policy in the Fourth Republic: Complementarity or Contradiction. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(4). Pp. 434-444. (P. 437).

²⁸⁸ McGreal, C. (2007), Ruling party named winner in disputed Nigerian election. In: *The Guardian Newspaper*, Apr 24. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/24/chrismcgreal.international>. Retrieved on 11.05.2020.

²⁸⁹ Adeola, G. L. & Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2015), *Op. cit.* P. 439.

Unfortunately, President Yar'Adua was unable to actualize his great vision for the country because of his ill-health. On November 23, 2009, he was flown to Saudi Arabia to receive treatment for his Kidney problem. Sadly, he died on May 05, 2010.²⁹⁰ Thus, the Vice president, Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan was sworn-in as the Acting President on May 6, 2010.²⁹¹ President Jonathan expressed the desire to fulfil his immediate boss' economic dream for Nigeria. However, he was often distracted by the menace of the terrorist group, Boko Haram, that became a national security threat to the country. On August 26, 2010, President Jonathan launched the Road Map for Power Sector Reform in Lagos with the primary aim of addressing the erratic power supply in the country.²⁹²

In April 2011, presidential election, Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner of the election by the electoral body INEC and accordingly, sworn-in on May 29, 2011.²⁹³ On January 01, 2012, the Jonathan administration without any palliative measure on ground for the masses, removed fuel subsidy and increased the pump price of petrol from 65 to 141 naira per litre.²⁹⁴ Though arguably, such measure would benefit Nigeria on the long-run vis-à-vis curbing the purchase of smuggled Nigeria's subsidized petroleum in neighbouring countries, the policy however caught many Nigerians unawares because of the timing. The removal of subsidy was also perceived by the opposition as a political fight against some rivals. Thus, some influential parties were determined to end the 16 years of the PDP dominance in Nigeria's nascent democracy.

²⁹⁰ Tran, M. (2010), Nigeria's President Yar'adua Dies. In: The Guardian Newspaper, May 6. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/06/yaradua-nigeri-dies-president> Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

²⁹¹ Karimi, F. & Purefoy, C. (2010), Nigeria swears in acting president. In: CNN World/Africa, May 6. No page. Available online at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/05/06/nigeria.president/index.html>. Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

²⁹² Adeola, G. L. & Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2015). Op. cit. P. 441.

²⁹³ Smith, D. (2010), Goodluck Jonathan takes oath of office and Pays Tribute to Predecessor Umaru Yar'adua who died after long illness. In: The Guardian Newspaper, May 6. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/06/goodluck-jonathan-nigeria-president>. Retrieved on 08.01.2022.

²⁹⁴ Busari, S. (2012), Searing anger as Nigerians protests fuel price increase. In: CNN Online-News, 4th January. No page. Available online at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/03/world/africa/nigeria-fuel-protest/index.html>. Retrieved on 05.05.2020.

In the 2015 presidential election, Muhammadu Buhari of the APC defeated the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP at the polls and was sworn-in with his Vice, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, on May 29, 2015.²⁹⁵ On economic matters, President Buhari like his predecessor, removed the subsidy on fuel in 2016 and increased the price of premium motor spirit in the country to 145 naira per litre.²⁹⁶ Same year, oil price dropped below \$30 per barrel in the volatile international oil market which not only affected the revenue generated by the federal government from the export of crude oil, but also contributed to (not caused) Nigeria's economic recession. On the 5th of September 2017, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced that the country was finally out of recession as Nigeria's GDP grew by 0.55% in the second quarter of the same year.²⁹⁷ In 2019, Buhari was declared the winner of the presidential election by the electoral umpire, INEC.

Rather than maturing with time, the country's fourth democratic experience has continuously shown evidence of a possible relapse into its immediate past autocratic experience. "Troublingly, not only is democracy threatened in the country, but Nigeria's corporate existence is also endangered by the activities of many influential public officials who seem to be above the law. Just as many of these well-connected, elected, and appointed public officials as well as their associates escape reproach for different offenses, many of the ordinary citizens who increasingly perpetrate other forms of crime that further incapacitate the state also escape from the law."²⁹⁸

Four presidents have ruled Nigeria so far in the fourth Republic (1999 - 2020)

1. Olusegun Obasanjo (29 May 1999 – 29 May 2007),

²⁹⁵ Smith, D. (2015), Historic Succession Complete as Buhari is Sworn in as the President of Nigeria. In: The Guardian Newspaper. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/29/historic-succession-complete-buhari-sworn-in-nigerian-president> Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

²⁹⁶ Nwabughio, L. (2016), Why FG increased petrol pump price to N145 per litre - Kachikwu. In: Vanguard News. May 11. No page. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/05/fg-increased-petrol-pump-price-n145-per-litre-kachikwu/>. Retrieved on 13.05.2020.

²⁹⁷ Olawoyin, O. (2017), Nigeria's Economy out of Recession, Statistics Bureau. In: Premium Times Newspaper, September 5. No page. Available online at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/280907-nigerias-economy-out-of-recession-nbs-insists.html>. Retrieved on 13.05.2020.

²⁹⁸ Yagboyaju, D. A. (2011), Nigeria's Fourth Republic and the Challenge of a Faltering Democratization. In: African Studies Quarterly, 12 (3) Summer. Pp. 93-106, (P. 103). Available online at: <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i3a5.pdf>. Retrieved on 14.01.2019.

2. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua (29 May 2007 – 5 May 2010),
3. Goodluck Jonathan (6 May 2010 – 29 May 2015),
4. Muhammadu Buhari (29 May 2015 – till date).

3.3 A Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter, the researcher was able to analyse the role of the military in truncating the constitution and the federal system as practiced by the democratic government from the period of independence. In its characteristic manner, the military suspended the constitution and centralized power in a unitary system. The role religion played in the military regimes especially the membership into the OIC, was also analysed and the eventual return of the country to democratically elected leadership. The factors that affected the democratic governments of the first, second and third republics respectively, were given attention. The fourth republic and the challenges faced by the four different civilian presidents were analysed.

The impact of military rule on the quality of life in Nigeria, can be described as catastrophic.²⁹⁹ They used force to control the people and did little to address their grievances. Several institutions that make for good and effective democratic governance like the Judiciary, police, legislature, etc were abandoned to decay. The exit of the military in 1999 only exposed the collapse of the institutions. Corruption which was usually one of the reasons the military often quotes to justify its intervention, has defied military solution, but has rather been aggravated by the military itself. The increased revenue from oil led to the agricultural sector suffering a near total neglect.³⁰⁰ Consequent upon this neglect, Nigeria moved from being a major exporter of cocoa, palm produce, groundnut, cotton and rubber to an importer of some of these items.

The effect of the oil boom converted the military officers and their bureaucratic aids into very rich property owners through the diversion of the surpluses from the oil revenue for their private and personal benefits.³⁰¹ Social services appeared to be the worst hit under the military. For instance, the educational sector virtually collapsed. Pipe-borne water, regular electricity supply, good roads and housing became a mirage despite the policy of privatization and commercialization.³⁰² This is the practical reality in Nigeria after 62 years of independence. At this point, one is left with the notion that the Nigerian system has suffered from structural and

²⁹⁹ Dudley, B. J. (1982), *An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics*. Lagos: Macmillan. P. 115.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid. P. 116.

³⁰² Ibid.

institutional collapse. The return to democracy in 1999, gave Nigeria and the political leaders an opportunity to rebuild the dilapidation caused by many years of military rule. Our focus in the subsequent chapter shall be on the major religions in Nigeria and their political responsibilities in the political system.

Chapter Four: The Religions and The Political System in Nigeria

In the first three chapters, the researcher made an overview of Nigeria's political system and the factors affecting it. Corruption, ethnicity, electoral/religious violence and non-participation of youths in politics were highlighted as serious factors affecting the political system in Nigeria. The role of the military further plunged the country into institutional collapse. The intention of the researcher in chapters four and five is to focus on the roles of the three major religions in Nigeria, their political responsibilities and the normative basis for development in the context of structural/institutional failure. In this chapter, an analysis of the origin of Christianity, Islam and the African Traditional Religion (ATR) in Nigeria and the relationship between these major religions and politics would be made. The divide between the Christians and the Muslims and the use or misuse of religion would end the chapter.

Religion can be described as the most powerful and pervasive force on Earth.³⁰³ Etymologically, "religion comes from three Latin words namely, Ligare which means to bind, Relegare meaning to unite or link and Religio which stands for relationship."³⁰⁴ These interpretations reveal that the word "religion" refers to an establishment of a relationship between two persons, the human person and the divine person or persons.³⁰⁵ "It is this relationship expressed by man in his belief and worship of the divine person that is known as religion."³⁰⁶ However, it is relevant to note that there are religions which do not have a god as a person to relate with. In polytheism, there are several divine persons.

Characteristically, religion has a significant impact on the political system in many countries of the world significantly in most Muslim-majority countries where various aspects of Sharia Islamic laws are adopted or practiced. The religions are undoubtedly not political institutions in the narrower sense. They are not different political parties. "They play a role in and for politics, which seems to have become less important recently, but they are not part of the political system."³⁰⁷ In Africa, the role of religion differs widely between countries. For

³⁰³ Kimball, C. (2020), *When Religion becomes Evil*. Harper San Francisco, New York. P. 1.

³⁰⁴ Ogedegbe, B. G. & Ukpebor, E. (2012), *Religious Overview of Post-Election in Nigeria: Challenges for National Development*. In: Academia.Edu. P. 3. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/4380746/Religious_Overview_of_Post_Election_in_Nigeria_Challenges_for_National_Development. Retrieved on 07.05.2018.

³⁰⁵ Omoregbe, J. I. (1993), *A Philosophical Look at Religion*. Lagos: JOJA Press Ltd. P. 2.

³⁰⁶ Ogedegbe, B. G. & Ukpebor, E. (2012), P. 3.

³⁰⁷ Kruip, G. (1999), *Op. cit.* §.ii.4. P. 117.

instance, Nigeria is one of the most religious countries in Africa and religion still has a strong impact on politics.³⁰⁸ In Nigeria “religion possesses great functional value and People attach a strong significance to religion.”³⁰⁹ Religiosity plays a central role in the life of the Nigerian. It empowers the average man “to pursue political power [...] that can make him to have firm control of the environment.”³¹⁰

4.1 The Three Major Religions in Nigeria

There are three major religions in Nigeria: Christianity, Islam and the African Traditional Religion.³¹¹ “Historically Islam had an early arrival, while Christianity was a late comer in Nigeria, however, they are the two major religions with African Traditional Religion (ATR) as the third.”³¹² Before the coming of Christianity and Islam, Nigerians practiced their indigenous religion³¹³ which they believed is their source of existence and exist in a psychic form, where they pray and ask for divine provision, guidance and protection.³¹⁴ But with the coming of the Arab traders and the Christian missionaries, this traditional African religion was condemned especially by the Christian missionaries as idolatry³¹⁵ and replaced to a large extent by Christianity and Islam.

However, it is relevant to note that the ratios of adherents of these three major religions in Nigeria are conflicting. According to a survey conducted in 2010, “Nigeria’s population has both Christians and Muslims in a nearly equal ratio, with a small percentage of the population following other religious beliefs such as indigenous faiths and no affiliations at all. Muslims make up 48.8% of the country’s population while Christians add up to 49.3%. The remaining

³⁰⁸ Afolabi, O. (2015), Op. cit. P. 44.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. Pp. 45.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 25.

³¹² Jega, A. D. (2013), The role of Religion and Politics in Nigeria for Sustainable National Development. In: Academia.Edu. P. 9. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/40342464/ISLAMIC_PAPER. Retrieved on 27.10.2019.

³¹³ This is called the African Traditional Religion. This is extensively discussed in the later part of this chapter. (See. 4.1.3.)

³¹⁴ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 9.

³¹⁵ The Christian Missionaries brought the Ten Commandments that condemned the worship of another God as Idolatry. This was employed by the missionaries in relegating the Traditional religious worship as sinfulness. This was extensively discussed by Mbiti, J. S. (1969), African Religions and Philosophy. Heinemann, London.

1.9% is either practitioners of indigenous religions or no affiliations.”³¹⁶ Ugwu (2017) does not agree with the above ratio. He argues that “Islam is the single religion that commands the highest number of followership, making up to some 50 percent of the Nigerian people.”³¹⁷ He went further to state that ‘Christianity controls about 43 percent while the Traditional Religion controls seven percent of the Nigerian population.’³¹⁸ The Nations Encyclopaedia on the same note affirms that “overall statistics indicate that about 50% of the population are Muslim, [...]. About 40% are Christians and about 10% practice traditional African religions or no religion at all.”³¹⁹

These conflicting statistics may not give the actual ratio of the adherents of the three major religions, but they reflect that Islam is the largest religion in Nigeria. It is noteworthy to mention that religious affiliation in Nigeria is strongly related to ethnicity, with rather distinct regional divisions between ethnic groups. The northern states dominated by the Hausa and Fulani groups are predominantly Muslims while the southern ethnic groups have many Christians.

In the southwest, there is no predominant religion. “The Yoruba tribe, which is the majority ethnic group in the southwest practice Christianity, Muslim, and/or the traditional Yoruba religion, which centres on the belief in one supreme god and several lesser deities.”³²⁰ The places of worship have different names for the different religions. For the Muslims, their place of worship is called ‘Mosque’, while the traditional religion calls their place of worship ‘Shrine.’ The Christians on the other part call it ‘church’.

4.1.1. Christianity

The Christian religion can generally be viewed as a religion based on the life, teachings, and miracles of Jesus of Nazareth, known by Christians as the Christ, or "Messiah", who is the focal point of the Christian faith.³²¹ The resurrection of Jesus is the basis for Christianity.³²² Christianity is next to the youngest of the great religious systems in our day which has

³¹⁶ World Atlas, Religious Beliefs in Nigeria. No page. Available online at:

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-nigeria.html>. Retrieved on 03.12.2018.

³¹⁷ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 25.

³¹⁸ Ibid. P. 25.

³¹⁹ The Nations Encyclopaedia, African Religions. No page. Available online at:

<https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-RELIGIONS>. Retrieved on 03.12.2018.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Woodhead, L. (2004), Christianity: A very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, New York. P. 16.

³²² Milman, H. (1887), The History of Christianity. A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York. P. 351.

undergone wide interpretations among mankind.³²³ In a span of more than two thousand years, Christianity has arguably become world-wide, with a more extensive geographic spread and a greater influence upon mankind than any other religion.³²⁴

The history of Christianity in Nigeria can be traced back to the 15th century when the Portuguese arrived at the shores of the region via the Atlantic. According to Anagolu (2019), “The first encounters of the Africans and Nigeria in particular with the western religion, happened in the 15th century when the Portuguese sailors and trade merchants sailed through the Atlantic Ocean for their interest in West African gold.”³²⁵ These Portuguese sailors did this “[...] in order to circumvent the gold middleman-ship of the Muslim kingdoms in the northern Africa and Arabia in the Middle-East.”³²⁶ According to Owolabi (2009), a prominent Portuguese voyager named Henry, “sent out his ships accompanied by some Roman Catholic Missionaries to Nigeria.”³²⁷ Unfortunately, this effort towards the evangelization of Nigeria by the Missionaries did not succeed because the Kings they encountered were more interested in business rather than religion.³²⁸ The Kings placed their priority on the purchase of guns rather than Christianity. The guns were used for the capturing of slaves and in fighting inter-tribal wars.

Hence, the planting of Christianity by the Missionaries failed in the 15th and 16th centuries AD in Nigeria. The essential prerequisite for the success of the missionary activity was considered by Berman (1975) as “the abolition of the slave trade.”³²⁹ Also, the relationship of the Christian faith to the colonialism was not clear for the people. This was because the Christian faith was seen as part of the product of the colonialists. Associated with colonialism was the shameful fact of slave trade. Colonialism and slave trade contributed immensely to discredit the Christian message and perhaps could be said to be some of the main reason for the failure of the 15th

³²³ Kenneth, S. L. (1975), *A History of Christianity: Vol. I: Beginnings to 1500: Revised Edition*. Harper Collins, New York. P. 4.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Anagolu, K. (2019), *Op. cit.* P. 93.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Owolabi, J. (2009), *Christianity in Nigeria*. National Open University of Nigeria, CTH071, Lagos. P. 2. See also Emezie, I. & Ejizu, C. (1985), *Hundred years of Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria, 1885 – 1985. The Nnewi Story. A Historico – Missiological Analysis*. Asele Institute, Anambra. P. XI.

³²⁸ Ibid. P. 2.

³²⁹ Berman, E. (1975), *African Reactions to Missionary Education*. Teachers College Press, New York. P. 80.

century Christianity in Nigeria. Elisabeth Isichei affirms: “The great weakness of the Christian enterprise in black Africa in the middle years was its close association with the slave trade. There was a basic contradiction between converting Africans and purchasing them as slaves.”³³⁰ According to Egbulefu (1990), “The shameful slave trade and the frantic search for wealth that was sometimes hidden behind the real pastoral activities of Christian missionaries of that time, meant that Christianity became interwoven with commerce and consequently compromised her credibility and conditioned the integrity of the Christian. So, the Christian religion was no longer able to impress the people, nor could it put down roots or become embodied in them”³³¹

In 1807, the slave trade was abolished through the help of persons like William Wilberforce, and it was consequently made illegal.³³² The freed slaves were sent to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Thus, more freed slaves of West African ancestry that have been liberated from different parts of Europe, began to settle in Freetown. An Anglican Priest named Rev. Mulvilles, came to Freetown and cared for the spiritual needs of the freed slaves. He preached the gospel to them and prayed for them.³³³ Subsequently, some of the freed slaves became merchants and travelled along the coasts to other parts of Africa into Lagos, Nigeria. They preached the gospel in Lagos, Badagry, Abeokuta, and subsequently in the eastern region like Onitsha, Calabar, etc. many people were consequently converted.³³⁴

However, the present Christianity in Nigeria antedated the Baptist Missionary Society mission in Africa in 1792. According to Isichei (1995), it is a product of the Portuguese missionaries in 15th century. “The first Portuguese ships anchored off the cost of the west-central Africa kingdom of Kongo in 1483. Catholicism survived, in an indigenized form, until the late nineteenth century, when a new wave of missionary activity began. It was introduced into the Niger Delta kingdom of Warri in the 1570s; despite long periods without missionaries, it

³³⁰ Isichei, E. A. (1995), *A History of Christianity in Africa; From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans: Africa World Press, Lawrenceville. P. 71.

³³¹ Egbulefu, J. O. (1990), *The Church in Africa Towards the Third Millennium: The Present Problems of the Young African Church as the Occasion for the Synod*, *Omnis Terra* 24, Enugu. Pp. 211, See also P. 415.

³³² Oldfield, J. (2011), *British Anti-slavery*. In: *BBC History*, December 17. No page. Available online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/antislavery_olshtml, Retrieved on 13.10.2019.

³³³ Owolabi, J. (2009), *Op. cit.* P. 3.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* P. 2.

endured until the mid-eighteenth century.”³³⁵ Makozi (1982) agrees with Isichei that, “Several attempts were made by a number of religious orders and missionary societies to establish the Christian faith in Nigeria since the fifteenth century, with varying degrees of success.”³³⁶

Mbiti (1969) gives a slightly different account of the coming of Christianity to Nigeria. According to him, “The modern expansion of Christianity in Nigeria began with the freed slaves who returned to West Africa towards the end of the 18th century.”³³⁷ Jega (2013) on another note also agrees with Isichei’s account on the date. He stated that, “The visitation of the Roman Catholic missionaries to the coastal areas of the Niger-Delta region in the southern part of Nigeria marked the beginning of Christianity in the 15th century, where few churches were built with reasonable numbers of converts recorded.”³³⁸

However, despite the disparity in the date, missionary opportunities were opened in the 18th century and more missionaries came to Africa from Europe and America with different denomination like, Anglicanism, Catholicism, Lutheranism, Methodism, etc.³³⁹ It is important to note that this spread of Christianity came with its own challenges like means of transport, language, health, hostilities from the villagers, etc. Some of these challenges were contained through the sincere efforts of some missionaries to learn and speak the native languages of the communities to communicate the faith easily. Notable among such missionaries were Rev. J. Schon and Rev. S. A. Crowther who learnt Hausa and Yoruba languages respectively. Rev. Ajayi Crowther later became a bishop of the Anglican church.³⁴⁰

It is relevant to note that the advent of Christianity in Nigeria has had remarkable impact on politics, education, and many other facets of social/cultural life. Western education brought western ideologies of individualism and rationalism which erroneously portrayed Africans as backward and uncivilized. It can be argued that a couple of traditional practices may have been barbaric just as could be found in the history of Europe; however, the advent of Christianity did set biased standards that berated some rich traditional/cultural practices in Nigeria. According to Ekeh (1975), “Missionaries openly told Africans that ancestors-worship was bad

³³⁵ Isichei, E. A. (1995), Op. cit. P. 45.

³³⁶ Makozi, A. O. & Afolabi, G. J. (Eds.) (1982), *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Macmillian Nigeria Publishers Limited, Lagos. P. 1.

³³⁷ Mbiti, J. S. (1969), Op. cit. P. 233.

³³⁸ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 9.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Owolabi, J. (2009), Op. cit. P. 19.

and they should cut themselves loose from their ‘evil’ past and embrace the present in the new symbolisms of Christianity and western culture. Indeed, Africans were virtually told that the colonizers and missionaries came to save them, sometimes despite themselves, from their past.”³⁴¹ A question mark arises at this point on what the missionaries actually meant by ‘evil past’. Was the traditional religion of the Africans evil or was it the ancestors that were evil? However, more Christian churches have continued to spring up in almost every part of the South-Eastern region of Nigeria as more people become converted despite the attendant ethnic cum political challenges.

4.1.1.1 Christian Denominations in Nigeria

The Christian denominations in Nigeria are divided into three, the Catholics, the Traditional Protestants (Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Lutherans, etc) and the Pentecostals (Mountain of Fire, Grace of God, Amazing Love, Dunamis, etc). The initial Christian denominations that came to Nigeria to evangelize the people were Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans and Baptists. The Pentecostals make up the growing number of breakaway Christian churches, which are gaining popularity. These Pentecostal churches often include drumming and dancing in their services, as a way of attracting members. According to Osagie (2015), the ratio of the Christian denominations in Nigeria includes “the Protestants (Anglican 10%, Baptist 8%, Methodist 5%, and Lutheran 5%), the Catholics 15%, the Evangelical Church of West Africa 2%, Jehovah’s Witnesses 5% and a myriad of other local (Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial church of Christ 20%) and Pentecostal churches 30%.”³⁴²

4.1.1.1.1 The Catholic Church

There are many senses in which [Catholic] church could be understood. It as a community of believers, the kingdom of God, the Mystical Body of Christ, etc.³⁴³ The Second Vatican Council recognized two meanings of the church:³⁴⁴ the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’

³⁴¹ Ekeh, P. P. (1975), Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement. In: Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17 (1). Pp. 91-112, (P. 95).

³⁴² Osaghae, E. E. & Rotimi T. S. (2005), A history of identities, violence, and stability in Nigeria. CRISE working paper No. 6. Oxford, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity. P. 11. Available online at: <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/Inequality/wp6.pdf>. Retrieved on 14.07. 2019.

³⁴³ The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994), Part One, Section Two, Chapter 3, Article 9, Paragraph 1&2. Pauline Press. Nairobi, Kenya. Available online at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM. Retrieved on 25.11.2018.

³⁴⁴ My use of the word church in this work refers to the Catholic church.

meanings. ‘Subjectively, the church is viewed in line with the definition of the council of Trent as the union of human beings who are united by the profession of the same Christian faith and participation in the same sacraments under the direction of their lawful pastors, especially of the one representative of Christ on earth, the Bishop of Rome. Objectively, the church is the people of God, chosen by God to be his own and on whom he bestows the special grace of his providence.’³⁴⁵ However, it is relevant to note that this subjective definition specifically excludes all apostates and heretics who do not profess the same Christian faith, Christians who do not receive the same sacraments and schismatics who are not submissive to the church’s lawful pastors under the Pope who is the Bishop of Rome.

Theologically, the church “[...] is a reality beyond the temporal world, the bride of Christ.”³⁴⁶ It is viewed as a Mystery and the Sacrament of salvation, the fullness of Christ, and the body of Christ, a people of God, a Society, and the Kingdom.³⁴⁷ In the same light, the Fathers of the church described it as “[...] temple, house, spouse, flock, vineyard, kingdom, field and net.”³⁴⁸ Sociologically, the church is viewed as the “formal organization that sets out to accomplish specific purpose.”³⁴⁹ It has its own mission, purposes, structures and officers. “In many ways, it parallels other social institutions, like governments or schools.”³⁵⁰

In 1861, the Catholic missionaries returned to Nigeria with the British colonial rulers through the priests from the Society of African Missions (SMA). The Holy Ghost fathers (CSSP) later joined the SMA to share the missionary work. In 1911, the Prefecture of Eastern Nigeria was

³⁴⁵ Gaudium et Spes (1965), Op. cit. Chapter IV, §.43.

³⁴⁶ Kruip, G. (2007), Introduction. In Kruip, G. & Reifeld, H. (Ed.), Church and Civil Society. The Role of Christian Churches in the Emerging Countries of Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa. Druckerei Franz Paffenholz GmbH, Bornheim. Pp. 11-18, (P. 14).

³⁴⁷ Rahner, K. (Ed.) (1991), Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi. Crossroad, N.Y. P. 210.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Van Reken & Calvin, P. (1999), The Church’s Role in the Social Justice. In: Calvin Theological Journal. No. 34. Pp. 198-206, (P. 198).

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

created.³⁵¹ By 1920, different missions had appeared throughout Igboland including the priests from the St. Patrick's Society.³⁵²

After the Nigerian civil war, numerous lay organizations which supplemented the Church's missionary efforts began to emerge, including the St. Anthony's Guild, St. Jude's Society, the Legion of Mary and the Block Rosary Crusade. These lay organizations gave the Church an indigenous, Africanized flavour.³⁵³ In recent years the Church has seen massive growth in Nigeria, because of social services, financial supports, employments, medical services and other developmental projects that the state has failed to provide.

In Nigeria, the Church plays different roles in the lives of the people. It recognizes that she has a role of a shepherd to feed the hungry, care for the sick and fight for the oppressed because many are deprived of the necessities of life. The people are tormented with hunger, disease, injustice and different kinds of misery. Practically, the Catholic Church has made visible efforts to provide hope and assistance to the people through the building of hospitals, schools, CARITAS and other social amenities through different avenues like the Catholic Institute for Development Justice and peace (CIDJAP). The role of CIDJAP in helping to provide development, healthcare, fight for justice and alleviate poverty in the society, shall be discussed in chapter six of this research.

4.1.1.1.2 The Anglican Church

The Church of England is the original church of the Anglican Communion. Although the Anglican church upholds many of the customs of Roman Catholicism, it also embraces fundamental ideas adopted during the Protestant Reformation. The Anglican church in Nigeria (also known as the Church of Nigeria) is the second-largest province in the Anglican Communion, as measured by baptized membership, after the Church of England.³⁵⁴ The

³⁵¹ New Catholic Encyclopedia (2021), Nigeria, The Catholic Church. In: Encyclopedia.com. 28 Dec. Available online at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/nigeria-catholic-church>. Retrieved on 04.01.2022.

³⁵² Barrett, D. B. (et al) (Eds.) (2001), Nigeria. In: World Christian Encyclopedia. Oxford University Press, New York. Pp. 549-555, (P. 549).

³⁵³ Nwaka, C. J. (2013), The Catholic Church, The Nigerian Civil war, and the Beginning of Organized Lay Apostolate Groups Among the Igbos of South-eastern Nigeria, Catholic Historical Review, 99, (1). Catholic University of America, Washington. Pp. 78-95, (P. 79).

³⁵⁴ Kwashi, B. A. (2013), The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). In: The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion. Pp. 165-183 (P. 165). Available online at:

Anglican mission (CMS) was by far the largest and most successful of the Christian missions in what would come to be Nigeria, in part because it was the church of the colonizing state and it granted converts the autonomy to lead their communities. As such, African clergy members were active participants in the early growth of the church.³⁵⁵

According to Kwashi (2013), “Henry Townsend of the CMS left Freetown, Sierra Leone, and landed at Badagry before proceeding to Abeokuta. He was the first missionary in the Yoruba Mission. When he landed, he met the first Methodist missionary to Nigeria, the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, and they celebrated the Eucharist together under a tree on Christmas Day 1842. This is held to mark the establishment of the Anglican Church in Nigeria.”³⁵⁶

Practically, the Anglican church established a chain of mission schools especially in the south, focused on preparing boys to become academically developed and future members of the clergy, and for girls to become responsible housewives and good members of the community. They also introduced other programs to help and support the faithful like social welfare programs, hospitals, secondary schools, literacy courses and setting up cottage industries. “The Vision is clear. In summary, it is to the effect that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) shall be bible-based, spiritually dynamic, united, disciplined; self-supporting, committed to pragmatic evangelism, social welfare and a church that epitomizes the genuine love of Christ.”

4.1.1.1.3 The Methodist Church

In 1893 missionaries of the Primitive Methodist Church arrived from Fernando Po to an island off the southern coast of Lagos in Nigeria. From there the Methodist Church spread to other parts of the country, east of the river Niger and to parts of the north.³⁵⁷ The Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) has been at the forefront of spiritual and social transformation, by spreading spiritual holiness and investing in medical-health services and social-economic welfare of the people. After two decades in Nigeria, the Methodist church established various institutions like the leprosy centre, three mentally ill-destitute centres, and an orphanage centre. These centres

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300821317_The_Church_of_Nigeria_Anglican_Communion.

Retrieved on 04.01.2021.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ World Council of Churches (2021), The Methodist Church Nigeria. No page. Available online at:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/methodist-church-nigeria>. Retrieved on 04.01.2021.

reach out to the rejected and less privileged members of society. They also ensure reintegration of those previously treated as outcast and subjected to various societal abuses.

In the area of health MCN has established the Wesley Guild Hospital and several Methodist hospitals spread over the country which provide good healthcare services in their environments. In addition to all other services MCN has from the beginning placed a very strong emphasis on the need for education. Throughout the country the church has established numerous schools, from kindergarten through primary to senior secondary schools and theological institutions which have produced men and women who have contributed and are still contributing very significantly to all spheres of human endeavour.³⁵⁸

The Methodist missionaries did not just bring the gospel of Christ alone. They established schools alongside the preaching of the gospel, beginning with a nursery school in Badagry in 1842, they proceeded to build a secondary and teachers' training college with aid from overseas churches.³⁵⁹ These schools on the other hand contributed immensely to the education and training of many notable present and past leaders of Nigeria, including Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamidi Azikwe, Chief Alvan Ikoku, etc.³⁶⁰

Indeed, one of the duties of mission schools is to build high moral standards and characters besides giving education which is why most of the people trained by the mission schools had sound moral and capacity development training which stands them out in their various chosen careers.³⁶¹ The achievements of the Methodist Church in Nigeria can be summarized into two, evangelism and social actions. Evangelism is winning people for Christ, linking them with the church and instructing them in the scriptures, while social actions are services which the church renders to the society, such as building or establishing schools, hospitals, clinics and giving employment to people.³⁶²

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Eyoboka, S. (2012), Methodist Church Nigeria: 170 years of impacting Nigeria for God. In: The Vanguard Newspaper, October 14. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/10/methodist-church-nigeria-170-years-of-impacting-nigeria-for-god/>. Retrieved on 04.01.2022.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

4.1.1.1.4 The Pentecostal Church

Pentecostalism is a charismatic Protestant Christian movement that emphasizes a personal encounter with Jesus Christ as savior and healer, with the potential for converts to be “born again” as Christians. Nigerian Pentecostalism emerged in the 1970s as university-educated, charismatic youth began creating their own spaces for worship. Its roots are in the American and British Evangelical and Pentecostal movements of the 1960s, which Nigerians encountered through international studies, Pentecostal outreach, and American televangelism and other Christian media. As such Nigerian Pentecostalism combines elements of African worship while emphasizing its place among transnational Pentecostal networks, which have grown through conversion as well as robust immigration.³⁶³

According to Akinlola (2003), “[t]he new generation churches have evolved aggressive programmes in the form of outreaches, evangelical missions, music and other weapons, mostly targeted at youths, the suburbs and the rural areas, some of which had not heard the gospel of salvation. Economic hardship and ‘quest for quick solution and drama’ have compelled many to seek succour in some of these churches or religious gatherings.”³⁶⁴

In years that followed, some Pentecostal leaders became wealthy themselves as they directed their services to the wealthy, emphasizing a prosperity gospel which holds that faith is the key to prosperity in this world. In so doing these pastors contextualized the privilege of Nigeria’s Christian elite and attracted hundreds of thousands of poor and middle-class Nigerians aspiring to greater wealth.

³⁶³ Harvard Divinity School (2021), Religion and Public Life. No page. Available online at: <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/pentecostalism-nigeria>. Retrieved on 04.01.2021. See also: Ogbu, K. (2010), Sharia and Islam in Nigerian Pentecostal Rhetoric, 1970-2003, The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu, Vol. 3: Religions in Africa: Conflicts, Politics and Social Ethics. Wilhelmina, J. (et al) (Eds.). Trenton: Africa World Press. Pp. 87-105. See also, Marshall, R. (2009), Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

³⁶⁴ Akinlola, P. (2003), Vision of the Church of Nigeria. In: Anglican Internet Archive, June 12. No page. Available online at: <http://www.anglican-nig.org/history.htm> Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

4.1.2 Islam

Islam is arguably the second largest religion in the world after Christianity. According to secular history, the origin of Islam can be traced back to 7th century Saudi Arabia.³⁶⁵ The founder of Islam is Prophet Mohammed (circa 570-632 A.D), whom for the Muslims is considered as the highest prophet.³⁶⁶ According to Nigosian (2004), Mohammad was “a pious, contemplative person. He spent long periods in solitude and meditation, seeking peace and divine revelation, and he was commissioned specifically to propagate God’s message to humanity.”³⁶⁷ Today, around 1.5 billion people worldwide profess Islam and the basis of Islam is the Koran.³⁶⁸ The term Islam literally means "devotion" and "submission to God (Allah) who is one and unique”, while the adherents of Islam are called Muslims. Hence, Muslim means "the one who surrenders," and refers to “the followers of Islam.”³⁶⁹ The Muslim believes that the Quran is the final unaltered revelation from God.³⁷⁰ From the Muslim’s perspective, “those who aspire to the sanctity of life emulate Muhammad, as a spiritual guide and a socio-political leader.”³⁷¹

According to Jega (2013), “[t]he first contact of Nigeria with Islam predates the country’s contact with that of Christianity and European colonialists. This was orchestrated by the trade and commerce interests of the Arabs who first made contacts with the northern part of the continent and the country in particular.”³⁷² According to Isichei (1983), Islam came to northern Nigeria as early as the eleventh century, about 200 years after the beginning of Hausa Kingdom.³⁷³ She narrated that in the middle of the 9th Century, a Mai of Kanem Borno Empire named Umme Jilmi, was converted to Islam by an Islamic Scholar Mohammed B. Mani.

³⁶⁵ Schimmel, A. (et al) (2020), Islam. Encyclopedia Britannica, November 26. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>. Accessed 07.06.2021. No page.

³⁶⁶ Heine, P. (2014), Islam zur Einführung. Lexikon der Religionen. Junius Verlag. No page. Available online at: <https://religion.orf.at/v3/lexikon/stories/2539905/>. Retrieved on 07.06.2021. (The translation is mine).

³⁶⁷ Nigosian, S. A. (2004), Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices. Bloomington: Indiana University. P. 6. Available online at: muse.jhu.edu/book/12997. Retrieved on 07.06.2021.

³⁶⁸ Heine, P. (2014). No page.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Mahdi, M. S. (2021), Islam, Doctrines of the Quran. In: Encyclopedia Britannica. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam/Doctrines-of-the-Qur-an> Retrieved on 06.02.2021. No page.

³⁷¹ Nigosian, S. A. (2004), Op. cit. P. 15.

³⁷² Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 9.

³⁷³ Isichei, E. A. (1983), A History of Nigeria. Longmans, New York. P. 304.

Nwankwor (1989), on the other hand believes that there were some other avenues through which Islam came into Nigeria. One of such avenues was through the Berber Traders who migrated to Borno Empire bringing their religion along.³⁷⁴ Isichei (1983) further narrates that according to Kano Chronicle, Islamic Missionaries first reached Kano and converted the King, in the reign of Yaji dan Tsa Miya (c.1349-1385). In Yaji's time the Wangarawa came from Mele (Mali), bringing the Muhammadan religion. The traditionalists persistently defiled the newly built Mosque until their leader was struck blind. However, traditional religion remained strong in Kano.³⁷⁵ In summary, one would agree that Islam came into Nigeria through trade routes from North Africa.

Islam is traditionally known in Nigeria as a religion of the northern people and was not welcomed in the South.³⁷⁶ It was not considered as a threat by the people in the south until the Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817) in 1804.³⁷⁷ Between 1804 and 1810, Fodio and his followers unleashed a reform movement aimed at bringing the northern region and its populace to the purity of Islamic religion. In six years, the movement was victorious over a very large territory in what is known today as northern Nigeria.³⁷⁸ Islam became well established in the state capitals of the northern region by the sixteenth century, spreading into the countryside and toward the middle belt uplands.

Uthman Dan Fodio wanted to make Islam completely a state religion in the whole of northern region. Fodio was faced between two issues: Islamization of the northern Nigeria and the purification of Islam among the Hausa Muslims who had already embraced the religion but still mixed Islam with their traditional religion.³⁷⁹ Hence, Uthman Dan Fodio directed his holy war against the Hausa Muslim Emirs who were accused of practicing a perverted Islam. This purported purification of Islam continued till the coming of the British who conquered the

³⁷⁴ Nwankwor, R. D. (1989), *Religious Pluralism in Nigeria and the Christian Response*. Academia Alfonsiana, Rome. P. 158.

³⁷⁵ Isichei, E. A. (1983), *Op. cit.* P. 305.

³⁷⁶ Enwerem, I. M. (1995), *Op. cit.* P. 21.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* P. 22.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Jomier, J. (1989), *How to Understand Islam*. Butler & Tanner Ltd, London. P. 32.

Sokoto and Borno Empires respectively in 1902 -1903.³⁸⁰ The whole region was integrated by the British Colony into their colonial empire as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.³⁸¹

The history of Islam in Nigeria has been a progressive one in different aspects with the government at its services. Since after the independence, different administrations have treated the North and South as if they had different constitutions. For instance, some of the northern states implement the sharia law, while the South is administered by the Constitution of the country. Also, the Sharia law does not support the consumption and sale of alcohol in the North by the Muslims, but the same North enjoys the revenue from the taxation on alcohols.

The Muslims today are more organized and the spread of Islam to other parts of Nigeria has been a quiet but continuous movement. It could be said that Islam has become much more missionary than before, forming some voluntary and charitable organizations as the Christian missionaries did in the advent of Christianity in Nigeria. Some of these organizations/brotherhoods include Muslim Students Society (MSS), Muslim Association of Nigeria (MAN), Muslim Lecturers and Administrative Staff of Nigerian Universities (MLASNU), Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), and many others. These organizations were formed with two major intentions: 1. Uniting all Muslims in Nigeria, especially in the North, 2. To bridge the gap between the body of Muslims and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.³⁸²

4.1.2.1 Islamic Brotherhoods in Nigeria

While spreading the Islamic religion in Nigeria, different Islamic movements have sprung up with the hope of establishing an Islamic state in Nigeria. They are commonly referred to as Islamic brotherhoods. These Islamic movements have rooted themselves strongly in African tradition and do not seem about to disappear. They “not only serve to welcome and integrate Muslim migrants to cities far from their homes, but they also minister to the spiritual conditions of the people as they are, offering amulets and other religious remedies against evil spirits,

³⁸⁰ Roman, L. (1997), *Islamic Reform and Political Change; The Example of Abubakar Gumi and the Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria*, in *African Islam and Islam in Africa*. Edited by David Westerland and Eva Rosander. Nordic African Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. P. 287.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid. P. 162.

enemies, sickness, and obstacles to success in life.”³⁸³ It is interesting to note that some leaders of these movements imitate Christian revival services, “with dancing, singing, testimonies and advertisements that people should come and get their miracles.”³⁸⁴ An example is the Maitatsine movement that took root in Kano State and became influential in the 1970s.³⁸⁵

However, while some of these movements are considered as moderates, a few have developed into extremist groups with more sophisticated and radicalized approach. One of such extremist groups is the Boko Haram. The major brotherhoods in Nigeria are: The Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), the Izala³⁸⁶ movement, the Maitatsine movement, the Jama‘at Nasr al-Islam (Organization for the Support of Islamic Faith), the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Muslim Students Society (MSS), the Federation of Muslim Women’s Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), the Islamic Education Trust, the Maitatsine movement, the Boko Haram, etc. Because of their number, I shall only briefly review the major movements which have relevance to the Christian-Muslim relations and the gradual evolution of the Boko Haram sect.

4.1.2.1.1 The Jama‘at Nasr al-Islam (Organization for the Support of Islamic Faith)

The Jama‘at Nasr al-Islam (JNI) was founded in 1962 at Kaduna by Abubakar Gumi as a response to the call by the Premier of Northern Nigeria, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, as a result of the growing rivalry and disunity among the different Muslim groups, to form an organization that would enhance the propagation of Islam as well as unite all the various Muslim groups in the country.³⁸⁷ The vision of Ahmadu Bello was to unite all the Muslims into a formidable political force against the Yoruba in the West and Igbo in the East. It became imperative for the Sardauna to establish this JNI with the basic aim of coordinating their efforts to have a common voice in the country for political force in the country.³⁸⁸ This

³⁸³ Kenny, J. (2000), *West Africa and Islam*. Published by the Association of the Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA). P. 112.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. Pp. 112-113.

³⁸⁶ Izala means People Committed to the Removal of In-novation in Islam.

³⁸⁷ Paden, J. N. (1986), *Ahmadu Bello: Sardauna of Sokoto, Values and Leadership in Nigeria*. Hodder and Stoughton, London. P. 548.

³⁸⁸ Kane, O. (2006), *Political Islam in Nigeria*. In: Michael Broening and Holger Weiss (Hg.), *Politischer Islam in Westafrika: Eine Bestandsaufnahme*. Berlin: LIT. P. 159.

unification of the entire Nigerian Muslims would no doubt guarantee his political position in a federal election.

Thus, the Waziri of Sokoto, was made its first Chairman with the Sardauna himself as the Grand patron. A position he held until his death.³⁸⁹ The organization succeeded in uniting the Muslims in the country to some extent, especially during the lifetime of its founder until the first military coup of 1966. “With local and international support, Muslims were able to reap huge political and educational as well as religious dividends. Ahmadu Bello became a politico-religious icon both locally (to some extent) and internationally through the cross-fertilization of ideas, publication of religious literature, building of mosques and his conversion campaigns.”³⁹⁰

On the other hand, the Yoruba Muslims of western Nigeria were not satisfied with the monopoly of affairs and bias by the Hausa Muslims of the northern Nigeria. As a result, the JNI was not accepted in the west. This problem eventually led to the breakaway of the Yoruba Muslims.³⁹¹ These developments led to the formation of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) as a remedy to gain national acceptance. Today, the JNI has regained its place alongside with the NSCIA and is still an active player in the religious and political life of Nigeria. Its headquarters remains in Kaduna.³⁹²

4.1.2.1.2 The Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN)

Prominent among the Islamic brotherhoods in Nigeria is the group known as Sh’ite or Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN). The Islamic Movement in Nigeria is a Shiite organization reported to be financially and ideologically supported by Iran.³⁹³ This group was the brain of an extremist Malam Ibrahim al-Zakzaky. According to a 2013 report from the Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point, the IMN is considered “Iran’s proxy” by some Iranian officials and has adopted the Iranian government’s anti-American, anti-western, and anti-Israeli

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Nguvugher, C. D. (2010), *Conflicting Christologies in a Context of Conflicts: Jesus, the Isawa, and Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria*. A Doctoral Dissertation. Unpublished. P. 96. Available online at: http://rosdok.uni-rostock.de/file/rosdok_disshab_0000000449/rosdok_derivate_0000004306/Dissertation_Nguvugher_2010.pdf. Retrieved on 08.03.2021.

³⁹¹ For further reading on this topic, see: Paden, J. N. (1986), *Op. cit.* Pp. 548-549, 559, 561.

³⁹² Nguvugher, C. D. (2010), P. 97.

³⁹³ Counter Extremism Project (2019), *Nigeria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism*. No page. Available online at: <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/nigeria>. Retrieved on 0.6.03.2019.

political views.³⁹⁴ Ibrahim al-Zakzakky of Zaria was inspired by the Iranian Ayatollah and the Muslim Brothers of Egypt. Al-Zakzakky was also a strong pillar of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria when he was a student of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He was however, expelled from the University for leading a fundamentalist unrest.³⁹⁵ The Sh'ite sect remains one of the main groups that has the most Islamist agenda in Nigeria. They are opposed to the Nigerian constitution, flag and legal institutions, insisting that only the Sharia laws should be obeyed.³⁹⁶ The greatest desire of the movement is the overthrow of the Nigerian State and its replacement with the Islamic system, a desire its leader claims cannot be achieved through elections or any form of compromise with the unbelievers (kafiri), but only through a revolution.³⁹⁷ More than 30 IMN members were killed in clashes with government forces especially during the IMN's yearly procession held to demonstrate IMN's solidarity with the Palestinian cause in 2014 alone.³⁹⁸ IMN allegedly runs a radio-station, newspaper, and more than 300 Arabic schools in Nigeria. According to Nigerian intelligence, IMN hosts training camps for new recruits across northern Nigeria.³⁹⁹

4.1.2.1.3 The Boko Haram

Boko Haram which means "Westernization is Sacrilege", is an Islamic sectarian movement, founded in north-eastern Nigeria by a Salafist cleric named Muhammed Yusuf in 2002.⁴⁰⁰ The initial aim of the group was to uproot the corruption and injustice in Nigeria, which it blamed on Western influences, and to impose Shari'ah, or Islamic law in the country.⁴⁰¹ According to Danjibo (2009), Boko Haram seeks to rid the country of Western and secular education and to resuscitate the Kanem-Bornu Islamic caliphate that once ruled over modern-day Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon.⁴⁰² Yusuf believed that an imported system of government based on "Western

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Nguvugher, C. D. (2010), Op. cit. P. 87.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Counter Extremism Project (2019), Op. cit. No page.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Augustyn, A. (2021), Boko Haram: Nigerian Islamic group. In: Encyclopaedia Britannica, October 21. No page. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Boko-Haram>. Retrieved on 07.06.2021.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² For further reading on Boko Haram, see: Danjibo, N. D. (2009b), Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The 'Maitatsine' and 'Boko Haram' Crisis in Nigeria," Paper presented at the 2009 IFRA Conference on Conflict and Violence in Zaria, Nigeria. Pp. 1-26.

values” has resulted in ostensible corruption, poverty, unemployment and the continued suppression of “true” Islam in northern part of the country.⁴⁰³ Orthodox Islam according to him (Yusuf Mohammed, leader of the sect) frowns at Western education and working in the civil service because it is sinful. Hence, in his view, all institutions represented by government including security agencies like police, military and other uniformed personnel should be crushed for their aim to be achieved.⁴⁰⁴

Yusuf expressed his ideas as thus, “Western education is the body of knowledge that came to us through European colonialists, and it includes medicine, technology, geography, physics and of course the English language. They can all be used if they do not clash with the teachings of the Prophet Mo-hammed (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and we can teach these subjects to our own children in our own schools, so long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings. If they do, then we should discard them.”⁴⁰⁵

On a different occasion, Yusuf further expressed his dislike for Western education and his willingness to debate with anyone on the matter. He stated that, “We are ready to debate any one on this creed. Western education is destructive. We didn’t say knowledge is bad but that the unbelief inside it is more than its usefulness. I have English books in my possession which I read regularly. I didn’t say English amounts to unbelief, but the unbelief contained therein and the polytheism inside. In the process of becoming educated, you become a mushrik [idolater]. This is our only fear ... Destruction is destruction, whoever it comes from. Because it is the white man that brought it, does it amount to civilization? Yes, our own is traditional, as you call it, but yours is ‘shirkasiation’ (Heretic)”⁴⁰⁶.

These ideas were directly communicated by his followers and spread in Hausa and Kanuri languages in the northern part of Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Kano states through his recorded audiotapes. After a while, Yusuf became more radicalized and began to carry out physical attacks on security agencies and other religious groups like Christianity. The traditional emirs soon became uncomfortable with the Boko Haram sect. Other religious sects and groups in the

⁴⁰³ Ibid. Pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰⁴ Mustapha, A. R. (2009), Boko Haram: Killing in God’s Name. In: Tell Magazine, 10th August. Lagos. P. 34. This thought was also narrated in: Achebe, C. (2012), There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra. Citadel Press, London.

⁴⁰⁵ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 22. This was a recorded debate of Yusuf in 2006.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

region were frequently attacked by Yusuf and his proponents. The Federal government decided to arrest Yusuf and curtail the actions of the sect. However, in a mysterious circumstance, Yusuf was killed by the Nigerian security forces in 2009.⁴⁰⁷ Following severe interventions against his followers and what was perceived by his followers as injustice and extra judicial killing of their leader; a terrorist organization named Boko Haram emerged.

The best approach to understand the ideology and philosophy of the Boko Haram movement is by explaining the two key words, Boko and Haram. In Hausa language, the word boko is an equivocal term which means either book, Western or foreign; while the word haram is an Arabic derivative meaning forbidden, ungodly, or sinful.⁴⁰⁸ If the words are literally pieced together boko haram means book is sinful. But its deeper meaning is that it forbids everything Western and Western education, holding that Western education is sinful, sacrilegious, or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden.⁴⁰⁹ What can be drawn from the above is that the movement is not only characteristically opposed, but outrightly rejects Western education, Western culture and modern science. Alternatively, it embraces and advocates the propagation of and strict adherence to Islam by all and sundry regardless of anyone's personal conviction.

Historically, the disdain towards boko (Western education) arose from its close association and experience with the British colonial leaders and the Christian missionaries. The British had adopted the indirect rule system in northern Nigeria and this suited their (British) colonial educational policy well, as the British had no intention of widespread education anyway. The aim of colonial education, particularly in northern Nigeria, was to maintain the existing status quo by "imparting some literacy to the aristocratic class, to the exclusion of the commoner classes."⁴¹⁰ By the 1930s, colonial education had produced a limited cadre of Western-educated elite, who were conscious of their education and were yearning to play a role in society. Mainly

⁴⁰⁷ Cameron, D. (2009), Mohammed Yusuf's last days. In: The Guardian Newspaper, August 6. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/aug/06/mohammed-yusuf-boko-haram-nigeria>. Retrieved on 29/4/2020. Also see Aljazeera Online news, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2009/07/2009730174233896352.html>.

⁴⁰⁸ Danjibo, N. D. (2009b), Op. cit. P. 7.

⁴⁰⁹ Adesoji, A. (2010), The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria. In: Africa Spectrum, 45 (2). Institute of African Affairs at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. Hamburg University Press. Pp. 95-108, (P. 100).

⁴¹⁰ Tukur, M. M. (1979), "The imposition of British Colonial domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno and the neighbouring states, 1897-1914: A re-interpretation of colonial sources", PhD Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. P. 866.

children of the aristocratic class, the type of education they received was “different from the traditional education in their various societies, and this by itself was enough to mark them out as a group.”⁴¹¹ This new education enabled the children of the privileged wealthy Muslims to climb the social and economic ladder over and above their peers who had only the traditional Quranic education which was a different kind of education.

According to Chouin (2014), “This was the origin of the animosity and distrust between the traditionally educated and the Western-educated elite in northern Nigeria.”⁴¹² However, these educated Muslims were subordinate and loyal to the Europeans; as a result, they were perceived as collaborators by their Quranic-educated fellows. “Thus, the antagonism towards Western education continues in many northern Nigerian communities, which has defied government campaigns for school enrolment to this day. Mohammed Yusuf simply resurrected and built on an existing historical narrative.”⁴¹³

Since 2002, Boko Haram has carried out a regular string of attacks against Nigerian security forces and civilians. The group has killed more than 30,000 people in its effort to establish an Islamic caliphate.⁴¹⁴ Boko Haram gained international notoriety after kidnapping 276 Chibok schoolgirls in April 2014.⁴¹⁵ January 2015, marked Boko Haram’s deadliest attack to date, insurgents slaughtered more than 2,000 people in north-eastern Nigeria.⁴¹⁶ Boko Haram has grown more militant and has developed a reputation for mass violence. In addition to targeting Christians, who represent approximately 50 percent of the Nigerian population, Boko Haram routinely targets Muslim civilians outside of the organization (who are, by virtue of that fact, considered infidels).⁴¹⁷ One important aim of the Boko Haram and other Islamic movements

⁴¹¹ Kwanashie, G. A. (2002), *The making of the North in Nigeria, 1900–1965*. Kaduna: Arewa House. P. 50.

⁴¹² Chouin, G. (2014), *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*. MY. Pérouse de Montclos (Dir.), Ibadan, Leiden, IFRA-Nigeria, ASC, Wapos collection. P. 8.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Danjibo, N. D. (2009b), *Op. cit.* P. 7. See also, Ekot, B. (2009), *Conflict, Religion and Ethnicity in the Postcolonial Nigerian State*. *Australian Review of African Studies* 30 (2). Pp. 47–67.

⁴¹⁵ Abubakar, A. (2014), *Nigerian Girls Abducted*. In: CNN, April 16. No page. Available online at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/15/world/africa/nigeria-girls-abducted/index.html>. Retrieved on 07.02.2020.

⁴¹⁶ Mark, M. (2015), *Boko Haram Deadliest Massacer, 2000 feared dead in Nigeria*. In: *The Guardian Newspaper*, January 10. No page. Available online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/09/boko-haram-deadliest-massacre-baga-nigeria>. Retrieved on 07.02.2020.

⁴¹⁷ Counter Extremism Project (2019), *Op. cit.* No page.

discussed above, is to institute the practice of Sharia law as the legal system in Nigeria. Let us look at the understanding of this Sharia law.

4.1.2.2 The Sharia Law in Nigeria

Muslims consider an interpretation of Sharia to be valid so long as it protects and advocates for life, property, family, faith, and intellect. Muslim tradition overwhelmingly accepts differences of opinion outside these core values, which is why Sharia has survived for centuries as an ongoing series of conversations.⁴¹⁸ Some scholars believe that Sharia in its simplest form is a how-to-serve-justice manual based on the Qur'an and the Hadith (Prophet Muhammad's sayings and life examples).

There are two basic parts of Sharia: personal sharia and public sharia. The personal Sharia deals with beneficial actions of individuals, they are purely personal and ritualistic in nature that every individual follows in living his or her daily life. These personal rituals include actions like prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, charity, feeding the hungry, taking care of neighbour, giving alms to the poor, marriage, death and burial rituals etc. This is intended as a guide for individual Muslim in his or her faith. The second part of Sharia on the other hand is concerned with the relationship of the Muslim and fellow members of the society. It deals with issues such as divorce, business contracts, adultery, theft, murders, conversion, apostates and inheritance. This is intended to create a system of justice and fairness to every member of the society.⁴¹⁹

However, the public sharia raises a few concerns especially in relation to human rights. A good example is the idea of apostacy for Islam (an offence punishable by death penalty in Islam)⁴²⁰ According to Islam, a person commits apostasy or becomes an apostate if he describes himself a Muslim and then at a later time takes one of the following actions in a public way, namely, converting to another religion, rejecting a part of the Koran after recognizing it, to be a part of holding an interpretation of some Koranic verses or hadith contrary to what it teaches.⁴²¹ It is relevant to note that there is a difference between an apostate and a hypocrite. While a hypocrite is one who is outwardly willing to say or do what a Muslim says or does but, in his heart, has

⁴¹⁸ Coulson, N. J. (et al) (2021), Shari'ah. In: Encyclopedia Britannica, January 24. No page. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shariah> Retrieved on 01.01.2022.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Peter, R. (2005), Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. P. 22.

⁴²¹ Peters, R. & De Vries, G. J. J. (1977), Apostacy in Islam. In: Die Welt des Islams. New Series Publishers, Holland. P. 31.

decided not to believe in Islam, an apostate in contrast is a person who openly and knowingly does or says something that makes him a non-Muslim after he had called himself a Muslim.⁴²²

However, the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights of 1981 in line with the UDHR, provides in article 13 that “every person has the right to freedom of conscience and worship in accordance with his religious beliefs”. The Koran also holds that “there is no compulsion in religion” and in Sura 109: 1-6 it stated: “Say O you who reject faith do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. To you be your religion and to me be mine”.⁴²³

Also, on the 19th of September 1981, the Islamic Council of Europe, a network of Islamic thinkers and statesmen, drafted the ‘Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights’ (UIDHR). This declaration devotes several paragraphs to the freedom of religion and related subjects. Specifically, article 2 deals with the right of freedom in general and states that, “Man is born free. No inroads shall be made on his right to liberty except under the authority and in due process of the law.”⁴²⁴ However, article 25 of the same document states that “The Islamic Sharia is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles of this declaration.”⁴²⁵ The implication is that theoretically Islam recognizes the idea of human rights but practically the sharia governs the life of every Muslim.

The Sharia was introduced into Nigeria through Islam in the ancient Kanem Borno Empire in the 11th Century.⁴²⁶ In this period, the Islamic religion thrived as a court religion together with the Sharia. In 1804, the Hausa rulers were overthrown in a Jihad launched by Uthman Dan Fodio and a theocratic empire known as the Sokoto Caliphate was established.⁴²⁷ The Emirs were instructed to study and teach the Quran, appoint Judges, tax collectors, army commanders and prayer leaders. They were also instructed to carry on the Jihad to other parts of Nigeria.⁴²⁸

Thus, the Sharia became the law of the Caliphate as long as it was interpreted and administered by the Islamic Judges. “With all these machineries set in motion and the functionaries carrying

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ The Holy Quran: Arabic Text, Translation and Commentary (1951), Revised Ed. Pakistan: Lahore.

⁴²⁴ Salem, A. (1988), Universal Islamic declaration of human rights. In: The International Journal of Human Rights, 2 (3), Autumn. Pp. 102 – 112, (P. 102). This declaration is also available on the internet at: http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/islamic_declaration_HR.html, Article 2A&B.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. Article 25.

⁴²⁶ Trimingham, J. S. (1962), A History of Islam in West Africa. Oxford University Press, London. P. 115.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. Pp. 116.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

out their duties to the best of their abilities, the Islamic state came into full operation.”⁴²⁹ The Mallams began to teach Islamic science, and the Islamic Socio-Political and Judicial processes and institutions were emphasized.⁴³⁰ According to Ahmed (2003), Uthman Dan Fodio put in place “a highly centralized system of criminal justice administration and a distinct legal system.”⁴³¹ The effect of this was that the socio-economic cum religious life of the people under the Sokoto Caliphate was re-organized on the basis of the Sharia.

However, with the coming of the British colonialists, the application of Sharia including the Islamic criminal law was abolished by the legislature of Nigeria in 1959. Although only aspects of the sharia relating to marriage and family life, divorce and inheritance were allowed to operate.⁴³² In October 1999, Nigeria experienced a dramatic turn of events as the Islamic law was revived and enforced in some Northern States of the country. Sharia courts were once again established in some states like Zamfara and Sokoto despite its abolition in the Nigerian Republican constitution of 1963, section 22 §10 which stated that “No person shall be convicted of a criminal offence unless the offence is defined and the penalty prescribed in written law except in contempt of court.”⁴³³ The Sharia laws were regarded as unwritten customary laws by the British colonialists. Today, people are convicted in Sharia courts in some Northern states of Nigeria and penalties are prescribed according to Sharia laws.

4.1.3 African Traditional Religion (ATR)

Apart from Christianity and Islam, Nigerians also belong to a range of other religious groups. The largest of these is comprised of followers of traditional religious practice, here referred to as African Traditional Religion (ATR), who “share the conviction that the worldly and the

⁴²⁹ Ubaka, C. O. (2000), *Sharia in Nigeria: its Implications for Non-Muslims*. Enugu: Snaap Press Limited. P. 26.

⁴³⁰ Ozigbo, I. R. A. (1988), *An Introduction to the Religion and History of Islam*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu. P. 141.

⁴³¹ Ahmed, A. B. (2003), *Administration of Islamic Criminal Law and Justice in a Constitutional Democracy: Problems and Prospects*, in Ezeilo, J. N., Ladan, M. T. & Afolabi, A. A. (Eds.) (2003), *Sharia Implementation in Nigeria: Issues & Challenges on Women’s Rights and Access to Justice*. Enugu: Women’s Aid Collective & others, pp. 164-176. (P. 165).

⁴³² Ozigbo, I. R. A. (1988), *Op. cit.* P. 141.

⁴³³ The 1963 Constitution of Nigeria. P. 14. Available at:

<https://data.globalcit.eu/NationalDB/docs/1963%20Constitution%20of%20Nigeria.pdf>. Retrieved on 10.01.2022.

sacred are closely interwoven, and that all human relations – including those involving the state and its representatives – reflect both secular and spiritual forces.”⁴³⁴ However, it is believed that insight into these forces can be gained through divination and revelation, and that they can be influenced through sacrifice, prayer and incantation. Because traditional practices have influenced Christians and Muslims and vice versa, debates about their validity form an important and ongoing part of inter- and intra-religious struggles in Nigeria.⁴³⁵

As a religion, ATR is based on the diverse cultural beliefs and practices about the Supreme Being in Africa. When we speak of African Traditional Religion, we mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans.⁴³⁶ “It is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans, and which is being practiced today in various forms and various shades and intensities by a very large number of Nigerians, including individuals who claim to be Muslims or Christians.”⁴³⁷

According to Idowu (1973), the ATR played a significant role as a unifying factor in the political administrative structure of the different traditional societies.⁴³⁸ It “provides the moral, ethical and social norms to which the lives of the individuals must conform in the given community, it makes a basic demand of unreserved commitment to the preservation of peace in the community, maintenance of law and order and the general pursuit of the welfare of all. Membership to this traditional religion comes automatically by birth. By birth, one acquires all the rights, privileges and obligations inherent in the traditional religion.”⁴³⁹

African Traditional Religion according to Agbo (2019), “has been erroneously referred to as ancestor worship, juju or in other pejorative and despicable terms like primitive, salvage, native, fetish [...] It is an orally transmitted religion with its belief, ethos and dogma transmitted

⁴³⁴ Danjibo, N. D. & Oladeji, A. (2009), Religion, Politics and Governance in Nigeria. Religions and Development Research Programme, Center for West African Studies, University of Birmingham. Working Paper 39. International Development Department, University of Birmingham. P. 11. Available online at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>. Retrieved on 07.03.2022.

⁴³⁵ Amherd, N. & Nolte, I. (2005), Religions (West Africa). In: Johnson, D. (et al) (Eds.) Historical Companion to Post colonial Literatures, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp 422-428, (P. 423).

⁴³⁶ Spencer, B. A. & Spencer, D. W. (1988), The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God: Listening to God and Learning from Culture. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, Michigan. P. 65.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Idowu, E. B. (1973), Op. cit. P. 28.

⁴³⁹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 29.

from one generation to another through arts, folklores, myths, proverb, and through oral history.”⁴⁴⁰ According to Chukwuma (1985), “it is not just the religion of different peoples who are brought together by some sort of theological or ontological conviction but a religion within which its members are delimited by birth into the religious group and they see their destiny within the perimeter of the religion.”⁴⁴¹

4.2 Religion and Political System

Nigeria’s pre-colonial history and mode of incorporation into the global capitalist system under British colonial rule determined, to a large extent, the pattern and development of its geo-cultural and religious influences.⁴⁴² Nigerians make use of religion and politics in their daily activities. It is the opinion of the researcher that there is an incontrovertible connection between religion and politics. Although, the role played by religion in politics has remained debatable, there is no doubt that religion is a “very relevant factor for the development of political culture and social capital.”⁴⁴³ The relevant question here is, what is the nexus between the two concepts: religion and politics?

Religion plays an important role in the daily lives of the people through the interactions people have with one another, the manner of dressing and choices of clothes, food, and politics are mostly affected by religion.⁴⁴⁴ In other words, religion and politics are intertwined and this is illustrated by the fact that religion, not nationality, is the way in which most Nigerians choose to identify themselves in politics, though not in all cases.⁴⁴⁵ I agree with Njoku (2009) that religion and politics are integral aspects of the human person.⁴⁴⁶ Since “man is a religious being as well as a political being,”⁴⁴⁷ it is natural that man has both material and transcendent needs.

⁴⁴⁰ Agbo, C. E. (2019), Personality Cult as a Cultural Residuum in Africa. In: Academia.edu, P. 6. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/41705609/Personality_cult_jpcr. Retrieved on 25.10.2020.

⁴⁴¹ Chukwuma, M. (1985), Op. cit. P. 59.

⁴⁴² Chouin, G. (2014), Op. cit. P. 9.

⁴⁴³ Kruip, G. (2007), Op. cit. P. 15.

⁴⁴⁴ Afolabi, O. (2015), Op. cit. P. 42.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Njoku, F. O. C. (2009), Op. cit. P. 38.

⁴⁴⁷ Ekeocha, R. (2010), The Role of the Church in Community Development in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Eastern Nigeria. A Paper presented at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. P. 80. Available online at: <https://www.academia.edu/the-role-of-the-church-in-community-development-in-nigeria>. Retrieved on 02.11.2019.

Religion, therefore, engages with all men and women of good will, and the political authorities to build a state fit for human habitation. Usually, there are three ways in which religion can fruitfully engage the political authority, namely: “By the direct (or indirect) involvement of religious men in politics, by fusing religion and politics as one, and by subjecting politics or government to the doctrines or laws of religion, thereby carrying out politics or governance along the line of religious doctrine, ideals or laws.”⁴⁴⁸ These three ways are present in Nigerian politics, making the relationship between religion and the political system in the country inseparable. An important question at this point is, how do the different religions themselves see their responsibility for political action?

4.2.1 Christianity and Political Responsibility

When Jesus said, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God,”⁴⁴⁹ he teaches that to be a good Christian, one must also be a good citizen. The church teaches that all government comes from God following the words of St. Paul in the bible; “You must all obey the authorities since all government comes from God.”⁴⁵⁰ Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical “*Immortale Dei*”, stated that “as no other society can hold together unless someone be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, everybody-politic must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature has consequently God for its author.”⁴⁵¹ In relation to this divine origin of political authority, it is relevant to ask, “is a government through a bloody coup d’état to be respected as from God? Is apartheid regime God ordained? Are protests against dictatorship, genocide and even taking up arms as guerrilla against a regime of organized injustice or legalized brigandage an offence against God?”⁴⁵² These and many other questions point to the political responsibility of Christianity.

However, Pope John XXIII agrees that human society can neither be well ordered nor prosperous without the presence of those who vested with legal authority, preserve its institution and do all that is necessary to sponsor actively the interest of all its members, and

⁴⁴⁸ Omoregbe, J. I. (2003), Op. cit. P. 309.

⁴⁴⁹ The Holy Bible; Mt. 22:21.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. Romans 13:1-4.

⁴⁵¹ Pope Leo XIII (1885), *Immortale Dei*: Papal Encyclical: On the Christian Constitution of States. 1st November 1885, §.3. Available online at: www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/immortale-dei Retrieved on 25.03.2019.

⁴⁵² Ike, O. (2016), Op. cit. P. 53.

they derive their authority from God.⁴⁵³ He further clarified that “the fact that authority comes from God does not mean that men have no power to choose those who are to rule the state, or to decide upon the type of government they want, and determine the procedure and limitations of rulers in the exercise of their authority.”⁴⁵⁴ According to Pope Paul VI, there are certain situations that demand initiative and responsible action from the people, especially when it involves the denial of opportunities to advance politically and culturally, and abuse to human dignity. The temptation is usually to resort to violence as a means of correcting these wrongs, but this could be likened to throwing away an evil to bring a disaster. Even when tyrants infringe on fundamental personal rights and the common good, “a real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery.”⁴⁵⁵ Responsible action includes peaceful demonstrations, voting for the right person into office, speaking out against evil not only when it affects one but always, helping to protect the dignity of all persons and protecting the rights of the weak and destitute.

Although, Christianity admonishes that one must accept and respect civil authorities, this acceptance and respect does not entail compromising the truth and integrity. This is because as a Christian one has a responsibility to proclaim the gospel of Christ even to the politicians. The Christian is encouraged to be politically conscious and participate actively in all political activities. According to Dantani (2013), in the political arena, “Christians’ consciousness has sparked some interest in the nation’s [Nigeria’s] political terrain as orchestrated by Islam’s challenge. These situations have become most pronounced because of the recurring religious crises fermented by the adherents of Islam especially against the northern Christian minorities.”⁴⁵⁶ This challenge has woken Christianity to the consciousness of a political responsibility.

⁴⁵³ Pope John XXIII (1963), *Pacem in Terris*; Papal Encyclical. On establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty. 11th April, §.52. Available online at: www.papalencyclicals.net/john23/pacem-in-terris on 25.03.2019.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* §.52.

⁴⁵⁵ Pope Paul VI (1967a), *Populorum Progressio*, Encyclical. On the Development of People. March 26, 1967. §.30-31. Available online at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html. Retrieved on 19.07.2019.

⁴⁵⁶ Dantani, A. J. (2013), *The role of Religion and Politics in Nigeria for Sustainable National Development*. In: *Academia.edu*, P. 5. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/40342464/ISLAMIC_PAPER. Retrieved on 27.10.2019.

4.2.2 Islam and Political Responsibility

The northern areas of Nigeria are predominantly inhabited by the adherents of Islam and the tribes of Hausa-Fulani.⁴⁵⁷ “Given the philosophy of Islam as a complete way of life for Muslims, Islam has often been closely attached to politics in Nigeria.”⁴⁵⁸ This fact was applied by the British colonial government to effectively govern the Northern region. According to Oyegbile (2009), “after the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria and emergence of indigenous national politics, Islam has effectively represented a source of ethnic identity, group unity, political mobilization, de-mobilization, regime legitimization and de-legitimization in the country.”⁴⁵⁹ Hence, Islam has always played active role in the politics of Nigeria.

Also, the northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims see themselves as the off-springs of the Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio, representing the epitome of the Islamic holy Jihad and a product of an enviable Islamic socio-cultural history.⁴⁶⁰ Based on this, the Islamic religion is united both culturally and religiously with its adherents and empowers them to be politically united. This unity enables the Muslims to become a formidable force in Nigerian politics. Thus, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims see themselves as having a religious responsibility for a political action that directly or indirectly affects the Northern region and Nigeria in general. Islam is thus conceived to be synonymous with the North in the political matrix of Nigeria.

4.2.3 ATR and Political Responsibility

In Nigeria, the traditional religion remains a reference point to the society and the political community. The realization of the people’s cultural, traditional and political aspirations could be found within the concepts of the African Traditional Religion. The choice of leadership in the traditional African societies often takes place after adequate consultations with the gods of the land. Such persons chosen for political leadership, were expected to perform their duties in such ways that conform to the moral standards and principles of the traditional religion.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁷ Chouin, G. (2014), *Op. cit.* P. 8.

⁴⁵⁸ Dantani, A. J. (2013), *Op. cit.* P. 4.

⁴⁵⁹ Oyegbile, O. & Abdulrafiu, L. (2009), *Shielding Patrons of Boko Haram*. In: Tell (Lagos), 17 August, Platform. Pp. 67-71. Available online at: <http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/folklorising/>. Retrieved on 10.06.2021.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ Nzimiro, I. (1972), *Studies in Igbo Political System*. London Press. Pp. 43-44.

In the pre-colonial period in Nigeria, the African Traditional Religion was very responsible if not indispensable in political actions. The traditional religion played a significant role in the Nigerian political activities especially during the election of the village political leaders, as well as members of the customary judicial system that was responsible for settling cases like land disputes and fights. The highest political office in the villages (village Chief, traditional ruler) was often headed by traditional priests. For instance, between the 12 to 13th centuries AD, Yoruba politico-social organization was headed by “Ogbene” their priestly chief of agriculture. In the 15th century Hausa tradition, the people were politically and traditionally organized into smaller villages headed by the “Sarkin Noma” (the King of the farmers). In Igboland, the head of the village is known as the “Eze-ala” (King of the land) who occupies the position of the chief priest of the land. The head of the village in Efik-Ibibio is known as the Obong (the priestly chief of fertility). In the same way, the head of the Ijaw fishing villages is called “Amayanabo” (priestly chief of fertility).⁴⁶² Indeed, in the African society and culture, Religion and society are interwoven.

Some scholars like Chinua Achebe believe that since Africans contacted with the Europeans, there had been decay and opulent decadence in the socio-political, religio-cultural, economic and even divine milieu of the Traditional African society.⁴⁶³ According to Achebe (1958), “The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.”⁴⁶⁴ Ilogu (1974) agrees with Achebe that things fell apart for the African traditional society with particular reference to the Igbo culture, through the coming of Christianity. He argues that the “decay in Igbo moral code started when Christianity preached directly against some Igbo beliefs like the-spirit world of the Igbo and the Earth goddess (Ala) and her sanctity around which a good deal in that moral code was built.”⁴⁶⁵ However, I disagree with Ilogu

⁴⁶² For the detailed explanation on the Ijaw tribe, see Horton, R. (1969), *From a Fishing Village to City-State: A Social History of New Calabar*, in Douglas, M. & Kaberry, P. (Eds.) (1969), *Man in Africa*. London: Navistock publications. Pp. 37–58. For the Yoruba example see, Smith, R. (1969), *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*. London University Press, London. P. 110, and the Hausa example, see Smith, A. (1970), *Some Considerations Regarding the Formation of States in Hausa land*. In: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 3. Options Book and Information Service, Ibadan. Pp. 335–337.

⁴⁶³ Achebe, C. (1958), *Things fall Apart*. Heinemann Ltd, London. P. 124.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ Ilogu, E. C. O. (1974), *Christianity and Igbo Culture*. New York: NOK Publishers Ltd. P. 201.

because the advent of Christianity in Africa and Igbo society in particular brought education and insight that empowered the people to question the rationale behind most traditional practices that were ignorantly done in the name of the gods, like the killing of twins.

However, despite the systematic “demonization and paganization of the historical African traditional gods,”⁴⁶⁶ I agree with Agbo (2019) that “African pre-colonial society was religio-culturally, socio-economically, politically and economically subjugated by the colonial government who only aimed on institutionalizing their personalities in place of Africa forebears.”⁴⁶⁷ This has affected the traditional religion’s responsibility for political action in modern times as the adherents seem to have lost the confidence take responsibility in political actions. The Christians and Muslims stand out in the political arena of Nigeria but not devoid of constant conflicts.

4.3 Christian - Muslim Divide

The relationship between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has often been marked by conflicts. This conflict is referred to as inter-religious conflict and it is common in the northern part of the country. There are two types of religious conflicts in the Northern geo-political region of Nigeria. They are the conflict between followers of two different religions (Christian-Muslim), and conflict between followers of the same religion, particularly between Muslims.⁴⁶⁸

The identifiable causes of inter religious conflict range from extremism to politicization of religion. A factor that contributed to this development is the politicization of religion that took place at both national and local levels.⁴⁶⁹ At the national level, the attempt to enlist Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) caused a lot of tension and religious division as the Christians fought aggressively against such a move by the government.⁴⁷⁰ At the local level, the expansion of Sharia legal system by some state governments in the north further heightened the tension between Muslims and Christians. The situation was made worse by the presence of local religious armed groups, the Hisbah, who were specifically formed and

⁴⁶⁶ Ibrahim, J. (1991), Religion and political turbulence in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29 (1), Pp. 115-136, (P. 116).

⁴⁶⁷ Agbo, C. E. (2019), *Op. cit.* P. 6.

⁴⁶⁸ Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, IPCR (2003), *Strategic Conflict Assessment: Consolidated and Zonal Reports*, IPCR, Abuja. March. The Regent (Printing and Publishing) Ltd, Kaduna. P. 33.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.* P. 34.

⁴⁷⁰ This has been discussed already in chapter three of this work, (see: p. 75).

mandated to monitor the implementation of the sharia legal system at local level especially in Kano and Zamfara states. Another situation at the local level is the “proliferation of Pentecostal Christian churches in terms of aggressive preaching and indiscriminate constructions of churches in residential areas that are dominated by Muslims.”⁴⁷¹ This could potentially lead to provocation and violence especially in the north.

The use of religion for political ends is another major cause of this religious divide between Christians and Muslims. This is because of the public perception that access to power and resources at the national level was possible with religious support. This creates a religious division among adherents on one hand and the politicians on the other hand. The adherents feel a sense of obligation to support ‘their own’ person while the politician feels a sense of obligation to show gratitude for the religious support which is often expressed by ‘giving back’ through building of churches or mosques at every available opportunity or donating outrageous sums of money to their Pastors or Imams for projects that would never be accounted for. Some politicians have even gone to the point of placing their clerics on monthly salary as a mark of gratitude. This is often visible among the Christians and Muslims which leads to an unhealthy rivalry between the two religions. According to the Human Rights watch report, “the country is divided along religious lines, with the boundaries between Muslim and Christian often overlapping.”⁴⁷² This overlapping boundaries sooner or later develops into conflicts.

4.4 The Use or Misuse of Religions in Nigerian Politics

The effect of religion on politics all over the world is bifocal because it is both positive and negative. It is positive in the sense that religion, as earlier identified, is value driven and it naturally robs off on the polity through the participation of ardent religious believers. The negative effect could be deciphered from the perspective of sectarian tendency, where religious fanatics do anything in the name of religion to ensure that positions or offices are gained by their adherents. Such people stand on the position that their ideals and beliefs dominate any environment they find themselves.⁴⁷³ Many of the misuses and manipulations of religion in

⁴⁷¹ Zhakom, N. I. (2014), *Op. cit.* P. 31.

⁴⁷² Human Rights Watch, (2006), *They Do Not Own This Place: Government Discrimination Against Non-Indigenes in Nigeria*. New York; HRW. P. 7. Available online at: <https://allafrica.com/view/resource/main/main/id/00010792.html>. Retrieved on 10.03.2022.

⁴⁷³ Ginsberg, A. (2005), *Church Rob Pair Dining out on Poverty Claim: DA*. In: *New York Times*. February 23. No page. Available online at:

Nigerian politics are engineered by poverty, unemployment, and related economic strife among citizens, especially the youth.⁴⁷⁴ The use or misuse of religion can have far-reaching effects on the political system and social institutions, leading to a possible collapse. The researcher shall analyze seven factors that contribute to the use/misuse of religion in politics.

4.4.1 Foundations and Principles of Religion

Some of the religions are in their doctrines, not separated from politics, i.e., the religion of Islam and politics interplay since the (Islamic) politicians and or leaders must play the game of politics according to Islamic provisions and the leadership itself is originally shouldered on religiously inclined people (Imam).⁴⁷⁵ One example of this interplay between doctrine and politics is the implementation of Sharia in the northern states of Nigerian by the governors. This was a wrong decision by the northern governors in a circular country like Nigeria.

4.4.2 Attitudes of Religious Leaders and Politicians

Greedy religious leaders and selfish politicians have aided in the misuse of religion in politics. They understand that religion is a fundamental institution respected by most adherents, any appeal with religious intonation easily wins the hearts.⁴⁷⁶ Thus, they influence the greedy religious leaders with money to gain access to their adherents who are further convinced 'in the name of God' to support such politicians. Such attitudes of religious leaders in politics have brought about people voting according to their faith regardless of the capacity of the candidate to lead the country. For instance, Catholic Priests in Anambra State openly enjoined their members to vote for a particular candidate because of his religious inclination. According to Okafor (2011), "he always clutched his chaplet tightly in his hands to demonstrate to the Catholic faithful that he was certainly one of them." And they accepted him.⁴⁷⁷

<https://nypost.com/2005/02/23/church-rob-pair-dining-out-on-poverty-claim-da/> Retrieved on 18.12.2020.

⁴⁷⁴ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), The Use, Misuse of Religion and Implications in Nigerian Politics. A Paper presented at the 2nd National Conference of Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), held at: Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi State, Nigeria. 6th - 8th November. P. 4. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/40916668/THE_USE_MISUSE_OF_RELIGION_AND_IMPLICATIONS_IN_NIGERIAN_POLITICS. Retrieved on 18.12.2020.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 3.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. P. 4.

⁴⁷⁷ Okafor, J. C. (2011), Nigeria, Religion and Politics. In: Afolabi, O. (2015), The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and its sustainability for political development. Net Journal of Social Sciences, 3 (2). Pp. 42-49, (P. 46).

According to Momoh et al (1989), “the unity of Nigeria depends on the extent to which her leaders could perceive and understand the relationship between religion, ideology and the nation”⁴⁷⁸ This is noted by Jega (2000) that; The ruling class derived both its origin and wealth from the state, around which it gravitates, using every available means to secure power and access.⁴⁷⁹ Hence, in the competition and struggles for the state power, especially in the period of economic crises, identity politics become heightened and religion tend to assume primacy.⁴⁸⁰

The manipulation of religion by some powerful individuals who hide under the guise of religion to pursue selfish interests, and greediness of some religious leaders who patronize such corrupt politicians remains part of the negative effects of religion on the polity. Greed has crept into the religious terrain to the extent that some religious leaders now patronize corrupt rulers to meet their lust for money and other material gains. Efforts by Nigerian politicians to gain ascendancy and power have led to situation in which politics has swept away the sacredness of religion, and in the process, contaminated the hearts of people with bitterness and enmity for the religion of others. This is indeed, a misuse of religion.

4.4.3 Poverty and Unemployment

Many of the misuses and manipulations of religion in Nigerian politics are engineered by poverty, unemployment, and related economic problems, especially among the youth.⁴⁸¹ The 2011 presidential election has provided a concrete and empirical experience towards the misuse of religion and undermining politics with negative consequence that resulted in the death of many people, especially in Kaduna, Bauchi, Azare, among others. Illiterate and unemployed youths especially in the north, were instigated to protest the presidential result that was announced by INEC on the pretext that a Christian must not be allowed to govern the Muslims. The protests turned into violent riots that led to the loss of lives and properties.⁴⁸² Poverty and unemployment promote tensions and politicians are ready to use religion and manipulate such.

⁴⁷⁸ Momoh, C. S. (et al), (Eds.) (1989), Nigerian studies in religious tolerance. Vol. III. CBAAC and NARETO, Ibadan. P. 59.

⁴⁷⁹ Jega, A. D. (Ed.) (2000), Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikaninstitutet. P. 19.

⁴⁸⁰ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), Pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸¹ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁴⁸² Nossiter, A. (2011), Election Fuels Deadly Clashes in Nigeria. In: The New York Times, 24 April. No page. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/25/world/africa/25nigeria.html>. Retrieved on

4.4.4 Lack of Infrastructures

The failure of the state in its institutional responsibility to provide infrastructures, security and social justice for the people, the politicians are very likely to take advantage of the situation for political campaigns and votes buying. Indeed, the institutional failure has created a gap which the religions are trying to fill, through education, hospitals, economic programs, etc. However, as the religions make efforts to fill the gap of institutional failure and bring better alternative solutions for the state's problems on one hand, the corrupt politicians on the other hand "exploit every avenue to attain political power by adopting politics of identity based on religion, ethnicity, sectionalism or tribal basis."⁴⁸³ Religion thus, becomes an object of exploitation.

4.4.5 Religious Influence on Political Parties

Momoh et al (1989) have noted that the two main religious have unduly influenced the causes of social and political events in Nigeria.⁴⁸⁴ Often, the choices of presidential or governorship candidates are influenced by selfish and ethnic minded religious leaders.⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, the effect of religious influence in politics has brought about the reinvigoration of religious reawakening in politics. A practical example is the 1999 elections, when the Pentecostal Christians openly supported Obasanjo's candidature under the banner of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), declaring him as a symbol of the restoration of Christian control over the government of Nigeria and of the "ending of Muslim political dominance."⁴⁸⁶ This declaration of Christian restoration would be considered a wrong use of religion because the president belongs to everyone.

4.4.6 Power Tussle Between Religions

Wherever there is existence of more than one religion (especially with two dominant) there may be tendencies for fierce competition between the two to widen and maintain stronghold

26.03.2022. This news is also available in: News Wires (2011), Rights group says over 500 killed in post-election riots. In: France 24 online news. 24 April. No page. Available online at: <https://www.france24.com/en/20110424-rights-group-says-over-500-killed-post-election-riots-nigeria-violence-unrest>. Retrieved on 26.03.2022.

⁴⁸³ Ibid. P. 4.

⁴⁸⁴ Momoh, C. S. (et al), (Eds.) (1989), Op. cit. P. 62.

⁴⁸⁵ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), Op. cit. Pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸⁶ Ojo, M. A. (2004), Pentecostalism, public accountability and governance in Nigeria. A paper presented at the workshop on Pentecostal-Civil Society Dialogue on Public Accountability and Governance, Lagos, 18 October. P. 4.

and or sphere of influence, win more converts and assert dominance over the state and the political system. In most cases, this leads to mutual suspicion and unhealthy rivalry thereby leading to use of every available means to assert control, influence and or domination.⁴⁸⁷ This background made Momoh et al (1989) to conclude that in the Nigerian situation “not only that the two main religions (Islam and Christianity) do not understand each other, the politics is westernized and so the religions are in a cut-throat competition for domination in national affairs.”⁴⁸⁸ Thus, the unhealthy rivalry leads to use of ‘every means’ for dominance in the state.

4.4.7 The Nature/System of Government

The nature of the political system and the creation of more states and local governments along tribal sentiments has engineered the trend for individuals and ethnic groups to clamor for more states and local governments, based on identities and other particular tendencies. This tendency has drifted down into the politics of religion and ethnic identities.⁴⁸⁹ Indigenes struggle for the creation of their own churches, mosques, diocese and indigenous clergy men and women based on ethnic identity or political boundaries. This has led to various confrontations and even rejection of priests and bishops by the faithful because he or she is not from the same region or state of the diocese or parish. The implication is that a Hausa man from Kano would not be accepted by the faithful to be a parish priest in the Igbo speaking part of Enugu. An example is the rejection of a Catholic Bishop by the indigenes of Ahiara in Nigeria because he is not from Ahiara.⁴⁹⁰ This is often orchestrated by politicians who seek for control of their political boundaries including the religions and their leaders to enable them win elections. Hence, religion becomes a weapon that could be used by the politicians to achieve their selfish goals.

4.5 A Summary of Chapter Four

In this chapter, the researcher analysed the three major religions in Nigeria and their political responsibilities. The use or misuse of religion in politics and how it affects the system were analysed. Thus, the researcher has shown the extent to which politics is influenced by religion in Nigeria. were analysed. While the significant role religion plays in Nigerian politics becomes

⁴⁸⁷ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), Op. cit. P. 5.

⁴⁸⁸ Momoh, C. S. (et al), (Eds.) (1989). Op. cit. P. 61.

⁴⁸⁹ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013). P. 5.

⁴⁹⁰ Aidoghie, P. (2018), Ahiara Diocese crisis: Bishop Okpalaeke quits. In: The Sun Newspaper, February 20. No page. Available online at: <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/ahiara-diocese-crisis-bishop-okpalaeke-quits/>. Retrieved on 28.04.2021.

obvious at every count of events, major state actors don't downplay it as insignificant in the body polity of Nigeria. As it seems, Nigerian politicians accept this position to further benefit from the 'religious capital' in politics.⁴⁹¹ The implication is that religion is often misused by the politicians for their selfish political interests to the benefit of greedy religious leaders.

This is particularly so given the fact that religion in its present form represent a viable societal structure that has been accorded so much respect and freedom which the religious leaders have often abused without consequences. On the other hand, religion is not given due recognition in the Nigerian constitution in the context of its role in the political system. This 'so much respect' and 'freedom' give people the opportunity to easily twist religion for personal interests which in several cases lead to religious crisis. Indeed, religion can be a uniting force or a disintegrating force among and between groups of people.⁴⁹² Cosmologically, religion is an integral part of one's ethnic identification. It is equally distinctive from ethnicity⁴⁹³ because ethnicity deals with the aspect of material culture, religion deals with spiritual culture.

There is, therefore, the need for an adequate and succinct definition of the role of religion in the state and politics of the country. Religious leaders need to be constitutionally accorded due respect and assigned official responsibilities to give them a sense of belonging in Nigeria.⁴⁹⁴ Corrupt religious leaders must also be punished according to the law to show transparency and build confidence among the people. It is when these clergies begin to have a consciousness of being leaders in the sense of true shepherds in the society that they would be able to sincerely work for the interest of the nation and be actively involved in promoting peace and development. In this light, the question of norms and constitutional rights to development with its corresponding responsibilities come to mind.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Nsemba, E. L. (2014), Ties that Bind and Differences that Divide: Exploring the Resurgence of Ethno-cultural Identity in Nigeria. In: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. Africa Development 34 (2). Pp. 153-212, (P. 157). Available online at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287415489_%27Ties_that_bind_and_differences_that_divide%27_Exploring_the_resurgence_of_ethno-cultural_identity_in_Nigeria. Retrieved on 10.06.2021.

⁴⁹³ Ibid. P. 158.

⁴⁹⁴ Arjomand, S. A. (Ed.) (1993), The political dimensions of religion. State University Press, New York. P. 59.

Chapter Five: Normative Basis for Development and Common Responsibility

In this chapter, the focus is on analysing the normative basis for development from the legal/human rights perspective and the Christian ethical perspective, and the factors that have led to the structural and institutional failure in Nigeria. The researcher shall also analyse the meaning of our common responsibility as explained by the German Bishops Conference (DBK) and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). This switch from the “generally accepted” norms to the Christian perspective is intended to view the actions of the church in helping to influence good policies in politics for the good of the polity with a particular focus on the option for the poor and the less privileged of the society. The normative basis would help in determining some of the roles religion and politics played (or should play) in averting or ameliorating the structural and institutional failures as highlighted in the previous chapters.

The word ‘normative’ is a standard or norm especially of behaviour. It can also be understood as a standard that is generally accepted. Thus, one may ask: What is the accepted standard of development in Nigeria? Or rather, does Nigeria have a value-based standard at all? Nigeria, like every modern society is made up of economic, political, cultural, social and religious groups. The activities of these groups are often organized in an institutionalized system in which, under a classical separation of powers, some organs (elected persons) form the constitutive foundations of the groups. Such organs are known as the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and they are responsible for formulating policies, norms and regulations, implementing these policies and norms as well as interpreting them to reconcile conflicts.

Therefore, these three organs require a power structure with its own hierarchical categories that considers the economic, social, cultural and political tensions within society and thus develop its own means of resolving conflicts to ensure peaceful and effective solutions to existential problems of the state and its people. This power structure is provided by the constitution of the state. For example, the Nigerian constitution obligates the state to carry out certain functions including the formulation of agencies that would help in ensuring good governance and to “abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power.”⁴⁹⁵ In this circumstance, one would curiously ask, are there such agencies in Nigeria? Why is the country underdeveloped despite its huge resources? What are the indicators of bad governance in Nigeria? In what contexts should the

⁴⁹⁵ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Chapter Two, Section 15 (5). Available online at: https://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org/sites/fdl/files/assets/law-library-files/Nigeria_Constitution_1999_en.pdf. Retrieved on 11.04.2021.

religions make a difference with the aim of promoting a just society at different levels of polity, policy and politics in Nigeria? These and other questions form the basis of this chapter.

5.1 The Normative Basis for Development

The word development has different meanings. For some scholars, it means “material possession and prosperity”,⁴⁹⁶ like owning a land, house, money, etc. It could also be understood as “liberation from oppression”,⁴⁹⁷ or “a holistic project of personal and spiritual progress.”⁴⁹⁸ Thus, development is aimed at improving the quality of life of people.⁴⁹⁹ The key ingredients of the quality of life in this context are education, health, economy, social and political satisfaction. Through development, people have the opportunity for employment, investment, prosperity and a valuable life. However, this is achieved by the state through policies, and these policies directly or indirectly have consequences for the citizens. This highlights the need for value judgement on how policy ought to be set. This is the normative basis for development because development is based on value judgement.⁵⁰⁰ The implication is that government should be focused on a normative framework to achieve a people-oriented development.

A normative framework leads to a proper judgement and this would give certain issues like security, education, health, etc., greater importance, proper moral or ethical judgement.⁵⁰¹ A normative basis for development would ensure that people become the ultimate end of development. A normative basis for development would also ensure a balance between economic and the social development, create a harmony between the natural environment and the people in the society. This harmony is distorted when the people are no longer the ultimate end of development. For instance, a country may benefit economically from mining of petroleum, gold or tin ore, but suffer from the destruction of its social and natural environment through the emission of toxic chemicals like cyanide acid used in the extraction of solid minerals⁵⁰² by mining companies which may lead to serious health challenges for its citizens.

⁴⁹⁶ Alkire, S. & Deneulin, S. (1979), *A Normative Framework for Development*. Textbook. Ophi, UK. P. 3. Available online at: https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Textbook_Ch1.pdf. Retrieved on 19.04.2021.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. P. 4.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. P. 5.

⁵⁰² Ibid. P. 10.

Indeed, the arrival of mining companies often brings economic developments both to the state and the local communities. But this can also have serious social consequences like displacement of people from their ancestral homes and contamination of water. This limits their livelihood opportunities because of the inability to pursue their traditional subsistence activities.⁵⁰³ The Ogoni community in Niger Delta region of Nigeria is an example.⁵⁰⁴ A socio-ethical question at this point would be: Is the displacement of the citizens in this context justified? This raises a serious question on the meaning of economic growth in relation to quality of life. A country may be termed developed or wealthy, but its citizens have a low quality of life emanating from social and economic inequalities, water or air pollution, etc. Hence, economic or scientific development without human development becomes valueless.

According to Sutor (1991), “*der Mensch als person [ist] immer zuerst Quelle der Gesellschaft*” (man as a person is always first the source of society).⁵⁰⁵ Therefore, the normative framework for development ensures that economic development is not prioritized above human development. This framework places certain responsibilities on the state to provide basic infrastructures like schools, hospitals, security, electricity and water, for the citizens. It also gives the citizens the right to development and an enabling environment for a decent life.

5.2 The Right to Development

Economic activities have also “become a fundamental aspect of human existence.”⁵⁰⁶ Through economic activities, people earn an adequate standard of living, find satisfaction and fulfilment in exercising their professional activities and most importantly contribute to the development of the society. However, the field of economic development can be “a source of exploitation of individuals which, in extreme cases, may amount to forced labour and modern-day slavery.”⁵⁰⁷ This is often the case when the citizens do not recognize their fundamental human rights and the responsibilities of the political system as outlined in the constitution.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. P. 17.

⁵⁰⁴ The people of Ogoni were displaced from their lands and their rivers and farms were polluted with oil. The plights of Ogoni people were narrated by Saro-Wiwa, K. (1995), *Nigeria in Crisis: Nigeria, Oil and the Ogoni*. In: *Review of African Political Economy*, 22(64). See Pp. 244-246. Available online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006321>. Retrieved on 25.04.2021.

⁵⁰⁵ Sutor, B. (1991), *Op. cit.* P. 23. (Translation is mine).

⁵⁰⁶ Kälin, W. (et al) (2019), *The Law of International Human Rights Protection (Second Edition)*. Oxford University Press, New York. P. 429.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

The right to an adequate standard of living, the right to food, health and the right to free education have always been an important element in human rights treaties of the United Nations and the constitutions of many democratic nations. These rights are reflected in the United Nations declaration on the right to development, the African Charter on human rights and the Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. The researcher shall analyse these three.

5.2.1 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (UNDRD)

The UNDRD is aimed at the constant improvement of the well-being of the state and the citizens, based on their active, free and meaningful participation in development. It also protects the individual from discrimination and acknowledges the right to employment, equitable conditions and equal pay for equal work. The researcher shall briefly analyse articles 1 and 2 of the UNDRD in the context of this research.

Article one (paragraph one) of the UNDRD states that “The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.”⁵⁰⁸ The highlight here is that the right to development is inalienable and there is equal opportunity for every individual to make meaningful contributions in the development of the state and to enjoy the benefits of development. This places a responsibility on the part of the government to create an enabling environment for development that is devoid of nepotism.

Article two (paragraph one) makes the human person “the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development.”⁵⁰⁹ This article gives the human person the required protection from exploitation by the political authorities in the pretext of development. Thus, the human person becomes both the subject and the beneficiary of development. It becomes unjust for people to be displaced from their lands for the sake of industrialisation without proper compensation and consideration for their well-being and for the ecosystem. Every effort made towards development should have the people not only as the primary beneficiaries but as actors in the process. In Nigeria, the reverse is the case in the areas where mining of coal, cement, crude oil and gold takes place. Many

⁵⁰⁸ United Nations Human Rights (1986), Declaration on the Right to Development. Adopted by General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986. Article 1, §.1. Available online at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/righttodevelopment.aspx>. Retrieved on 22.04.2021.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. Article 2, §.1.

communities have been displaced from their homes and their lands or rivers polluted. They are deprived from their means of subsistence.

5.2.2 African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)

The ACHPR was adopted on 26 June 1981 by the Organization of African Unity (now African Union since July 2001). "In addition to a list of civil and political rights and of economic, social and cultural rights for individuals, the Charter also contains collective rights, that is to say the rights of peoples to equality, self-determination, development, peace and a satisfactory environment."⁵¹⁰ The researcher shall briefly analyse articles 6, 17 and 22 of the African Charter.

Article six of the ACHPR grants every individual "the right to liberty and to the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his freedom except for reasons and conditions previously laid down by law. In particular, no one may be arbitrarily arrested or detained."⁵¹¹ This article makes freedom and the security of life and properties the right of every individual and the responsibility of every government. Unfortunately, insecurity is the biggest challenge facing Nigeria. As a result, people are kidnapped, raped and killed on a daily basis. Students are kidnapped from their schools and farmers are killed in their farms. The government seemed to have failed in its responsibility to protect the citizens. Indeed, a failure of the political system.

Article 17 §1 of the ACHPR gives every individual the right to education.⁵¹² Thus, education is the right of every individual both old and young. The political leaders have the responsibility of providing not only the infrastructures for proper education, but also a conducive atmosphere for learning. The unfortunate reality in Nigeria is that the school system has badly deteriorated.⁵¹³ School buildings are old and dilapidated and teachers are either poorly paid or

⁵¹⁰ Kälin, W. (et al) (2019), Op. cit. P. 430.

⁵¹¹ African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Part I, Article 6. Adopted by the eighteenth Assembly of Heads of State and Government, June 1981 - Nairobi, Kenya. No page. Available online at: <https://www.achpr.org/legalinstruments/detail?id=49>. Retrieved on 22.04.2021.

⁵¹² Ibid. Article 17, §.1.

⁵¹³ Ojomoyela, R. (2021), Decay in education, source of Nigeria's crises — Babalola. In: Vanguard News Nigeria, February 24. No page. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/02/decay-in-education-source-of-nigerias-crises-babalola/>, Retrieved on 07.03.2022.

owed months of salaries.⁵¹⁴ This is yet another responsibility that has been neglected by the government to the advantage of private schools that are better managed but too expensive for the poor to afford. The political leaders in Nigeria are yet to formulate appropriate national development policies, that would aid socio-economic development. Indeed, a structural failure.

5.2.3 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

In Chapter II (no.15, §5), the Nigerian constitution grants the state “the authority to abolish all corrupt practices”.⁵¹⁵ Thus, the leaders have the power to fight and abolish corruption, but they lack the will to do so. Unfortunately, corruption has remained the most difficult challenge facing Nigeria, because the people invested with the power to fight it are either the beneficiaries of corruption or are directly involved in it. This is a huge failure on the part of the political system that after 62 years of independence, the country is still crippled by corruption.

Also, chapter two, (no.17, §3) states that: “The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that- (a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment: (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life: (c) the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused: (d) there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons.”⁵¹⁶ The constitution makes a provision for the social security of the citizens, making employment, humane working conditions and adequate medical care the right of every citizen. Unfortunately, the political system has failed in the provision of social amenities for the citizens. The rate of unemployment is high and the medical facilities are dilapidated. In number 18, the constitution also places a huge responsibility of ensuring a free and compulsory primary, secondary and university education for every citizen. But the political leaders have not only failed to provide a free education, but they have also failed to maintain the already existing educational facilities that are dilapidating. This is a failure in the political system. One can arguably say that the right to development as reflected

⁵¹⁴ Ilouno, M. B. (2020), Improving the educational system in Nigeria. In: The Guardian Nigerian Newspaper, 22 December. No page. Available online at: <https://guardian.ng/opinion/improving-the-educational-system-in-nigeria/>, Retrieved on 07.03.2022.

⁵¹⁵ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Op. cit. Chapter II, Section 15 (5).

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. Chapter II, Section 17 (3d).

in the UNDRD, ACHPR and the Constitution of the country, has been abused by the political system. The citizens are suffering the consequences of such structural and systematic failure.

However, there is a common responsibility for both the leaders and the followers to practice certain virtues that are embodied in the normative principle which would lead to the identification of the needs of every citizen and the corresponding necessary action towards a solution.

5.3 A Common Responsibility

It is the intention of the researcher at this point, to switch from the secular philosophical analysis to a Christian perspective. This is intended to show that many texts of the church do argue in a reasonable way without reference to faith or the Bible. The principles and arguments employed by the church are only “rational”. It is relevant to remark that the church carries with her a culture of rights and a culture of democracy which serves as a reminder that the people are not reduced (beschränken) but are assisted to attain true transcendence.⁵¹⁷ The idea of a common responsibility in the context of this research, is in relation to the community. According to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the church (2004), “[t]he human person is the foundation and purpose of political life.”⁵¹⁸ The human person is also “responsible for his or her choices because he or she is endowed with a rational nature, and is able to pursue projects that give meaning to life at the individual and social level.”⁵¹⁹ This implies that the social life of a person is not something added on but is part of an essential and indelible dimension of the person.⁵²⁰

The primary characteristic of a people is the sharing of life and values in the community. This function is entrusted to every creature by God according to the capacities of its own nature or character.⁵²¹ According to Sutor (1991), “Die menschliche Person ist Individuum, selbständiges Einzelwesen, aber zugleich wesentlich mit anderen Personen verbunden. Sie ist

⁵¹⁷ Graulich, M. (2008), Op. cit. P. 789. The translation is mine.

⁵¹⁸ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004), Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: To His Holiness Pope John Paul II Master of Social Doctrine and Evangelical Witness to Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Chapter 8, No. II, §.384. Available online at: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html. Retrieved on 25.04.2021.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid. §.383.

in Ihrer Entfaltung auf diese Verbindung angewiesen.” (The human person is an individual, an independent being, but at the same time essentially connected with other persons. The human person is thus, dependent on this connection for development).⁵²² This function requires certain normative principles and virtues. The focus here is to work collectively towards identifying the needs and rights of the individual in the community and take positive action towards meeting these needs in a framework that also respects the needs and rights of others. The idea of the common responsibility is that diversity is celebrated and differences are appreciated by the community. However, the focus here is what the church can and should do for a better society.

In its relations to and with the society, the church is guided by its social teachings⁵²³ which are the body of official teachings of the magisterial authority of the church, drawn from the Catholic social thought tradition over the years. This is meant to be a guide, not only for Christians in their relations to and with civil society, but also as a guide for the rest of humanity. Thus, the church has outlined these basic principles to serve as guides in the implementation of policies by all stakeholders in addressing socio-political/cultural and economic issues. Some of the main principles of the Catholic social teachings are:⁵²⁴

- The Principle of the Common Good.
- The Principle of Subsidiarity
- The Principle of Solidarity
- The Dignity of the Human Person
- The Principle of Social Justice
- The Universal Destination of Goods
- The Preferential Option for the Poor

Hence, the church is considered not only informative but performative in its indispensable expression of life-changing actions in the context of policies and polity.

⁵²² Sutor (1991), Op. cit. P. 22. (Translation is mine).

⁵²³ Pope John Paul II (1991), Papal Encyclical: “Centesimus Annos”: On the 100th Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. No.4. Available online at: www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents. Retrieved on 26.03.2019. See also John A. Ryan (2008), Institute for Catholic Social Thought. P. 1.

⁵²⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2005), Op. cit. P. 160.

5.3.1 The Contribution of Christian Churches in Germany for a just development of the Society

The German Catholic Bishops Conference (DBK) and the German Evangelical Church (EKD) in their joint statement number 22 (2014), analysed ten meanings of common responsibility.⁵²⁵ The researcher shall discuss five of them as it concerns this research. I am specifically referring to this text because I find it very rational, practical and practicable for the development of any society. Hence, the principles can be applied to the context of Nigeria. I have also referred to some relevant documents of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria to collaborate the rationality of the text from the Christian churches in Germany and show a combination of thoughts from two different point separated by geographical boundaries but united in a common rational purpose of developing a just and responsible society. Society is founded in the socialization of persons, grows from their relationships⁵²⁶ and exchange of ideas. It is my opinion that the combination of thoughts of different churches would create a larger platform for the development of a better society guided by Justice, equity and love.

5.3.1.1 Placing Economic Development at the Service of the People:

According to the DBK/EKD, “Christian economic ethics and church declarations have always emphasized that economic activities – including entrepreneurial endeavour, as well as financial market transactions – are not a purpose unto themselves and must never be viewed only from the point of view of self-interest.”⁵²⁷ The support of human development as a whole, the alienation of poverty and the general improvement of the welfare of individuals, is the sole aim of economic development.⁵²⁸ Therefore, the principle of maximizing profits at all cost to the detriment of the welfare of the individual is not morally acceptable.⁵²⁹ On the same thought, the CBCN observed that in Nigeria, “the crushing poverty and ignorance of the people have

⁵²⁵ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), Common Responsibility for a Just Society. Initiative of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Bishops’ Conference for a Renewed Economic and Social Order: Joint Statement 22. 28 February, Pp. 14-52 Available online at: <https://www.dbk-shop.de/de/publikationen/gemeinsame-texte/common-responsibility-for-a-just-society.html>. Retrieved on 21.04.2021.

⁵²⁶ Sutor (1991), Op. cit. P. 23.

⁵²⁷ Ibid. P. 15.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

left them vulnerable to manipulation by unscrupulous and self-seeking politicians, and other persons or groups who exploit them.”⁵³⁰

The role of development is to serve the needs of the people. Similarly, money plays an auxiliary role of serving the economic needs of the people and if this auxiliary role is lost in the process of development, then its aim is defeated. Hence, government has the responsibility of creating an enabling environment for a suitable economic growth. “Only a responsibly formed market economy is suited to bringing about the wealth that can make it possible for everyone to live in justice, peace, and freedom.”⁵³¹ Thus, such a responsibly formed market economy “requires a framework to ensure that the economic activity of individuals and corporations ultimately remains within a scope that serves the public good. Such a framework cannot be achieved solely through a mixture of self-serving behaviour but requires broad democratic decision-making processes on the part of all who are involved, with a view to commonly held values.”⁵³² Hence, the regulation of the general ethical standards in the economic activities and entrepreneurial endeavour, as well as financial market transactions. It is relevant to note that “the churches intervene in such matters out of her common responsibility for a just society [in the face of] globalization, financial and economic crisis, growing environmental problems, demographic change, and increasing social imbalance,”⁵³³ and importantly, “to make political action possible.”⁵³⁴

5.3.1.2 Regulatory and Ethical standards for the Economy

Ethical and regulation standards “evolved from a historical model in which a powerful individual ‘commanded and controlled’ the actions of his inferiors, exercising unfettered authority through enforcement by fear of imposing harsh punishments on those who did not obey, with or without justification. In contemporary society, that vertical authoritative model

⁵³⁰ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria [CBCN] (2001), Building God's Kingdom of Justice and Peace. A Communique Issued at the End of the First Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) for the Year 2001, held at the Pope John Paul II Catholic Centre, Abuja, from 5th to 10th March. §.6. Available online at <https://cbcn-ng.org/communiques.php>. Retrieved on 13.04.2021.

⁵³¹ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), Op. cit. P. 16.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid. P. 5.

⁵³⁴ Ibid. P. 9.

is replaced by a more horizontal model of mutual trust.”⁵³⁵ “Trade and harmonious society function based on trust. So, the purpose of regulation of business activity is to enable widespread trust in traders, because of which a healthy, sustainable and growing economy can exist, which in turn supports employment, social stability and innovation.”⁵³⁶

However, the lack of moderation as well as the self-aggrandizement and greed on the part of financial market participants has displaced the mutual trust. There are also some unsuitable structures that encourage so many financial market participants to ignore all principles of sustainable business and to take risks that would be considered uncontrollable.⁵³⁷ However, the churches do not have “the competence necessary to decide which particular instruments are the right ones to reform and regulate bank oversight and the financial market.”⁵³⁸ Thus, it is necessary for those with the political responsibility implementing the necessary ethical policies for the economy to follow regulatory norms and moral standards. This would grant protection to the individuals who engage in the risky economic or financial transactions.⁵³⁹

5.3.1.3 Anchoring Ecological Sustainability in our Lifestyle

During the massive global economic development, the earth has been exposed to dangerous signs of environmental degradation.⁵⁴⁰ This has led to a climate change which is endangering the basis of existence for the current generation and generations to come, as well as creation.⁵⁴¹ This environmental degradation affects the poorest countries and individuals particularly strongly. Climatic shifts and their consequences therefore need to be considered in developmental cooperation as well as in national policy, now more than ever before.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁵ Hodges, C. (2016), Ethical Business Regulation: Understanding the Evidence. In: Department of Business Innovation and Skills, UK. P. 3. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497539/16-113-ethical-business-regulation.pdf. Retrieved on 26.04.2021.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), Op. cit. P. 22.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. P. 23.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Pope Francis (2015), Encyclical Letter: “Laudato Si’”: On Care for Our Common Home. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Chapter Four, (§.14), P. 14.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Ibid. Pp. 14-22.

⁵⁴² Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), Op. cit. P. 31.

The political challenge facing the modern society for an ecological sustainability is the protection of the climate and reduction of carbon emissions through the reduction in the use of coal and making fossil energy cheaper and more available.⁵⁴³ “Ultimately, the climate, viewed as a common global good, can only be effectively protected through international efforts.”⁵⁴⁴ There is need for an ecological responsibility linked to principles of social balancing. “Since men are social by nature, they must live together and consult each other's interests. That men should recognize and perform their respective rights and duties is imperative to a well-ordered society. But the result will be that everyone will make his whole-hearted contribution to the creation of a civic order in which rights and duties are ever more diligently and more effectively observed.”⁵⁴⁵

However, a reflection of the ethical problem is that those who have caused climate change are not usually the same as those who will bear the consequences of these changes.⁵⁴⁶ Hence, the route to a sustainable economy is the protection of the environment, reduction of poverty and the respect of individual rights.⁵⁴⁷

5.3.1.4 Equal Opportunity Through Inclusion and Participation.

“Governance worth its name is only possible where there is true justice, equality and peace.”⁵⁴⁸ For individuals to be able to take their own initiative, they also need to have a real and fair chance to participate actively in society, using their individual gifts. Thus, political community pursues the common good when it seeks to create a human environment that offers citizens the possibility of truly exercising their human rights and of fulfilling completely their

⁵⁴³ Kommission Weltkirche der Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (2021), *Wie sozial-ökologische Transformation gelingen kann. Eine interdisziplinäre Studie im Rahmen des Dialogprojektes zum weltkirchlichen Beitrag der katholischen Kirche für eine sozial-ökologische Transformation im Lichte von Laudato si.* Studien der Sachverständigengruppe „Weltwirtschaft und Sozialethik.“ Nr. 22. Bereich Weltkirche und Migration der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Bonn. Pp. 20, 22. Available online at: https://www.dbk-shop.de/de/publikationen/publikationen-wissenschaftlichen-arbeitsgruppe-weltkirchliche-aufgaben/studien-sachverstaendigengruppe-weltwirtschaft-sozialethik/wie-sozial-oekologische-transformation-gelingen.html?dl_media=34504. Retrieved on 09.03.2022.

⁵⁴⁴ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), *Op. cit.* P. 31.

⁵⁴⁵ Pope John XXIII (1963), *Op. cit.* §31.

⁵⁴⁶ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014). P. 31.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.* P. 32.

⁵⁴⁸ CBCN (2019), *Op. cit.* §.3.

corresponding duties.⁵⁴⁹ “It should not happen that certain individuals or social groups derive special advantage from the fact that their rights have received preferential protection. Nor should it happen that governments in seeking to protect these rights, become obstacles to their full expression and free use.”⁵⁵⁰

However, there are still many cases of discrimination and frustrating obstacles that people of minority face both in places of work and in their social lives. This affects a wide variety of races and social groups. Also, “People with immigrant backgrounds, [...] too frequently continue to be denied equal social recognition.”⁵⁵¹ Hence, it is a challenging but an achievable task for social policy to make equal opportunity a reality. This involves allowing people with poorer social beginnings to receive adequate support from early childhood onward.⁵⁵²

5.3.1.5 Supporting Personal Development Through Education.

Education does not only serve to impart knowledge and skills, but also to promote personal development and to help make social participation possible.⁵⁵³ General education and training play very important roles in the preparation for the job market. A citizen “has the natural right to share in the benefits of culture, and hence to receive a good general education, and a technical or professional training consistent with the degree of educational development in his own country. Furthermore, a system must be devised for affording gifted members of society the opportunity of engaging in more advanced studies, with a view to their occupying, as far as possible, positions of responsibility in society in keeping with their natural talent and acquired skill.”⁵⁵⁴

The opportunity to learn throughout one’s entire life needs to be expanded and made more attractive so that the gifts and potential of people, young and old, can be brought out and developed further. We need to think of people with less schooling as well, as they particularly need to be encouraged to pursue further education to ensure that their potential does not go to waste. Education constitutes an important foundation for fulfilled lives.⁵⁵⁵ Thus, in support of

⁵⁴⁹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004), Op. cit. Chapter 8, No. II, §.389.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014), Op. cit. P. 40.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid. P. 47.

⁵⁵⁴ Pope John XXIII (1963), Op. cit. §.13.

⁵⁵⁵ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2014). P. 49.

personal development and economic progress, the CBCN directed all parishes in Nigeria “to begin a programme of basic education in the civic rights and responsibilities of its members, especially through the Justice, Development, and Peace Committees. If one does not know his or her rights, it is all too easy for government and others to take them away.”⁵⁵⁶ This programme would most importantly empower the poor and less privileged by providing them with basic education which is the key to the future. However, the church must be proactive.

5.4 Option for the Poor

The present condition of the global society is such that the number of people deprived of the basic human rights and access to justice is growing daily. A call for solidarity and “a preferential option for the poorest” becomes “logical and inevitable.”⁵⁵⁷ The term “Option for the poor” was first introduced in Medellin, Colombia, by the Latin American Bishops’ Conferences in 1968 and further expatiated in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979.⁵⁵⁸ The Bishops admonished the Catholic church in Latin America to be one with the poor and humble servants of the people. This option according to the bishops does not exclude anyone but rather draws the church closer to them.⁵⁵⁹ As inhabitants of the earth, we are challenged to create conditions for marginalized voices to be heard, to defend the defenceless, and to assess different policies and social institutions in relation to how they affect the poor in the society. This option demands that we look around us to see that the dignity of the poor is protected as an “ethical imperative essential for effectively attaining the common good.”⁵⁶⁰

The reality in the world today is that over half of the world’s population suffer from either a denial of full participation in the economic, social, and political life of the society, a lack of access to basic healthcare, or an absence of opportunities to help themselves, through such means as employment opportunities with fair wages. In line with this reality, Pope Francis lamented that the poor, the weak and the vulnerable must be given more attention.⁵⁶¹ This

⁵⁵⁶ CBCN (2001), Op. cit. §.7.

⁵⁵⁷ Pope Francis (2015), Op. cit. §.158.

⁵⁵⁸ Nairn, T. A. (2007), Medicine and society, Roman Catholic ethics and the preferential option for the poor. *Virtual Mentor: American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*, May, 9 (5), Pp. 384-387, (P. 384). Available online at: <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/roman-catholic-ethics-and-preferential-option-poor/2007-05>. Retrieved on 09.03.2022.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Pope Francis (2015), Op.cit. §.158.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. §.52.

attention to the poor should be seen as a social responsibility and “a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity.”⁵⁶²

Hence, the option for the poor means that we have the responsibility to care in a special way for those who need the most help. It also brings us to the realization of the plight of those who struggle to survive, and to contemplate on the necessity of putting the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society ahead of individual selfish interests. As responsible citizens, we can never stop questioning an oppressive system that forces millions of our brothers and sisters in our country and all over the world to live in poverty. We need to ask questions like; why are people dying of hunger? Nigeria is a country filled with mineral resources, why should the government allow its people to live in poverty, to be homeless, to lack good education and adequate health care and to die of hunger? It is also relevant to ask oneself the personal questions; what are my responsibilities as an individual? On the other hand, there is a growing awareness of the solidarity and support of the poor among themselves in a peaceful way directed towards defending their rights in the presence of negligence and corruption by the political system.⁵⁶³

The option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one, not only for the church but for the general humanity. An expression of the commitment of the church to the disadvantaged and marginalized is reflected in the commitment shown to refugees and migrants as a particularly vulnerable group of people.⁵⁶⁴ Another good example for solidarity to the poor, vulnerable and marginalized, is Saint Francis of Assisi. “He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.”⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace (2006), Op. cit. §.182.

⁵⁶³ Pope John Paul II (1987), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: To the Bishops, Priests Religious Families, sons and daughters of the Church and all people of good will for the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. §.39. Available online at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html. Retrieved on 18.12.2020.

⁵⁶⁴ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2019), *Vertrauen in die Demokratie stärken. Ein Gemeinsames Wort der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz und des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*. 11.04.2019. Gemeinsame Texte Nr. 26, §.2.3. Available online at: https://www.dbk-shop.de/de/deutsche-bischofskonferenz/gemeinsame-texte/vertrauen-demokratie-staerken.html?info=29080&dl_media=30817. Retrieved on 04.12.2020.

⁵⁶⁵ Pope Francis (2015), Op. Cit. §.10.

Solidarity to the poor is not just a theological statement and a Christian creed, but also a socio-ethical principle.⁵⁶⁶ It involves listening to the needs of those who suffer in the society in different capacities. This is different from any other ideology because the poor person when loved is treated with dignity and great value, and there is no attempt to exploit him or her for one's own personal or political interest. According to Pope John Paul II, “[w]ithout the preferential option for the poor, the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today's society of mass communications.”⁵⁶⁷

5.5 The Structural and Institutional Consequences

So far, we have been able to establish from the factors and challenges affecting the democratic system on one hand, and the normative basis for development through the declaration of the UNDRD, ACHPR and the Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, and the options for the poor on another hand, that Nigeria displays the consequential attributes of a state with structural and institutional failure. It is relevant to ask some salient questions concerning Nigerian: What is the measure of development in the country? Has the political system failed in its responsibilities to provide social amenities to the citizens? There is no controversy about the series of symptoms of state failure and state collapse in Nigeria: the issue remains the extent of failure and incapacity displayed by the leaders.

This incapacity was clearly highlighted by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria in a communique. The bishops lamented that “We continue to hear the cries of suffering, helplessness and despair of many Nigerians. In this country which God has endowed with an abundance of human and material resources, Nigerians are faced with starvation and destitution of incredible magnitude. Workers do not earn enough to live above starvation level; one can only imagine the deplorable conditions of the teeming population of the unemployed. The nightmarish condition of the roads in this country, the insecurity of life and property experienced in the upsurge of armed robbery and hired assassinations make life extremely difficult and precarious for the people of this country. Greed, corruption, sectionalism, gross abuse of human rights and militarisation of the Nigerian psyche continue unabated.”⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2019), Nr. 26. §.4.2.

⁵⁶⁷ Pope John Paul II, (1995), Op. cit. §.199.

⁵⁶⁸ Catholic Network (1996), Communique: Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Benin City, 10-13 September. Available online at: <https://nigeriacatholicnetwork.com/second->

Indeed, Nigeria has suffered a history of mismanagement, poor political governance, corruption, conflict and war. According to Yagboyaju (2019), the Nigerian government has failed in the following three key tasks: “security of lives and property, promotion of the rule of law, and establishment of visionary leadership.”⁵⁶⁹ Over the years, the ruling elites in Nigeria have consistently shown that they do not respect the laws and regulations of the three main institutions. With structural and institutional decay, corruption and impunity evident in Nigeria's socio-political and economic environment, the state's ability to uphold the rule of law is severely undermined.

Indeed, Nigeria needs leadership that respects the jurisdiction and competence of the three principal organs of government and heeds good governance, which implies the virtues that enable practical politics at all levels to adhere to the normative principles of separation of powers in practice. This desire for good governance was highlighted in a communique by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).⁵⁷⁰ Generally, the development of a state is measured by the extent to which there are improvements and sustainable development in issues such as security of life and property, poverty levels, accountability, transparency and corruption, party and electoral systems, rule of law, leadership, human rights, gender, and political participation.⁵⁷¹ With the weakness of the political system and its ineffectiveness, it has become challenging to eradicate impoverishment, engage in infrastructural development, and stem the tides of insurgency and terrorism, which have potentially derailed the country's political development.⁵⁷² This situation can best be described as failure of the state.

The researcher would analyse some of the failures that have led to the structural and institutional decay of governance in Nigeria. These challenges are, lack of development-

plenary-meeting-of-the-catholic-bishops-conference-of-nigeria-c-b-c-n-for-1996-benin-city-10-13-september-1996/. Retrieved on 09.01.2022.

⁵⁶⁹ Yagboyaju, D. A. & Adeoye, O. A. (2019), Nigerian State and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Exposition. In: Sage Journal. 9 (3). P. 1-10, (P. 1). Available online at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244019865810>. Retrieved on 03.04.2021.

⁵⁷⁰ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria [CBCN] (2019), Governance in Nigeria and the Common Good. A Communiqué issued at the end of the First Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) at the Resource Centre, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Durumi, Abuja, 10 - 16 March 2019. §.3. Available online at: <https://cbcn-ng.org/docs/g41.pdf>. Retrieved on 13.04.2021.

⁵⁷¹ Alkire, S. & Deneulin, S. (1979), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁵⁷² Yagboyaju, D. A. & Adeoye, O. A. (2019), Op. cit. P. 1.

oriented leadership, security of life and property, the fight against corruption and disregard for rule of law.

5.5.1 Development-Oriented Leadership

According to Shanum (2013) “the progress of any nation rests on the stature or standard of its leadership and how they can bring this to bear on the welfare of people of the nation.”⁵⁷³ Unfortunately, the political elites in Nigeria seem to have limited understanding of what governance requires. The lack of capacity in terms of the attainment of good and effective governance that addresses the issues of corruption, human rights, and mobilization of human and material resources for sustainable development in Nigeria, could be traced to the lack of responsible leadership.

Nigeria lacks a leadership that manifests itself in an excellent performance of practices implying the virtues that enable practitioners to observe all the normative principles of each practice. This is a strong foundation of state incapacity. Furthermore, Uzodike (2009) states that “many African governments have remained either criminally blind to, or unable to redress, the harsh realities of life for most of their citizens. I agree with Shanum (2013) that “[n]o nation can enjoy lasting peace if her citizens live in abject poverty particularly if that nation is acknowledged as having the ability and substantial means to provide development and guarantee a good standard of living. Unfortunately, that is the tale of Nigeria. It is a tale of poor governance.”⁵⁷⁴ A failure of development oriented leadership.

5.5.2 Protection of Lives and Properties

The responsibility of securing the lives and properties in Nigeria lies on the shoulders of the elected president who commands the authority of “371,000 police personnel: 130,000 in the Army: 18,000 and 15,000 in the Navy and Air Force respectively”⁵⁷⁵ There are other 10 prominent institutions under the command of the president, that are involved in the responsibility of managing the security of the country. They include: the “National Intelligence

⁵⁷³ Shanum, S. (2013), Democracy and bad leadership in Nigeria. Premium Time. No page. Available online at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/127105-democracyand-bad-leadership-in-nigeria-by-simonshanum.html>. Retrieved on 03.04.2021.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Yagboyaju, D. A. (2016), Corruption, democracy, and development: Lessons for Africa and Asia. A paper presented at the Seventh Annual Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit, Making Sustainable Development Goals Work for People, August 22-25. University of Ibadan, Nigeria. P. 52.

Agency (NIA), Department of State Security Services (DSSS), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Fire Service (FFS) and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), among others.”⁵⁷⁶ Others include, the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON).

It is noteworthy that “[s]ome of the functions of these security agencies as provided by law include amongst others the preservation of law and order, detection of any crime within Nigeria, maintenance of internal security, the protection and preservation of all non-military classified matters concerned with the internal security of Nigeria.”⁵⁷⁷ However, hardly can the lives and properties of the ordinary citizens be said to be secured. According to the Global Terrorism Index released in 2020, Nigeria occupies the third position in a list of the most terrorized countries in the world.⁵⁷⁸ It is a sad reality that since 2001, over 22,441 people have been killed because of insecurity⁵⁷⁹ and between 2007 and 2019, there have been 4,383 terrorist attacks in Nigeria.⁵⁸⁰ This could only be described as enormous loss of human lives.

Indeed, the political leadership of the Nigerian state lack the will for effective governance. Consequently, the country is facing the challenges of multidimensional security threats, which include assassinations, insurgencies, terror acts, abductions, armed robberies, communal clashes, and ethno-religious conflicts. On the same note, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) agrees that the “government is failing to live up to its first duty to ensure the safety of life and property of its citizenry. Armed robbers continue to threaten our possessions and indeed our lives. People are turning to unacceptable violent vigilante solutions because the official Security Agencies remain ineffective and unable to prevent or respond adequately to criminal activities.”⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁶ Yagboyaju, D. A. & Adeoye, O. A. (2019), P. 5.

⁵⁷⁷ Nzarga, F. D. (2014), An Analysis of Human Rights Violation by the Nigerian Security Services. In: Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization. Vol. 30. Pp. 1-9, (P. 1).

⁵⁷⁸ Global Terrorism Index (2020), Measuring the Impact of Terrorism. Institute for Economics and Peace. P. 8. Available online at: <https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>. Retrieved on 24.04.2021.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 21.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 36.

⁵⁸¹ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria [CBCN] (2001), Op. cit. §.4.

This is an indication of failure in governance and the political leaders must take responsibility. According to Anning (2016), most of these security challenges have emerged partly because of “multiple socio-economic injustices,” including but not limited to “marginalization, social inequality, political exclusion, corruption, economic deprivation, unequal allocation and distribution of state resources.”⁵⁸² Indeed, without security, other socio-economic goals would be difficult to attain. The failure to protect lives and properties in Nigeria is a tale of poor governance. It is a failure of the political system.

5.5.3 Protection of Human Rights

Human rights are “rights which all human beings have by virtue of their humanity, such as the right to life, dignity of human person, personal liberty, fair hearing and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”⁵⁸³ Pope John XXIII in his encyclical ‘Pacem in Terris’ admonished that “[e]very individual “is entitled to the legal protection of his [or her] rights, and such protection must be effective, unbiased, and strictly just.”⁵⁸⁴ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, “provides for fundamental rights of citizens, including the right to life, right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, and the right to acquire and own property anywhere in Nigeria.”⁵⁸⁵ A typical example is the destruction of more than 20 houses in the Logo 1 area of Makurdi in Benue state, overseen by armed police in May 2020. “The Governor of Benue state denied any knowledge or involvement in the act but failed to investigate the incident.”⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸² Anning, K. (2016), Negotiating the West Africa conundrum: Developing society through human security and social justice. Keynote address at the international conference on Africa since independence: Promise, pugnacity, and failure in the post-colonial contexts, August 3-5. University of Ibadan, Nigeria. P. 4.

⁵⁸³ Onwuazombe, I. I. (2017), Human Rights Abuse and Violations in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Oil-Producing Communities in the Niger Delta Region. In: Annual Survey of International & Comparative Law: 22 (1), Article 8. Available online at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/annlsurvey/vol22/iss1/8>. Retrieved on 24.04.2021. Pp. 115-150, (115).

⁵⁸⁴ Pope John XXIII (1963), Op. cit. §.27.

⁵⁸⁵ Onwuazombe, I. I. (2017). Pp. 115.

⁵⁸⁶ Amnesty International (2020), Op. cit. No page.

Indeed, human rights abuses and violations in Nigeria cut across the entire spectrum of rights.⁵⁸⁷ Some of the violations of human rights are related to abuses by armed groups, unlawful attacks against innocent citizens, excessive use of force by the police and the military, arbitrary arrests and detentions without bail, torture and other ill-treatment of people in detention, enforced disappearances, freedom of expression, right to health, poor prison conditions, gender-based violence, right to housing and forced evictions, etc. Despite repeated government pledges to address the problem of human rights abuses and in the Nigerian criminal justice system, “little progress has been made.”⁵⁸⁸

The rights to freedom of association, expression, and peaceful assembly have been routinely violated by the security forces. On this note, the CBCN lamented that “[m]any Nigerians feel that their rights are being infringed upon where the Sharia law has been imposed as state law. Because of Sharia law, thousands have been forced to relocate from their places of abode and work at great cost and loss to themselves. Many others, indigenes of these states, have nowhere to relocate to. Others suffer in silence because they are too poor to relocate or powerless to seek legal redress. We regard this imposition of Sharia law as state law grossly irresponsible and unacceptable.”⁵⁸⁹

Also, Amnesty International in their 2020 report stated that “the authorities used repressive laws to harass, intimidate, arrest and detain human rights defenders, activists, media workers and perceived critics. Journalists have been subjected to intimidation, harassment and beatings by the police and the military.”⁵⁹⁰ For instance, the military flouted an Abuja High Court order in July for the release of Martins Idakpini, an army officer who was detained in June 2020 after he publicly condemned the military’s handling of the fight against Boko Haram insurgents.⁵⁹¹ In April 2020, Chijioke Agwu who is a reporter working with the Sun newspaper in Ebonyi State was arrested after he published an article on a Lassa fever outbreak. Also, Peter Okutu, a reporter of the Vanguard newspaper, was arrested for his report about a military attack on a community in Umuogodoakpu-Ngbo. However, both Okutu and Agwu were released without

⁵⁸⁷ Onwuazombe, I. I. (2017), Op. cit. P. 116.

⁵⁸⁸ Amnesty International (2021), Human Rights Abuses. In: Nigeria Human Rights Report. No page. Available online at: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/nigeria/>. Retrieved on 24.04.2021.

⁵⁸⁹ CBCN (2001), Op. cit. §.4.

⁵⁹⁰ Amnesty International (2020), Op. cit. No page.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

charges.⁵⁹² Between March and April 2020, the National Human Rights Commission in Nigeria documented 105 complaints of human rights violations, including the use of excessive force perpetrated by security forces in 24 states and in Abuja.⁵⁹³

In the oil producing region of Niger Delta, Pollution and environmental damage caused by the harmful practice of gas flaring perpetrated by the oil companies have a serious impact on people and government agencies responsible for enforcement are ineffective and, in some cases, compromised by conflicts of interest.⁵⁹⁴ Some of the rights typically violated in the oil-producing communities include the right to life, the right to health, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right to equal protection of the law, right to the dignity of human person, right to work, means of livelihood or employment and the right to development.⁵⁹⁵ Indeed, the failure to protect human rights is a gross failure of the political system.

It is relevant to note that the political system in Nigeria shows lack of willingness or incompetence in handling the various structural and institutional challenges facing the country. This is a failure of the system, and the political system must take responsibility. Indeed, Nigeria needs leaders with a sense of purpose.

5.6 A Summary of Chapter Five

In this chapter we analysed the normative basis for development and actions from the Christian ethical perspective using some selected human rights declarations of the United Nations and the Nigerian constitution as a framework. We analysed the thoughts in the Catholic social doctrine on the common good and some communiques of the CBCN and the DBK/EKD on a common responsibility in the community. Five of these common responsibilities were highlighted. The option for the poor/underprivileged and the need to protect and fight for them in the political system was discussed. The structural and institutional consequences of the lack of normative basis for development exposes the failure of the political system, which is visible in irresponsible leadership, ethnic/religious violence, corruption, insecurity, human rights abuses, and the misuse of religion.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Onwuazombe, I. I. (2017), Op. cit. P. 119.

Indeed, Nigeria needs a leadership that manifests itself in an excellent performance of practices implying the virtues that enable practitioners to observe all the normative principles of each practice. The country has suffered a history of weak political leadership, corruption, greed, abuse of power, etc. The situation in Nigerian has degenerated to the point where it is unable to provide minimal social security for its vulnerable population. With the weakness of the political system and its ineffectiveness to fight corruption and security challenges, one can only seek for a change in the political leadership. This change can only come from the people through the election of responsible and credible persons into leadership positions. They must also be courageous to defend their votes.

According to the CBCN, “power has been taken away from the people, and put into the hands of an elite. The voice of the people is no longer heard in the halls of government and the people have become numbed and passive. One reason for this is that people do not have a proper understanding of the personality and responsibility of the officials they elect in supposedly free and fair elections. As a result, many elected officials are not accountable and have no sense of service to those who elected them. Small blocks of persons, either in government or connected with government, selfishly obstruct what the people want.”⁵⁹⁶ As a result, the notion of “public interest” is very underdeveloped among Nigerians; there is no general notion of public interest in the society, unless it is related to one’s ethnic group, village clan, or extended family.⁵⁹⁷

In governing, leaders must focus on the Common Good and ensure that the people and their aspirations, both individual and collective, assume paramount importance. As a matter of justice not charity, political governance must pay particular attention to the provision of basic amenities, making sound policies and showing concern for the underprivileged of the society who are often deprived of the opportunity to participate in their own development.⁵⁹⁸ In the effort to bring about a more democratic climate and build national unity based on a true federalism, a national conference may prove helpful. Such a conference will succeed only if it represents all the people, from all parts of Nigeria, men and women, rich and poor, and not a recycled assembly of greedy leaders who have already failed the nation.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ CBCN (2001), Op. cit. §.6.

⁵⁹⁷ Ocheje, P. D. (2018), Norms, law and social change: Nigeria’s anti-corruption struggle, 1999–2017. *Crime Law & Social Change* 70. Pp. 363–381, (P. 375). Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-017-9736-9>. Retrieved on 09.04.2021.

⁵⁹⁸ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (2019), Op. cit. §.3.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. §.8.

Chapter Six: The Response of CIDJAP to the Institutional Failure

In the last two chapters, it was obvious that Nigeria suffers an institutional failure and thus, needs development-oriented leadership that would not only provide basic amenities and equal opportunities for the citizens, but would also protect lives, and rights, and improve the quality of life of the people. This is the aim of development. The key ingredients for the quality of life of the individual in this context are education, health, economy, social and political satisfaction. Nigeria lacks such ingredients for the quality of life. As already shown in the previous chapter, the people live in abject poverty although the country has “the ability and substantial means to provide development and guarantee a good standard of living. Unfortunately, that is the tale of Nigeria. It is a tale of poor governance, insecurity and poverty in the midst of plenty.”⁶⁰⁰

In this chapter and the subsequent chapters, the researcher shall focus on the active role of religion and its response to the institutional failure and the need for a better society, through the activities of the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace, which is an example of the response of religion. Thus, the researcher shall analyse the structures, objectives, achievements and challenges of CIDJAP from 1986 to 2014. This would show the role the Institute played (and still plays) in the political and socio-economic lives of the people within these years. The mission statement of the Institute⁶⁰¹ is “Empowerment of people, promotion of integral Development, Challenging structures of injustice, creating hope and working for peace.”⁶⁰² The Institute was “established to promote and further the principles of development, justice, peace, human rights, balanced education, religious freedom and tolerance, especially on behalf of the dejected, the powerless and the oppressed of the Nigerian society”⁶⁰³ and its motto is “If you want Peace, Work for Justice.”⁶⁰⁴

I am specifically using CIDJAP here for two reasons; because I am a Catholic Priest, and because I have worked as a deputy director in CIDJAP where I had a practical experience of the level of achievements recorded in providing a solution to the structural and institutional failure in the country. For clarity, my use of the word church here specifically refers to the Catholic church.

⁶⁰⁰ Shanum, S. (2013), Op. cit. No page.

⁶⁰¹ The Institute here means CIDJAP.

⁶⁰² CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), CIDJAP Printing and Publishing House, Uwani – Enugu. P. 6.

⁶⁰³ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 295.

⁶⁰⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), A Decade of CIDJAP. CIDJAP Press, Enugu. P. 1.

6.1 The Meaning and Origin of CIDJAP

CIDJAP is situated in the Catholic Diocese of Enugu in Nigeria and serves the purpose of furthering, in a more concrete manner, her evangelization process in the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*. The Institute is recognized by the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace in the Vatican and maintains a good working relationship with other such local and international allied agencies and organizations. It is also registered in the Federal Republic of Nigeria with the National Corporate Affairs Commission as a corporate body No. 7461.⁶⁰⁵ Its logo is a map of Africa showing two human hands in a friendly handshake which symbolizes hope for the downtrodden, openness to dialogue, friendship and solidarity.⁶⁰⁶ It represents a sign of readiness to fight against “the structures of oppression, agents of injustice and other religious ideological groups of the Nigerian state and society as well as with the poor, the homeless and the less privileged of the society both in Nigeria and across Africa who also have a claim and right to life, respectful and decent living, religious liberty and balanced education.”⁶⁰⁷ It is also relevant to note that “until 1994, CIDJAP remained the only Institute of its kind with a compact and integral programme of activities not only in Nigeria but also in the whole of Africa.”⁶⁰⁸

The origin of CIDJAP in the Catholic Diocese of Enugu in Nigeria could be traced to the fruits of the Second Vatican Council.⁶⁰⁹ The council in its document *Gaudium et Spes*, had outlined principles on practical actions for a more systematic but actively involving role of the church in the promotion and furtherance of development, justice and peace in the human society.⁶¹⁰ The council was motivated by its concern for the dejected, the poor, the marginalized and those who suffer grave injustices in the human society.⁶¹¹ In response to this motivation, Pope Paul the VI inaugurated the Pontifical Commission “*Justitia et Pax*” on January 6, 1967.⁶¹² The commission was given a five year experimental period. The Commission faced with complex

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 1.

⁶⁰⁶ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 32.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. P. 32.

⁶⁰⁸ CIDJAP Annual Report (1994), CIDJAP Printing and Publishing House, Uwani - Enugu. P. 3.

⁶⁰⁹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 297.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), Op. cit. No. 40-43, and 89.

⁶¹¹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 297.

⁶¹² Pope Paul VI (1967b), *Motu Proprio Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam* of January 6, 1967. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. January 6, 1967. No page. Available online at:

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_pro_20011004_en.html. Retrieved on 01.03.2021.

and multifaceted problems, carefully studied the document *Gaudium et Spes* and put into practice the precepts of the pastoral constitution, thus making the voice of the church to be heard in the society as the herald of true justice and peace. The Pope praised the success and achievements of the Commission and encouraged all Christians and people of goodwill especially the Catholic Dioceses and the Catholic Bishops Conferences of the different countries to set up similar commissions in their immediate and respective environments for the purpose of creating options for the poor and those who suffer injustice.⁶¹³

It is in response to the above challenge of Pope Paul VI, that the Catholic bishop of Enugu Diocese, M. U. Eneje instituted a diocesan Commission for Development, Justice and Peace on September 25, 1986, with Obiora Ike as the Chairman of the Commission.⁶¹⁴ Enugu diocese was among the first, not only in Nigeria but also in Africa, to respond to this challenge. The Commission was charged with the responsibility of translating into practical terms the doctrines and precepts of the Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II Council document; *Gaudium et Spes* and other Social documents of the church.⁶¹⁵ “The Commission also had the responsibility to investigate, study and analyse matters concerning denials of human rights, injustices, freedom of religion, religious tolerance, conflicts between the local church and other institutions, and proffer ways of resolving the challenges within the bounds of the church’s Magisterium.”⁶¹⁶

The Commission was given a five-point agenda:

- “1. To advise Enugu Diocese on matters affecting Justice, Peace, Human Rights and Human Promotion.
2. To act as a contact point between the diocese and the entire world in the gathering of information on issues relating to Justice and Peace, Communications Forum including gathering Newsletters, Magazines, Journals of world-church significance and publication of relevant materials.
3. To create awareness on Justice and peace issues within the various parishes, religious congregations, etc. especially by forming small Justice and Peace groups in immediate vicinity.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Nwafor, C. J. (2002). P. 299.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. Pp. 299-300.

4. To attend meetings relating to Justice, Peace and Development and Caritas and to help implement decisions reached at such meetings.

5. To respond to the call of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace by making Justice an apostolate to the poor in all manners possible.”⁶¹⁷

Thus, in pursuit of the goals of the Commission, Obiora Ike initiated the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) on the 4th of October 1986. This Institute became an active organ of the Church in the promotion of research, education, dialogue, human promotion, etc.⁶¹⁸ After 34 years (1986 – 2020), CIDJAP has become a reference point in terms of fighting for human rights, fighting for the weak and the poor, promotion of education, religious tolerance, development and efficacy, not only in Nigeria but in the entire African continent.⁶¹⁹ Hence, the Institute has remained focused on its vision of “Promotion of pastoral and social teachings of the Church, giving succour to the downtrodden, encouraging African self-determination, African self-reliance, and inculcating in the people the spirit of hard work and dignity of labour.”⁶²⁰

Today, the Institute has grown from the strength of a five-man Commission to over one thousand personnel.⁶²¹ “Its relevance has been extended beyond a research and advisory institute to development, justice, peace, education, research, prison services, human rights, inter-religious dialogue, social housing programme, banking, health care services, financial and small scale projects and co-operatives among the rural population, printing, farming, academic sponsorship, caritas, water resources management, staff training and rehabilitation services, etc.”⁶²² It has “37 Staff Members, Six Consultants, 30 Volunteers, Five Entrepreneurial Ventures, One Micro-Finance Scheme, Five Charitable Trusts and thousands of Beneficiaries.”⁶²³ CIDJAP “has shown signs of rapid and stable development. The infrastructures it has acquired and developed for this relatively short period of time, its fame in

⁶¹⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (1992), CIDJAP Printing and Publishing House, Uwani - Enugu. P. 7.

⁶¹⁸ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 1.

⁶¹⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), CIDJAP Printing and Publishing House, Uwani - Enugu. Pp. 6-8.

⁶²⁰ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁶²¹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), Op. cit. P. 6.

⁶²² Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 303.

⁶²³ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 5.

Nigeria and its scope of operation are eloquent testimonies of a richly developed and developing Catholic Institute in Nigeria.”⁶²⁴

6.2 The Structures of CIDJAP

To effectively disseminate the good news, the Commission for Justice and Peace begins from the smallest unit of the Catholic Church’s structures up to the level of the Vatican. The smallest unit of the structure of the Church is the small Christian community. At this level, there is a contact person that is expected to be well schooled on the issues of Justice and Peace. These contact persons at the community level are in touch with the parish committee of the Commission.⁶²⁵ The Parish Committee falls under the Diocesan Commission. All the Diocesan Commissions put together form the Provincial Commission at the Regional level and from these we have the National Commission for Justice and Peace, which report to the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace in the Vatican.⁶²⁶

6.3 Self-Set Aims and Objectives of CIDJAP

According to the CIDJAP’s annual activities report of the year 2013, it observed: “In our society, many people live in poverty, sickness, ignorance, oppression and other social vices. Compassion for those in need and the longing to set people free moved CIDJAP on and in solidarity with others, to work for justice in the society.”⁶²⁷ Thus, in pursuance of these noble goals [...] CIDJAP set up for itself some objectives as a means of achieving the ultimate objectives for which it was established in accordance with the terms of reference it was given and in line with the demands of *Gaudium et Spes* No.91. I have structured these objectives into thirteen points for clarity:

1. “To awaken God’s people to the full understanding of their role and duty in the fields of development, justice, charity, peace, human advancement, human rights and projects-promotion related to the said areas in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general”⁶²⁸ and “of

⁶²⁴ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 303.

⁶²⁵ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 11.

⁶²⁶ Ibid. P. 11.

⁶²⁷ Ibid. P. 8.

⁶²⁸ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 1-2.

their worth and role in creation of other people and especially in the areas of Justice, development and peace.”⁶²⁹

2. To develop and deepen reflection and action on theological ideas and Christian ideals in the context of a developing theology in Nigeria.⁶³⁰

3. Spreading the Social Teachings of the Catholic church as have been urged by the various Papal Encyclicals and seeking the awareness to participate and accentuate integral human development via concrete projects,⁶³¹ so that “the world may become a better place.”⁶³²

4. To avail the believers of information and formation through education of persons, publication and distribution of booklets, pamphlets and other enlightenment materials aimed at exploring, analysing, and considering perspectives that can help in a common search for authentic values in our faith in God and human dignity.⁶³³

5. Encouraging and enhancing technical skills among the youths by sponsoring talented young people of suitable character for technical, practical and theoretical education within the country and abroad.⁶³⁴

6. As an African Institute, CIDJAP fosters international co-operation by promoting African studies and cultures and enhancement of contacts between various interest groups, international Catholic agencies, non-governmental Organizations, and world bodies.⁶³⁵

7. To arrange on a constant and continual bases, meetings, workshops, colloquia, lectures on community development ventures, symposia, and other varied development issues at various levels of local and international participation with the aim of animating, conscientizing and motivating the people on important issues that touch and affect their lives.⁶³⁶

⁶²⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶³⁰ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 1-2.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² CIDJAP ANNUAL REPORT (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶³³ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 1-2.

⁶³⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 1-2.

8. To help alleviate the problems of the local poor and needy population through initiating, participating, and developing projects related to health, agriculture, social housing, women empowerment, academic research, youth employment and vocational training.⁶³⁷
9. To promote and encourage indigenous Art by supporting poor, talented artists.
10. The Institute champions the cause of the oppressed and marginalized, speaking out and acting against injustice and oppression, abuse and neglect maintaining and fighting for human rights, prisoners' welfare, and civil liberties of all persons generally and being the last hope of the common man on matters of human rights and civil liberties.⁶³⁸
11. As an institute for peace, CIDJAP initiates dialogue between Catholic church and various Christian confessions, Muslims, Non-Christians, non-believers, African Traditional religionists and the state with the aim of promoting peace, tolerance and co-existence in a multi-cultural society in the light of Christian social principles.⁶³⁹
12. Fostering international development and cooperation among nations and bodies by virtue of its position as agent of development.⁶⁴⁰
13. The Institute recognizes the necessity of the three basic needs of man and it strives to provide clothing, food and housing for as many people as possible.⁶⁴¹

It is relevant to note that the pursuit of these objectives has yielded and continues to yield fruitful results.⁶⁴²

6.4 The Achievements of CIDJAP

The Institute has been able to translate into concrete action the purpose for which the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission was established. The Institute has been able to put machineries in place for the realizations of its objectives. The motivating force for venturing into these programs by CIDJAP is the dictum that, "God intended the earth with everything in it for the use of all human beings and all peoples. So, created goods should flow fairly to all, regulated

⁶³⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴⁰ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. Pp. 5-6.

by Justice and accompanied by Charity.”⁶⁴³ I have grouped these achievements into different categories for the sake of clarity. We shall look at only eight of such achievements. I shall rely on the various annual reports of the institute, the analysis of some scholars and my personal experience during the period I served as the deputy director.

6.4.1 Catholic Social Teaching and Theology for Lay People (CST/TLP)

“The CST/TLP which is an empowerment program for the lay faithful in theological and doctrinal issues including the social teaching of the Catholic Church.”⁶⁴⁴ According to Nwafor (2002), the Institute for CST/TLP was set up to serve the purpose of furthering the cause of human rights, balanced and all-round education, religious freedom and religious tolerance in Enugu diocese and beyond.⁶⁴⁵ Many professionals, who have graduated from this program, are making great impact in the Church.⁶⁴⁶ The Institute which began with an initial enrolment of 50 students when the school was established in 1990 has graduated close to 250 students within its first six years.⁶⁴⁷

It is relevant to note that this is an important part of CIDJAP that has not yet been properly harnessed. Its importance is based on the relevance of Ethics and the Catholic social teachings in the lives of the people and the society in general. However, in 2013, the program took a new dimension as CIDJAP went into a collaboration with a team of Professors from the Catholic University of Washington USA to facilitate summer lectures on Catholic Social Teachings for both the clergy and laity.⁶⁴⁸ This collaboration yielded a lot of positive results and made a huge impression on the participants who come from different works of life: Priests, lawyers, monks, professed sisters, engineers, architects, teachers, etc. and from different and various dioceses in Nigeria. It is important to note that these graduates of the summer program on CST are already making great and visible impacts in their various Dioceses, states and other areas.⁶⁴⁹ These graduates as evaluated by Nwafor (2002), are also socially and pastorally active through

⁶⁴³ Gaudium et Spes (1965), Op. cit. No.69, and 89.

⁶⁴⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 17.

⁶⁴⁵ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 307.

⁶⁴⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 17.

⁶⁴⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁶⁴⁸ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 17.

⁶⁴⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 4.

various seminars they organize, Christian education in schools, human rights, religious freedom and religious tolerance.⁶⁵⁰

One of the impacts of this Institute is the formation of a national organization by some of the graduates, with the name ‘Catholic Social Teachings Organization’ (CASTO). This organization works closely with CIDJAP in pursuit of the realization of CIDJAP’s aims and objectives.⁶⁵¹ Some graduates have also joined the Nigerian branch of African Association for the Advancement of Catholic Social Teaching (AAACASOT) where they have continued to advance the objectives of CIDJAP.⁶⁵² It is relevant to note that a diploma course on Human Rights has been added to the curriculum of studies in this institute with a professional in the discipline as the facilitator.⁶⁵³

Indeed, through its CST/TLP program, CIDJAP has deepened “pastoral reflection and action, theological ideas, Christian ideals and the social teachings of the church, the awareness of the fundamental human rights, balanced education and religious tolerance are being disseminated, not only in Enugu diocese but also in the whole of Nigeria and beyond.”⁶⁵⁴ Also, “the active participation of the lay faithful in the lives of both the church and the state is thus enhanced through the training and motivation of the institute, making the beneficiaries of the program become not only listeners but preachers and doers of God’s message to mankind; preachers and defenders of justice, peace, human rights, balanced education, religious freedom and religious tolerance.”⁶⁵⁵ Thus, for the first time in the history of Nigeria, lay people were given the opportunity to formally study theology and the Church’s social teachings, through the instrumentality of the CST/TLP program.⁶⁵⁶

6.4.2 Seminars, Conferences and Symposia

CIDJAP has built up a tradition of organizing seminars and symposia on a routine basis in order to create awareness of the church’s social teachings and fundamental doctrines especially

⁶⁵⁰ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 308.

⁶⁵¹ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), Op. cit. P. 10.

⁶⁵⁴ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 308.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 309.

⁶⁵⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 4.

on human rights, education, religious freedom and religious tolerance.⁶⁵⁷ These seminars and symposia are directed towards increasing the degree of awareness of Catholics, Christians and Non-Catholics in Nigeria to see the development especially of the human person, the guarantee and respect of her fundamental rights, as challenges of the gospel message.⁶⁵⁸

Annually, over 10 seminars/workshops are organized by CIDJAP on various issues concerning society, state, the church, human rights, dialogues, co-operation and charity in the context of the Catholic Social Doctrine. Some of the conferences/workshops organized by CIDJAP include; “The International Conference on Religious Freedom, Christian Persecution and Intolerance in Nigeria, aimed at raising concerns on how best to approach the growing insecurity in Nigeria with the advent and menace of Boko Haram.”⁶⁵⁹ The CARITAS Week Seminar was also organized to raise awareness on the plight of the poor and the needy in the society and the need to take positive action.⁶⁶⁰ Other conferences, workshops or seminars include, the ‘Africae Munus’ Conference, Bishop Michael Eneja Memorial Lecture, Green Deal Nigeria in collaboration with Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation, Interactive Forum on Central Bank of Nigeria fund for development and support of small and medium scale entrepreneurs,⁶⁶¹ the Inter-continental Symposium on ‘Catholic Social Teaching en route in Africa’ with the participation and attendance of the continent’s renowned academics, ecclesiastical dignitaries and Human Rights activists to assess and re-direct the continent’s permanent crisis, elevate her joys and resolve her sorrows.⁶⁶²

Communiqué and resolutions of these symposia, seminars, workshops and other related materials are published through the CIDJAP’s print media, and circulated throughout Nigeria and Africa as a way of motivating people into action in seeking to bring into concrete reality the basic demands of the social teachings and doctrines of the church in defending justice, peace, human rights, religious freedom and tolerance.⁶⁶³ These publications and print-circulations have succeeded in creating awareness of the church’s social teachings and

⁶⁵⁷ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 309.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 310.

⁶⁵⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 24.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶⁶² Ike, O. (1998), Freedom is More Than a Word. CIDJAP Computer and Printing Press, Uwani – Enugu. Pp. 264-265.

⁶⁶³ CIDJAP Annual Report (1995), CIDJAP Printing and Publishing House, Uwani - Enugu. P. 7.

actions.⁶⁶⁴ It has also created the readiness for dialogue among different Christian groups, between the different religions and most importantly between the state and religious bodies.⁶⁶⁵

6.4.3 Prisons Social and Legal Services

In the analysis of Ike (1998), CIDJAP aims among other things to work as a human rights educational centre in a country that has deteriorated into painful expressions of human rights violations and abuses, lawlessness from both the citizens and law enforcement agencies, and near anarchy.⁶⁶⁶ Thus, the prisons legal and social services department is a strong organ of the Institute that has been tasked with the responsibility of “defending the rights of the oppressed poor in courts and promoting human rights through campaigns and education, litigation and legal assistance, prisoners welfare support, driving for justice sector reforms and other forms of human rights awareness.”⁶⁶⁷

This department of CIDJAP has other sub-departments like the Prisons Welfare Support Desk and the Justice Sector Reform/Advocacy desk.⁶⁶⁸ The human rights/legal department covers four prisons in Enugu state and collaborates with other legal/human rights agencies spread across Nigeria.⁶⁶⁹ Its aims and functions have also been extended to the areas of “health care for inmates; rehabilitation of ex-prisoners; pastoral and religious care; career and skill development acquisition and training for serving inmates; [...] voluntary contributions; public enlightenment and programs which lead to an attitude change of the larger public so that adequate focus is given to the dignity of incarcerated prison inmates and the deteriorating situation generally on the issue of the human rights of persons in the polity.”⁶⁷⁰

It is relevant to note that the “Nigerian prisons constitute some specific areas in Nigeria where human rights and social justice are constantly abused. A good number of presumed innocent Nigerian citizens are not only imprisoned or detained without due process of the law but are

⁶⁶⁴ Efforts are made to publish the resolutions and communique in some of the Nigerian Newspapers, see the article in the Nation Newspaper. Available at: <https://thenationonlineng.net/seminar-seeks-end-to-herdsmen-farmers-clashes/> Retrieved on 18.11.2020.

⁶⁶⁵ CIDJAP Annual Report (1995), Op. cit. P. 7.

⁶⁶⁶ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 211.

⁶⁶⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 15.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 211.

also lumped together in very small and squalid prison cells, sometimes even together with very notorious prisoners already sentenced to death and awaiting execution for specific criminal offences.”⁶⁷¹ As a result of this, many Nigerian citizens spend many years in the prison or police cells under deplorable sanitary and inhuman conditions, awaiting trials.⁶⁷² “Undocumented experiences have shown that a few of such citizens are rather turned into criminals by their forced togetherness and eventual association with the criminals in these prisons and police cells while others die of starvation and lack of Medicare.”⁶⁷³

The situation of the Nigerian prisons was aptly captured by Ike (1998) thus; “The prison is a world of its own with its own unique language and culture, its problems and prospects which will not be readily obvious to the outsider. The overcrowded nature of the Nigerian prisons and the lumping together of the first-time offenders and mere suspects (some of them minor offenders) with hardened criminals all living together under conditions of horrid squalor. [...] The fact that prison officials either divert foods and various supplies meant for prison inmates to their own use or exploit the prisoners and their families by asking for financial inducements to perform for the prisoners even the most routine of their duties. The fact that over sixty percent of prisoners are suspects awaiting trial makes the overcrowding of the prisons quite an artificial creation.”⁶⁷⁴

CIDJAP believes that “basic rights exist for every person to food, clean water, a home, an education, health-care, livelihood, a safe environment, protection from violence, equality of opportunity, freedom of conscience, movement and speech [...] and the fundamental right to life.”⁶⁷⁵ As a result, CIDJAP developed the ‘Prisons Social and Legal Services Scheme’ in 1991, to help foster and protect the fundamental rights of such citizens through seminars and lectures organized for the inmates of the prisons with a view to re-orientating them and making them aware of their fundamental rights and the matching obligations even as prisoners, and for the prisons and police staff, on the need to respect and protect the fundamental rights of others

⁶⁷¹ Nigerian Congress of Catholic Prisons Chaplains (NCCPC), A Communique issued at the Second all Nigerian Congress of Catholic Prisons Chaplains held in Enugu, 3-6 December 1995. CIDJAP Library, Enugu. P.3.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 215-216.

⁶⁷⁵ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 6.

including convicts as is demanded by their professional ethics.⁶⁷⁶ The judiciary, civil liberties organizations, University law departments, the police and the state law enforcement agents, lay men, the state and the church are usually fully represented at such seminars.⁶⁷⁷

The legal department makes sincere efforts to throw more light on the deplorable condition of the Nigerian prisons and police cell. “It is obvious for all who care that force, violence, brutality, squalor, depression, marginalization, hunger, darkness, humidity, sickness, maltreatment, neglect, abandonment, incarceration and spiritual dilapidation characterize the situation in virtually all the prisons in Nigeria. The same situation exists in shabbily kept mosquito-infested police cells where primitive arbitrary behaviour is the name of the game. Often the innocent are victims. Charges are proffered against citizens to which they could hardly place a defence for lack of funds and the criminal justice system denies human beings their value and dignity.”⁶⁷⁸ Such inhuman condition cannot but elicit the desire for a positive action towards ameliorating the pains and sufferings of prison inmates.

As a result, the legal department has recorded huge success. “She has been able to secure and perfect bail applications made to the various high courts.”⁶⁷⁹ The department also engaged in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) whose number was 520 in 2013 alone.⁶⁸⁰ This department was also involved in mediation and counselling for troubled clients with bails for police detainees and rehabilitation for ex-prison inmates.⁶⁸¹ It also helps detainees and prisoners in Nigeria whose conditions warrant such, with supplies of food, medical facilities and clothing.⁶⁸² “Through dialogue and intervention, CIDJAP has succeeded in effecting a decongestion of the overcrowded Nigerian prisons securing freedom and justice for victims of poverty, victims of overzealous state-law enforcement agents and freedom from injustice.”⁶⁸³

Indeed, the legal advocacy unit has been in the Enugu State Justice Reform Team which is made up of stake holders in the Justice sector. It also belongs to the Human Rights Committee, Victims Crime Support services committee and the Police Human Rights Manual Preparatory

⁶⁷⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (1995), Op. cit. P. 4.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 213.

⁶⁷⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P.15.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), Op. cit. Pp. 14-15.

⁶⁸² Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 315.

⁶⁸³ Ibid. P. 317.

Committee.⁶⁸⁴ CIDJAP also runs programs on reintegrating and rehabilitating prisoners. This is in cognizance of the fact that many ex-prisoners lose their jobs, academic programs and are sometimes estranged from their families.⁶⁸⁵ The program aims at achieving three objectives;

1. Fostering and restating the human dignity and rights of prisoners and ex-prisoners.
2. The Prisoners and ex-prisoners are assisted towards finding a speedy re-orientation to normal and decent life.
3. They are re-united with their families and re-integrated into the society.⁶⁸⁶

This program gives the ex-prisoners and prisoners alike the courage to go on with life. At least a total of “112 discharged Prisoners have been fully rehabilitated and re-integrated to their respective families and communities.”⁶⁸⁷ By the year 2000, over 200 inmates had regained their freedom through this program.⁶⁸⁸ CIDJAP has played vital roles in “fighting to have the fundamental and human rights of the prisoners respected by the state and its law enforcement agents. It struggles for peace and justice on behalf of the prisoners, the helpless and the poor of the society. It works tirelessly to secure freedom for people unjustly sent to prison and for those who are forced by poverty and other circumstances to spend long periods in chains for trivial offences.”⁶⁸⁹ It has also organized seminars and workshops for the “Decongestion of prisons and police cells in Nigeria.”⁶⁹⁰

6.4.4 Caritas and Small-Scale Projects

The plights of the defenceless poor and the weak in Nigeria necessitated the creation of CIDJAP’s Caritas and small-scale department.⁶⁹¹ This department enables CIDJAP to play the double role of feeding the hungry with bread and teaching them how to bake the bread themselves. Such people are further assisted financially, materially and ideologically to commence the bakery.⁶⁹² This department of CIDJAP provides the needy with the basic

⁶⁸⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 16.

⁶⁸⁵ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 319.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (1995), Op. cit. P. 15.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 320.

⁶⁹⁰ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 213.

⁶⁹¹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 321.

⁶⁹² CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), Op. cit. P. 17.

necessities of life; food, shelter, clothing, medical assistance, etc. Unemployed people who have learnt trades or skills but have no money to start their own business or trade or borrow money from banks because of lack of collateral securities, are assisted with loans to be paid over specified period with little or no interest and without collateral security.⁶⁹³ With such loans, they are expected to start up small scale businesses and trades. This has helped many families to be independent and self-subsistent. Between the year 1986 and 1996, over two thousand people benefited from this CIDJAP Caritas program.⁶⁹⁴

“This department has helped many poor persons who come to them for help including the persecuted Christians from the crisis regions in the country where the hostility of the Boko Haram is predominant.”⁶⁹⁵ The department supports over 460 different poor people with various categories of needs ranging from health challenges, dietary needs, small and medium business people who need financial assistance, education support and families in abject poverty.⁶⁹⁶ The indigent people, the sick, the unemployed, the disabled, women in need, destitute, etc. have all benefited from the program.⁶⁹⁷ This has helped in fostering and protecting the dignity of such individuals as human persons and has helped them to re-discover meaning in life. It has also given them the courage to live.⁶⁹⁸

It is relevant to note that mental and economic development fosters peace and justice. Thus, CIDJAP helps to bring together small scale entrepreneurs in a co-operative to enhance effectiveness of labour, consolidation of capital, increased productivity and to be able to withstand the market forces and threats of the big firms and industries.⁶⁹⁹ Hence, in 1993 CIDJAP initiated the formation of a body of small scale entrepreneurs known as Small Medium Scale Entrepreneurs Promotion and Training Association of Nigeria (SEPTA) with an initial membership of 200 Entrepreneurs.⁷⁰⁰ Today, over 500 projects have been assisted by SEPTA

⁶⁹³ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 322.

⁶⁹⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 7.

⁶⁹⁵ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 18.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 7.

⁶⁹⁸ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 322.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. P. 323.

⁷⁰⁰ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 10.

and useful loans have been granted to its members leading to the creation of job opportunities and growth of business units in Nigeria.⁷⁰¹

Also, through the CIDJAP Caritas and Small-Scale Project, vocational institutes have been set up in some parts of Enugu where crafts like weaving, sewing, knitting, automobile repairs, spraying, upholstery, motor-rewinding, metal work, panel-beating and cookery are learnt.⁷⁰² These vocational institutes “have helped and are still helping many women and young boys/men not gifted to formal education, to gain means of livelihood and useful occupations. Many families and single individuals have thus been given the opportunity of finding means of survival in an economically distressed Nigeria. [...] Career and skills have thus been promoted and encouraged among the youths of the region and the country.”⁷⁰³

CIDJAP strongly believes that trainings and empowerment of youths is the key to sustainable development.⁷⁰⁴ The Oluaka di Mma Vocational and Industrial Technical Training Centre (VITTC) and the Nazareth Skills and Vocational Training Centre have championed this course of training and empowerment.⁷⁰⁵ The VITTC focuses on training of youths especially young men and women in metal works, aluminium works, automobile and electrical works, while the Nazareth centre trains them in beads making, soap making catering and snacks.⁷⁰⁶ In the year 2013, VITTC opened a state-of-the-art automobile section to take care of all forms of motor mechanic works and repairs. “The centre has so far trained over 378 young men and women in their formalized areas of expertise.”⁷⁰⁷ By these efforts, the tendencies to and rate of crimes in the Nigerian polity are reduced through employment opportunities. “The human dignity is thus enhanced and promoted and the fundamental human rights to decent living and gainful employment furthered.”⁷⁰⁸

Also, young and intelligent children have been empowered through the sponsorship and educational support programme for the indigent persons who cannot afford quality

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 324.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 19.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 325.

education.⁷⁰⁹ These children were without hope of going to school and accessing quality education until the intervention of CIDJAP with financial aids to enhance their education from primary to tertiary level.⁷¹⁰

6.4.5 Housing Scheme

Shelter is one of the biting problems of the Nigerian people and one of the basic needs and rights of human person. CIDJAP thus undertook a program of building low-cost housing scheme which would provide over 100 families with shelter of bungalow houses.⁷¹¹ CIDJAP intends to make this scheme an on-going program as part of its evangelization process and efforts to translate the Gospel into action by fulfilling an eschatological moral standard,⁷¹² “I was homeless, and you gave me home.”⁷¹³

6.4.6 Health – Care

Healthcare is another area of serious concern to the Institute. It is passionately concerned with “the delivery of qualitative community health care to the people towards alleviating the agony and difficulties of meeting health care needs.”⁷¹⁴ CIDJAP has been able to build hospitals, clinics, health-care and health education centres in different villages of Enugu like; Akpakwume-Nze, Akagbe Ugwu, Umana, Atakwu, Adani, Ugwuomu and in Enugu metropolis.⁷¹⁵ The communities not covered by these health centres are given medical attention through organized mobile clinic medical services organized by CIDJAP. Efforts are made to see that as many as the neglected poor areas of Enugu state as possible benefit from the CIDJAP’s health-care programs.⁷¹⁶ By the year 2000, sixteen functional community health centres had been built.⁷¹⁷ This has enabled numerous poor and neglected people in the rural areas to have access to adequate medical care.

⁷⁰⁹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 21.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 327.

⁷¹² Ibid. P. 328.

⁷¹³ The Holy Bible (RSV), Matthew 25:35.

⁷¹⁴ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 21.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (1996), Op. cit. P. 11.

⁷¹⁷ CIDJAP Annual Report (2000), Op. cit. P. 24.

The beneficiaries of these centres have been able to access services such as “Health education, HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment, Maternal and childcare, Family planning, Essential drugs and food/water supply, Treatment of minor ailments and dental care, Mental health and domestic accident prevention, Prevention and treatment of endemic diseases, Environmental and occupational health.”⁷¹⁸

CIDJAP believes that availability of such adequate health-care services is one of the most important ways of promoting the dignity of the human person. This also fosters and promotes justice, peace and enables the poor of the society to experience the joy of good health and proper medical attention.⁷¹⁹

6.4.7 The Justice and Peace Farms

One of the basic necessities of man is food, and the right to a good living, one of the fundamental rights of man and the provision of this necessity for the citizenry by ways of mobilization and agricultural enhancement programs is one of the most important factors with which the relevance of any government in a state is measured and determined.⁷²⁰ In 1986 CIDJAP decided to start “the Justice and peace farms located in the rural community of Ugwuomu Nike, approximately 25 kilometers of bad road (untarred, erosion aggressed) from the city of Enugu.”⁷²¹ The land which is about 190 hectares in size is blessed with two sizeable lakes and flowing rivers all the year round and an evergreen original forest which is productive.⁷²² This was one of the first projects CIDJAP went into soon after its creation and the goals at inception included;

- “To make agriculture more attractive and lessen the emphasis on crude oil and other products.
- To encourage young people in the locality to stay at home instead of running away to the big cities.
- To increase food production in both livestock and crops of all types.

⁷¹⁸ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 21.

⁷¹⁹ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 329.

⁷²⁰ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 325.

⁷²¹ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 53.

⁷²² Ibid.

- To improve the living conditions of the whole of the adjoining rural population in various ways (education, sanitation, health, social services, etc.).
- To grow to become self-reliant by profitable agricultural practice.
- To create cooperative farming in the spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity.”⁷²³

In 1997, CIDJAP went into partnership with the Israeli Center for International Agricultural Development Co-operation and a few other bodies to organize and promote an international seminar on communication and agricultural extension methods. The Justice and Peace Farms also did a few other exchange programs with different agricultural organizations that helped in the training of its staff colleges and centers for agricultural developments in Germany, Israel, Holland and Austria.⁷²⁴ These trainings helped in the planning, management, maintenance of the machines, efficacy and increased productivity in the farms.

Through a mechanized and irrigated farm system, the Justice and Peace Farms produce a variety of cash crops, livestock, and poultry, that the people (especially the poor) may enjoy a regular supply of farm products which invariably helps to bring down the market price of food items.⁷²⁵ The farm also provides employment opportunities for the people, thus enhancing the dignity of man. By December 1995, the farm had grown with a permanent staff of 27 and over 200 seasonal staff.⁷²⁶

Indeed, the achievements of CIDJAP have been driven by the desire for environmental productivity and alternative systems, the encouragement to start such projects no matter how small, to improve self-help and pave the way for sustainable improvement in the living conditions of the people, especially the poor.⁷²⁷ CIDJAP Enugu is not relenting in her efforts and these works are translated in many dioceses through many organs related to the Justice, Development and Peace Commission in the Nigerian church.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. Pp. 326.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. Pp. 325-326.

⁷²⁶ CIDJAP Annual Report (1995), Op. cit. P. 8.

⁷²⁷ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 53.

6.5 Challenges and Prospects of CIDJAP

Despite the spiritual, intellectual and social efforts of CIDJAP aimed at ensuring the dignity of the human person, development, justice and peace in the Nigerian polity, through educational empowerment, protection of human rights, religious freedom and tolerance, there exists some challenges or obstacles hindering the full realization of the goals of the Institute which according to Nwafor (2002) arise from both the nature and the structure of CIDJAP.⁷²⁸ The challenges are numerous but the prospects are bright. I shall discuss these challenges and prospects under six categories. Some of these challenges emanate from my experience as the deputy director of CIDJAP (2012 – 2014).

6.5.1 Management

The root cause of collapse in every establishment is often linked to mismanagement. Mismanagement happens at two levels: Human and Infrastructure. It is important for an organization like CIDJAP to work towards a proper management and maintenance of the human and infrastructural establishments. There should be constant training of staff for proper expertise, effective and result oriented input. Being a non-profit oriented organization, the Institute is often faced with the challenge of insufficient funds to sustain itself and its operations. It depends on foreign aids, charity and support that has only a short-term guarantee. Thus, CIDJAP faces the challenge of sponsoring its staff for training program or management course because of the financial implications.

However, the Institute has on some occasions lost money and manpower in the process of staff training. CIDJAP sent some selected staff for international courses and training overseas and some of the trainees refused to come back at the end of the training.⁷²⁹ Those who eventually came back left CIDJAP for more lucrative jobs in the government establishments because of the prospects of allowances, attractive salaries, and pension rights. This could be very discouraging especially when they do not pay back the cost of their training.

The Institute has also successfully completed numerous projects that cost huge sums of money. Unfortunately, some of these projects are dilapidating because of lack of maintenance fund and in some cases, lack of professional management. The Institute faces the challenge of affording the cost of employing skilled professionals to manage certain positions. It would be painful to

⁷²⁸ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 334.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. P. 335.

watch these projects dilapidate because of lack of maintenance culture. The Director must ensure the stability and continuity of all the projects of the Institute for the continuity of CIDJAP. He must embark on aggressive long-term investments for future financial independence and sustainability.

6.5.2 Finance

Every organization needs finance as a basic need to keep it operational, active, and consistently relevant in fulfilling the purpose of its establishment. One of the greatest challenges of the Institute is financial challenge because its sustenance is dependent of the donations from local, regional, and international partners. According to Ike (1998), “CIDJAP has links and cooperation agreements with various local, regional and international organizations.”⁷³⁰ Such partners include: Misereor (Germany), Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany), Deutschordens Wohnstift (Cologne), Caritas Deutschland, Association for the Promotion of Catholic Social Teaching (Germany), Diocese of Augsburg (Germany), Africa Peace and Justice Network USA, HMK Germany, European Union Brussels, etc.⁷³¹ The Institute also receives local supports from the Catholic diocese of Enugu and some rich individuals withing Nigeria.

It is relevant to note that with an annual personnel cost of 15 million naira (ca.30,000 euro), vehicle maintenance and building repairs of 6 million naira (ca.12,000 euro), workshops, sponsorships, school fees, financial grants, prisons and legal supports, printing, electricity and water, etc. that would cost over 10 million naira (ca.20,000 euro) annually.⁷³² CIDJAP is faced with the difficult task and responsibility of maintaining a regular flow of income from its regional, international and local donors. It is the case that often these funds are not easily available, and, in some cases, the funds take too long to be accessed because of bureaucratic principles. However, the Institute must work hard to maintain the international friendship and solidarity that has existed for many years through transparency and honesty in the general organization and the financial affairs of the Institute by conducting regular financial auditing and meticulous accounting for every income and expenditure. This would no doubt build confidence and trust among the existing donors as well as prospective donors. It is necessary for the Institute to arouse and increase local consciousness on the need and benefits of

⁷³⁰ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 49.

⁷³¹ CIDJAP Annual Report (2013), Op. cit. P. 12.

⁷³² Ibid. P. 33, ff.

supporting the organization through donations and local contributions. The Institute must create awareness on its function and activities that would motivate the local population into supporting the programs of development, justice, and peace for the benefits of the poor and the destitute in the community.

There is also a need to embark on long term capital investments that would serve as means of sustenance for the Institute in the near future. Investments in agriculture, purchase of shares, establishment of private firms, etc., would all serve as a means of sure and steady income for CIDJAP. This could be achieved by seeking professional advice from accountants, economists and estate managers. This would surely give CIDJAP the needed financial security to continue enhancing and promoting justice, peace, development, human rights, when the generosity of the donors begins to waver or dwindle.

6.5.3 Recovery of Loans

The Institute employ the method of revolving loans among members of cooperative groups. The cooperative groups are encouraged to know each other and share useful ideas on how to grow their businesses. Each group is about ten to fifteen members. The beneficiary must belong to one of these cooperative groups for the sake of easy identification and recovery of loans with the assistance of the other members of the group. Sometimes, people form cooperative groups just for the sake of collecting the loans only to disband and go away with the loans. There are people who collect loans, use it to pay their hospital bills, school fees, or even wedding celebration without any intention to pay back the loan. They simply change their residence and disappear without trace. Initially other members were made to pay for the defaulters, but with time these other members began to protest this decision because many more members began to default on paying their loans with the knowledge that the group would always take the responsibility and pay.

This is one of the most difficult challenges facing the Institute. Majority of the beneficiaries of CIDJAP's loan scheme are the very poor members of the society and have no collaterals security to present before collecting the loans. It becomes very difficult to recover such loans when the beneficiary defaults in paying back the loan. Since the Institute is a non-profit oriented organization, it may go bankrupt and therefore fold-up. Thus, it is my opinion that the Institute sets up a committee of about five persons from all the cooperative groups who would identify and know the members personally and confirm the purpose stated for the loan by monitoring its implementation. This committee would also be tasked with the responsibility of guiding and

supervising the businesses through unscheduled visits, unbiased assessments and professional advice to both the members of the cooperative and the Institute.

6.5.4 Making CST/TLP More Relevant

The impact of any knowledge acquired is in the application of such knowledge in one's daily life. The CST/TLP must be redesigned to be more actively and practically relevant for both the individuals and the political society. The studies and certificates should empower the individuals to be independent and motivated to promote Justice, peace and human rights.

6.5.5 The Covid 19 Crisis

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic and all its subsequent variants have had severe social, economic and psychological consequences across Nigeria and in many other countries of the world. This has led to dramatic changes in how businesses operate, how offices function and how people behave both at home, school or public spaces. All functions organized by various organisations that are intended to prioritize and optimize spending have either been cancelled or postponed. Many businesses and offices have closed and numerous workers have lost their jobs. Some businesses or institutes have implemented an indefinite hiring freeze. The general effects of the pandemic are like a chain reaction, affecting individuals, groups, organisations, schools and countries. Some countries have gone into recession. The poverty rate in many countries has doubled.

The implication for CIDJAP is that it is faced with more challenges. As a non-profit organization, CIDJAP depends on donations from friends and donor agencies to organize seminars, conferences, prisons social and legal services, caritas and health care support. All these have been put on a temporal stop, not knowing how long the 'temporal' would last.

6.6 The Role of CIDJAP in Politics

As a Catholic social institute, "CIDJAP has made a remarkable imprint in the service of the church in Nigeria through creating avenues for dialogue between the state and the citizens, between the Church and the state, between the different denominations, between Christianity and Islam, between Christianity and ATR, etc."⁷³³ It has also played the role of "promoting a culture of religious tolerance, creating awareness in the areas of fundamental human and religious rights and their corresponding duties, widening the scope of the educational horizon

⁷³³ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Op. cit. P. 332.

of the citizenry, creation of jobs and employment opportunities for the citizens, spreading of the Christian principles of peace, love, charity and justice.”⁷³⁴ Thus, CIDJAP has translated the gospel message into concrete action especially among the dejected, the poor and the oppressed of the society, becoming the practical arm of the Catholic Church in Enugu on matters of justice, peace and development that affects all levels of the society in the Nigerian polity and beyond.⁷³⁵

CIDJAP employs “all appropriate means and methods of human endeavours like spirituality, education, agriculture, housing, Medicare, prisons services, banking, social works and charity in effecting its purpose and achieving its aims. This is an integral social service. This is an integral evangelization – an evangelization process whereby faith is united with practical life; whereby faith and reason meet; whereby the body is united with the soul; whereby practical and theoretical methods of evangelization are intertwined and form an indivisible whole.”⁷³⁶ I have summarized the role of CIDJAP in Nigerian politics under the following points:

1. The Institute engages the Democratic process through mass mobilization and voter awareness programs for the people, with the aim of encouraging voter turnout during elections. Political debates are also organized at the local level for the political aspirants and the citizens are given the opportunity to make a better choice of leaders during the elections.
2. The Institute participates in the monitoring of local, state and federal elections and reporting on the elections outcome to improve the credibility of such elections.
3. CIDJAP organizes round table conferences and discussions with stakeholders and political leaders at all levels to build social consciousness around development, political and social issues for peace and justice. This also gives the citizens a rare opportunity to interface with their leaders on pertinent issues concerning the community.
4. The Institute is engaged in the constant training of professionals with towards attaining a diploma certificate in CST/ TLP social teaching program of the Christian church towards protection of human dignity, promoting decentralized economic development, solidarity, and peace. The aim is to make a positive impact in every sphere of life, including politics.

⁷³⁴ Ibid. P. 332.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. P. 333.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

5. The human rights department of CIDJAP is fully engaged with qualified lawyers assisting the poor, widows, orphans, and other persons threatened by law enforcement agents or institutions to gain their basic rights with legal assistance, advocacy, and defence in courts and standing in for bails and speaking out for the less privileged including prison inmates. Also, using Christian civil principles, values, teachings, and actions this department protects women, children and others from oppression and exploitation.

6. The Institute helps the government in ensuring religious tolerance and respect between Muslims and Christian, and indeed other religions through conferences and seminars on inter-religious dialogue in a multireligious and multicultural country as Nigeria.

7. The job of protecting the environment is not left for the government alone. CIDJAP is also actively engaged in the fight for environmental protection and climate justice with facts and statistics that are of global best practices. The Institute has sponsored talk-shows on radios and television, organized debates, and seminars on environmental protection. It has also engaged the extractive industries through monitoring of oil flaring and resources exploitation and ensuring that human habitats are not abused or polluted. The Institute has not hesitated in calling oil companies and solid minerals extractors to justice and responsibility. Sometimes through peaceful demonstrations when it is necessary.

8. Th Institute complements the efforts of government in education, social housing, and health care by making provisions at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for affordable and value-based education for character and learning, advocacy for social housing estate solutions for poor populations in the urban and semi urban areas, health infrastructures and affordable health care especially in rural areas.

9. CIDJAP is practically engaged in networking with likeminded civil society organizations, coalitions on national and international levels to coordinate activities that challenge corruption and mediocrity in governance. It also propagates for global peace and social transformation in Nigeria and Africa in general.

6.7 A Summary of Chapter Six

In this chapter, the response of religion through the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace Enugu (CIDJAP), to ameliorate the sufferings of the people in Nigeria caused by a structural and institutional failure was analyzed. The roles CIDJAP has played in the political arena of Nigeria as a practical step to facilitate justice, development, peace and tolerance among

the major religions and the ethnic groups were also analyzed. It is relevant to note that “CIDJAP acts both as facilitator and an agent for development in coordination with donors and partner agencies and thus attempts to help our rural and urban populations to respond adequately and actively to the various problems of our society, be it in strengthening the culture of civilization and democratization, or the efficient management of goods and services, or in the promotion of advocacy for human rights and dignity and the sharing of experiences gathered for mutual benefit and partnership.”⁷³⁷

The world is growing every day in population, science, medicine technology, etc. It is my opinion that religion must not be left behind in this development and growth to meet up with the foreseen challenges that would constitute future obstacles in her efforts towards the eradication of poverty and injustice. This explains why CIDJAP was created to become positively involved with the on-going attempt to provide solutions to the socio-political problems of Nigeria and Africa in general, even if in a very modest manner.⁷³⁸

Looking back at the impact of CIDJAP in the Nigerian polity and politics, one can only say that “*Es gibt viel zu tun, packen wir es an.*”⁷³⁹ Indeed, there is still much work to be done because there are still more challenges ahead. These challenges are population growth, climatic changes, urbanization, natural and man-made disasters, religious conflicts, politically motivated poverty, etc. “After all that has been said and done, we shall be judged finally by what we tried to do in the face of crisis and not just by the goodwill we tried to manifest in acknowledging the existence of crisis in an uninvolved manner. We must take sides. To be neutral in the face of injustice is betrayal!”⁷⁴⁰ Although CIDJAP faces numerous challenges as listed above, it continues in its mission of being an instrument of humanization, development, justice and peace.

⁷³⁷ Ike, O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 50.

⁷³⁸ Ibid. P. 265.

⁷³⁹ This is a German sentence meaning “There is a lot to do, let us get started.” (Translation is mine)

⁷⁴⁰ Ike, O. (1998). P. 269.

Chapter Seven: Seeking Common Grounds (The Role of Religions and the CSOs)

In this chapter, the researcher analyses from another perspective, the concrete actions taken by religion in Nigeria through the functions of the NSCIA, CAN and the civil society organizations (CSO), to intervene in the structural and institutional failure of the country. Thus, the researcher shall discuss the role of civil society organizations in Nigerian politics and analyze the positive actions that religion has taken in its efforts to play its role as a beacon of light in the politics of Nigeria through its adequate utilization of the spaces of dialogue with the attendant scope, principles and challenges of inter-religious dialogue. One important question that shall be analysed in this chapter is, could religion be looked at as a role model of best practices for politics? This is important owing to the misuse of religion by both the spiritual and the political leaders in politics,⁷⁴¹ leading to the low (or no) level of trust and the dwindling level of confidence in religion.

7.1 The Religions (The Roles of NSCIA and CAN)

The amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 and the emergence of indigenous national politics saw religion effectively representing a source of ethnic identity, group unity, political mobilization, regime legitimization and delegitimization in the country.⁷⁴² Consequently, religion began to be the basis of ethnic identity or political mobilization. This claim was supported by Dudley (1968) who pointed out that for instance, the political party for the north was the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC), which represented the consensus of the Muslim Society and any iota of its rejection by any member of the society signified a sinful Islamic act.⁷⁴³ Falola (1998) on the same note further narrated that the NPC adopted 'one raised finger' as a symbol of one God, the Islamic monotheistic faith and at the same time passed the message to its people that the symbol of two fingers (for victory) by its opponent in the south, was a sign of polytheism which was totally prohibited by Islam.⁷⁴⁴ According to Falola (1998), other ethnic groups began to protest the ethno-Islamic political hegemony of the NPC in the northern region and began to form their own ethnic political parties drawn along religious lines. Thus, groups like the Tiv

⁷⁴¹ The use and misuse of religion was discussed in chapter four of this work, (see: p. 118).

⁷⁴² Onapajo, H. (2012), Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria. In: *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4 (9), January. Pp. 42-66, (P. 46). Available online at: <http://jpanafrican.org/docs/vol4no9/4.9PoliticsforGod.pdf>. Retrieved on 12.10.2020.

⁷⁴³ Dudley, B. J. (1968), *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*. Frank Cass and Company Ltd, London. P. 143.

⁷⁴⁴ Falola, T. (1998), *Op. cit.* P. 2.

Progressive Union (TPU); Middle Zone League (MZL); Middle-Belt People's Party (MBPP); United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC); Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League; Birom Progressive Union (BPU), etc., were formed⁷⁴⁵

On the other hand, there was a similar development in the south particularly in some parts of the south-west with a large population of Muslims, went ahead and formed the United Muslim Party (UMP) as a protest political party against the Christian-dominated ruling party, the Action Group (AG), claiming that there was discrimination against them by their Christian population. The UMP came up with the motto: 'All Muslims Are One' to signify its major objective of uniting the Muslims.⁷⁴⁶ To further strengthen the unity of faith and to protect the interest of members of these religions to continue advancing the principles on which each of the religions is based, groups and associations started springing up from Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. These associations became an organized body through which the religions participate in the politics of the nation.

7.1.1 The National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)

It was founded in 1973 as an alternative to the alleged Northern dominated JNLC with an objective of catering for the interest of Islam throughout Nigeria and to serve as a channel of contact with the government of Nigeria on Islamic affairs, where necessary, and to serve as the only religious channel of political contact on Islamic matters.⁷⁴⁷ To attain this goal its membership was widened, covering all the 36 states of the federation.⁷⁴⁸ In order to reach a compromise with all the members across the country, each state had to send four representatives to the national body with the Sultan of Sokoto holding an automatic position of national president. The deputy president was occupied by the Mai of Borno and that of the Secretary General by a Yoruba Muslim, Abdulatif Adegbite.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ Kukah, M. H. & Falola, T. (1996), *Religious Militancy and Self Assertion: Islam and politics in Nigeria*. Hants & Vermont: Avebury & Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot UK. P. 87.

⁷⁴⁷ Kenny, J. (2002), *Shar'ah and Islamic Revival in Nigeria*. Dominican Publications, Lagos. P. 7.

⁷⁴⁸ Paden, J. N. (2002), *Islamic and Democratic Federalism in Nigeria*. Center for Strategy and International Studies, Africa Notes, No. 8. Washington DC. P. 5.

This NSCIA is the only Muslim organization usually recognized by the government to “[s]erve as a channel of contact with the Government Authorities on Islamic Affairs”⁷⁴⁹ and liaise with her on political matters and Muslim affairs. In addition, the council is vested with the serious responsibility of promoting “the continued application of Sharia in Nigeria and the observance of Islamic morality.”⁷⁵⁰ It is relevant to note that the implementation of the Sharia legal system in northern Nigeria is one of the biggest challenges facing the country because of its pluralistic nature. The Sharia crisis alone has led to the loss of many lives and properties.

The NSCIA has occasionally spoken out against bad governance. For instance, the NSCIA called for the declaration of a State of Emergency because of the incessant killings and kidnappings going on in the country.⁷⁵¹ It is important to note that the NSCIA has used its Mosques and other places of gatherings to campaign for or against a particular government that seems not to adhere to the sharia principles. However, the NSCIA occasionally makes a critical assessment of the state of the nation on the frequency and intensity of kidnapping, banditry and killings especially when it affects the northern region.

7.1.2 The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

The desire to form a Christian unity that would give Christians a political representation in Nigeria and speak with one voice on important national issues, led to the birth of CAN. Prior to the formation of CAN, the Northern Christian Association (NCA) was the Christian organization existing in the North. It was formed in 1964 in response to the threat of Islamic expansionism and its political domination. Therefore, to have a unified body representing the Christian faith in Nigeria, NCA was changed to CAN.⁷⁵² This desire was informed by the constant battles of faith faced by the Northern Christian Association (NCA) against their Muslim counterparts.⁷⁵³ Thus, CAN was founded in 1976 with Cardinal Dominic Ekandem as the president and C.O. Williams, the Secretary.⁷⁵⁴ CAN became the umbrella body for all Christian denominations in Nigeria, and it was tasked with the responsibility of tackling all the

⁷⁴⁹ NSCIA (2020), Objectives. No page. Available online at: <https://www.nscia.com.ng/index.php/about-us/objectives>. Retrieved on 09.03.2021.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Kukah, M. H. (1993), Op. cit. P. 54.

⁷⁵³ Tanko, B. P. (1991), *The Christian Association of Nigeria and the Challenge of the Ecumenical Imperative: Pontifical Studiorum Universitas A. S. Thomas Aq. in Urbe*. P. 125.

⁷⁵⁴ Nwanaju, I. U. (2005), *Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, Lagos: Free Enterprise. P. 421.

various socio-political and religious exigencies plaguing Nigeria before and after independence.⁷⁵⁵

The five major objectives of CAN as analysed by Nwanaju (2005) are:

- “1. To serve as a basis of response to the unity of the churches, especially as contained in Jesus’ pastoral prayer: ‘that they all may be one’.
2. To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member churches can consult together and when necessary, make common statements and take common action.
3. To be watch-dog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.
4. To propagate the Gospel.
5. To promote understanding among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria.”⁷⁵⁶

One of the major roles of CAN has been the area of Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria which has often been under threat. This threat according to Falola (1998) is the main motivating force that has kept the CAN alive till date.⁷⁵⁷ In an effort to foster a cordial socio-political relationship between the Christians and Muslims an Imam and a Pastor came together in 1995 and formed the “Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum” (IMC-MCDF).⁷⁵⁸ This is in addition to the already existing association known as the Nigerian Inter Religious Council (NIREC), which is specifically aimed at peaceful and mutual understanding among Christians and Muslims in the country. The association engages youths of different religions in social activities and trainings that will enhance understanding and peaceful co-existence among them.

For fifty-two years (1970-2022), CAN has been the mouthpiece of all the Christians against ethnic and religious violence meted out to them by Islamic extremists especially in the north with seeming support from the Muslim-led governments and lack of attention paid to Christians whenever such violence occurs.⁷⁵⁹ CAN takes the responsibility of collecting relief materials

⁷⁵⁵ Yusuf, J. T. & Grissen, L. V. (Eds.) (1995), *That We May Be One. The Autobiography of Nigerian Ambassador Jolly Tanko Yusuf*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishers, Michigan. P. 95.

⁷⁵⁶ Nwanaju, I. U. (2005). P. 421.

⁷⁵⁷ Falola, T. (1998), *Op. cit.* P. 247.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹ Kukah, M. H. (1993), *Op. cit.* P. 166.

and financial assistance even to the extent of rebuilding Churches often destroyed in such violence. Victims are also assisted with medications, food and clothing which CAN sources for nationally and internationally.⁷⁶⁰

CAN also partners with civil society organisations in tackling various social issues and challenges ranging from education, health, youth unemployment and corruption. It is relevant to note that CAN decided to use political means to achieve the solution to its problems. The association decided to sponsor its members to enter politics to represent their interests. The consequence was that the country was further polarised along religious lines which was contrary to its aims and objectives.⁷⁶¹ Apart from the inter-political divisions that naturally arose from this decision, there was also the problem of intra-political division among contestants from different denominations with different political interests.

One of the greatest challenges of CAN was the introduction of Sharia in six northern states during the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo. The CAN saw the drive towards the implementation of the Sharia, by the northern states as a clear-cut political strategy by Hausa Muslims to destabilize the regime of the Christian president Olusegun Obasanjo. This for instance, was echoed by Archbishop Ola Makinde, the Chairman of the Abuja chapter of CAN, who stated that the aims of the introduction of the political Sharia in Nigeria were to prevent or crush the spread of Christianity in the North and also to pull down the government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo which the political Sharia apostles saw as a government by an infidel.⁷⁶² This led to a serious crisis between Christians and Muslims.

A committee was set up to investigate the causes of the crises and proffer solutions. The committee came out with two reports, the anti-OIC backed by CAN and the pro-OIC backed by NSCIA.

The anti-OIC group led by CAN protested that joining the OIC was not necessary for Nigeria because:

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. P. 158.

⁷⁶¹ Mbachirin, A. (2006), *The Responses of the Church in Nigeria to Socio-Economic, Political and Religious Problems in Nigeria. A Case Study of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)*. Baylor University Texas. P. 290. Available online at https://beardocs.baylor.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2104/4874/Abraham_Mbachirin_phd.pdf?sequence=1. Accessed 19.11.2020.

⁷⁶² Onapajo, H. (2012), *Op. cit.* P. 52.

1. "Joining the OIC is not one of the pillars of Islam.
2. That the conditionality of OIC for the purported soft loan from Muslim sources is venomous to the body polity of Nigeria.
3. That Nigeria's membership of OIC foments religious segregation, strife, and discrimination.
4. That they can settle for Muslims joining the OIC at individual and organization level, but they would not settle for Nigeria's joining at government level."⁷⁶³

On the other hand, the pro-OIC championed by the NSCIA contended that it was important for Nigeria to join the OIC because:

1. "The OIC was an international organization and since Nigeria is a member of most international organization, her membership of OIC was in order.
2. Economic benefits are to be derived from Nigeria's membership of the OIC and that these benefits would flow to all Nigerians and not Muslims alone.
3. Membership of OIC would also advance the practice of Islam.
4. Prevailing customs and practices rooted in Nigeria's Christian colonial heritage give pre-eminence to Christianity over Islam."⁷⁶⁴

The NSCIA further argued that Islam has been relegated in Nigeria's social policy on at least four different instances.

1. **Work-Free Days:** Saturdays and Sundays have been designated as work-free days to the benefit of Christians, but the Muslims enjoy no similar status on Friday which is their day of prayer.
2. **The Gregorian Calendar:** According to the NSCIA, Nigeria uses the Gregorian calendar which was named after Pope Gregory of the Christian faith while the Hijrah Calendar enjoys no such recognition by the government. In addition, the first day January which marks the beginning of the Gregorian calendar is observed as a public

⁷⁶³ Kilani, A. O. (1998), Analysis of Implications of Nigeria Membership of Organization of Islamic Conference. In: Akama, E. S. (Ed.), Religion in Contemporary Nigeria: Some Tropical Issues. Owerri: Spring Field Publishers. Pp. 15-28, (P. 15).

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

holiday but there is no such holiday for the first of Huharram in Hijrah calendar which is the celebration of Awwal-Muharram.

3. **Diplomatic Ties:** The NSCIA also contended that Nigeria enjoys a diplomatic relation with the Vatican City which represents the interest of the Catholics alone.
4. **Christmas Celebrations:** The NSCIA argued that during the Christmas season, public funds are used to decorate government/public buildings accompanied with expensive parties while such is not the case for the Muslims.⁷⁶⁵

On this note, there was no reaction from CAN, rather it queried that since Nigeria got her independence, most Nigerian leaders were Muslims, and that the key positions in government have often been held by Muslims. For instance, that despite the large number of Christians in the Nigerian Police force, most of the Police Commissioners and Divisional Police Officers in the north were Muslims.⁷⁶⁶ However, this could also be attributed to the quota system.⁷⁶⁷

7.2 Civil Society Organizations (CSO): A Brief Meaning

“The idea of civil society has undergone several changes over many centuries, starting from the Greek classical epoch to the late 20th century. It has represented many things to many groups and intellectuals.”⁷⁶⁸ In a simplistic definition, the CSO “relates to the efforts by citizens, either under the authority of government or outside of it, to organize themselves for their own interest, benefits and for the common good of the community.”⁷⁶⁹ However, experts see the understanding of civil society organization from three perspectives; the spatial, the normative and the society as a set of organized groups.⁷⁷⁰

- The Spatial understanding has to do with the sphere in the society where stakeholders can come together voluntarily to undertake issues of common interest.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁵ Kilani, A. O. (1998), Op. cit. P. 15.

⁷⁶⁶ Mukhtar, U. B. (2007), *Christian Missions Among Muslims: Sokoto Province, Nigeria 1935-1990*. Africa World Press, Eritrea. P. 148.

⁷⁶⁷ The quota system was discussed in chapter two of this work, (see: p. 47).

⁷⁶⁸ Ugwu, S. U. (2016), op. cit. P. 37.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid. P. 38.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid. P. 39.

⁷⁷¹ Weigle, M. A. & Butterfield, J. (2007), *Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes. The Logic of Emergence*. Comparative Politics, 25 (1). (Oct.). City University of New York. Pp. 1-23, (P. 4). Available

- The Normative understanding is related to the various norms of civility that are associated with a civil society to have a level of fair play, freedom and equality of all in the state.⁷⁷²
- For the society as a set of organized groups understanding, civil society comprises various groups belonging to the third sector of the polity which include the various social groups, associations that are freely entered into and are mainly non-profit in nature.⁷⁷³

The religious groups fall into the third understanding of civil society. The religious groups are freely entered into and are non-profit organizations. For a clearer understanding, one can define the civil society as “a space or sphere that is formally distinct from organized politics and state authority on the one hand, and from the immediate pursuit of the demands of pure market enterprise on the other. It is also distinct from the family unit and its concerns. [It] is also distinguished from state establishments and institutions that are managed through the power of the government. This means that independent educational, research and scientific institutions also belong to civil organizations.”⁷⁷⁴

From a broader perspective, civil society is “one in which the grand total of all formalized and informal activities are organized by citizens in the interests of the public good, distinct from material gain, and one in which services are provided, and the duties of advocacy and self-help, as well as watchdog and intermediary functions are given precedence.”⁷⁷⁵ It is necessary to have a counter-balance force (watchdog) that checks the possible excesses of the ruling class of an organized state government apparatus with enormous legislative and executive powers. The civil society organizations fit into this role of limiting the executive powers of the government against excesses. Hence, the success or failure of any government to a large extent depends on the strength of its civil society and the whole society at large. An interesting

online at: <http://ceses.cuni.cz/CESES-141-version1->

[4_2_Weigle_Butterfield_civil_society_in_postcommunism.pdf](#) Retrieved on 19.11.2020.

⁷⁷² Borutta, M. (2005), Religion und Zivilgesellschaft. Zur Theorie und Geschichte ihrer Beziehung. P. 4.

Available online at: <http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2006/iv05-404.pdf>. Retrieved on 19.11.2020.

⁷⁷³ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 39.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid. P. 66.

⁷⁷⁵ Strachwitz, R. G. (2007), The Churches and Civil Society. In: Kruip, Gerhard and Reifeld, Helmut (Eds.) (2007), Church and Civil Society. The Role of Christian Churches in the Emerging Countries of Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa. Druckerei Franz Paffenholz GmbH, Bornheim. Pp. 29-33. (P. 29).

question at this point is; are there civil organizations in Nigeria? What roles do they play in Nigerian politics?

7.2.1 The Historical Background of CSO in Nigeria

I would discuss the historical background of CSO in Nigeria from two perspectives: the pre-independence period and the post-independence period. The pre-independence period in this context covers both the pre-colonial and the colonial periods while the post-independence period covers the post-colonial period from the independence in 1960 till date. In the pre-colonial and colonial periods, there existed in the villages and communities, some specific forms of civil associations or groups that served the purpose of regulating the political authorities. It is relevant to note that the colonial period did not affect the mode of operation of these groups/associations because the regulatory role they played in the villages before the coming of the colonial rulers remained the same until after the independence. They organized themselves for the purpose of the common interest of the general community and most importantly as watchdogs to the rulers. We shall discuss only three of these groups that existed in the pre-independence period in Nigeria, the age grades, market women and the cultural groups.

7.2.1.1 Age Grades: This is usually a conglomeration of youths within an age bracket forming a union or organization. Their functions in the community are for both mutual and public interest. Among the Igbo tribe, the age grade served as police for the ruling council in addition to the disciplinary measures against erring members of the group.⁷⁷⁶ The age grade in the Yoruba tribe served the purpose of public works like building of roads, and other political services. The age grades also help in organizing recreational activities. However, the members of a particular age-grade can state a protest injustice, mismanagement, or bad leadership from a ruler in the village.

7.2.1.2 The Market Women: This group is a union of market traders found in almost all the pre-colonial Nigerian markets. They controlled the market sales and resolved disputes between traders and customers or between members of the group.⁷⁷⁷ Erring members are disciplined in different ways that are commensurate to the offence or fined. There are also other unions like

⁷⁷⁶ Brown, P. (1951), Patterns of Authority in West Africa. In: Africa Journal of the International African Institute. 21 (4), October. Pp. 261-278, (P. 267). Available online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1156499.pdf?acceptTC=true>. Retrieved on 19.11.2020.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

the Farmers Union, Palm Wine Tappers Union, Builders Union, Iron workers Union, etc. The union also protects its members from intimidation and rallies around any member for support in moments of sorrows. These groups have been known to be very powerful when they unite in protest any ruler or political authority.

7.2.1.3 Ritual/Cult Groups: Among this group are the masquerade cults and the cultural organizations like the dance groups. The masquerade cults served as agents of security in the communities in addition to disciplining erring members of the community. The cult groups organize festivals, funerals and other traditional or religious rituals including the coronation of kings or chiefs.

It is relevant to note that many other groups and organizations exist in Nigeria and are spread across the different ethnic groups and regions. They serve various aims and objectives for the communities where they exist. Most importantly they serve as a restriction to the traditional heads of the community who would not commit an offence without incurring a stipulated punishment.⁷⁷⁸ In some cases, such punishment could lead to immediate banishment from the position of authority. Thus, there existed a balance of power between the ruler and the ruled.⁷⁷⁹ It is important to note that “the nature of the formation of the various sub-cultural units of the country after independence, just as in many other African countries, define the manner in which civil society subsequently developed in the country.”⁷⁸⁰

After independence, Nigeria was faced with the challenge of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural groups having to learn how to co-exist harmoniously without breaking the traditions or culture of the other. “Subsequently, it was not immediately easy to form a new national civil society, capable of sustaining the polity for the desired socio-political and economic development. The period from independence in 1960 until today has been mostly taken up by managing conflicts between and among the various ethnic nationalities and other interest groups.”⁷⁸¹

The colonial rulers did not lay a good foundation for the development of a healthy civil society because of the manner they ran their government which did not entertain civil society participation. According to Gellar (2006), there was “the reluctance to tolerate autonomous voluntary associations, religious organizations, and local governance institutions not directly

⁷⁷⁸ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 73.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 89.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

under the control and supervision of the state.”⁷⁸² Thus, the relationship was largely that of dependency with the government playing the role of the benevolent father.⁷⁸³ This relationship according to Kukah (2000), made civil society weak and ineffective.⁷⁸⁴ The participation of the traditional pre-colonial groups/associations in the politics of post independent Nigeria was limited mainly to their villages and towns.⁷⁸⁵ However, in the 1980s, some professional organizations like the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), the Labour Union, Students Union, etc. began to make input on social issues and governance.⁷⁸⁶

7.2.2 Actions of Civil Society Groups

The corruption and dictatorship of the military authorities gave rise to multiple protests and civil riots as part of the activities of civil society organizations in Nigeria.⁷⁸⁷ The impact of civil society between the years of the 1970s to 1980s makes it clear how important its contribution could be in bringing about a positive turnaround in some important aspects of national life. The execution of Ken Saro Wiwa on the 10th of November 1995⁷⁸⁸ by General Sani Abacha’s Military government was one of the high points of civil society and this sparked off worldwide protests and condemnation and strengthened the resolve of civil society to oust military dictatorship from Nigerian politics.⁷⁸⁹

In my opinion, one major factor could have been responsible for this spark of courage that motivated the civil society groups into action. The poor democratization policy of General Babangida and the IMF policy. The position of the regime that there was no alternative to the agenda of IMF, caused irritation to various groups who felt that it was unacceptable because of the various adjustments that would affect the political space and the life of the ordinary citizen. Hence, “[t]he military regimes of Generals Babangida and Abacha saw the rapid

⁷⁸² Gellar, S. (2006), Religion and Democratization in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa: Parallels in the Evolution of Religious and Political Governance Structures. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. P. 6.

⁷⁸³ Kukah, M. H. (2000), Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria. Spectrum Books, Ibadan. P. 40.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), op. cit. P. 90.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Falola, T. & Heaton, M. M. (Eds.) (2008), Op. cit. P. 181.

⁷⁸⁸ DW (2015), Why Nigerian Activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed. (09.11.2015). No page. Available online at: <https://www.dw.com/en/why-nigerian-activist-ken-saro-wiwa-was-executed/a-18837442>. Retrieved on 28.02.2020.

⁷⁸⁹ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), op. cit. Pp. 34-35.

evolution of civil society activism in Nigeria.”⁷⁹⁰ Although civil society organizations existed in Nigeria before independence, their operations were hardly organized towards a definite relationship with the state until in the 1980s.⁷⁹¹ Organizationally, ‘civil society’ had acquired legitimacy as a player in public space, shaping projects of democratic transitions, and generally acting as a credible source of intervention in policy debates and a voice for ‘good governance’.⁷⁹²

“Civil society activism was initially built around professional bodies and associations such as the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), the Nigerian press, among others.”⁷⁹³ However, the coming on board of organizations such as the “Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), from the mid-1980s signalled the genesis of a programmed and sustained critical response to the repressiveness of the military regimes as well as their economic and political policy frameworks. The state-civil society engagement took on even more critical dimensions with the annulment of the 1993 presidential election which was generally acclaimed to be free and fair.”⁷⁹⁴

The military sought to manage the crisis through co-optation, bribery (in the form of what became generally known as ‘settlement’), massive repression (which included assassinations, mass closure of newspaper houses and broadcast establishments deemed hostile to the government), and the hounding of opposition members into exile.⁷⁹⁵ In fact, the exile element proved crucial in mobilizing global opinion against the annulment and military rule in general.

⁷⁹⁰ Jibrin, I. (et al) (Eds.) (2015), Elections and the Management of Diversity in Nigeria. Centre for Democracy and Development, African Governance Study III. P. 21. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/17845161/ELECTIONS_AND_THE_MANAGEMENT_OF_DIVERSITY_IN_NIGERIA. Retrieved on 15.05.2020.

⁷⁹¹ The evolution of CSO in Nigeria was discussed by: Adejumbi, S. (2004), Civil Society and Federalism in Nigeria. In: Regional and Federal Studies, 14 (2), Summer. Pp. 211-231. See also: Abutu, M. (1995), The State, Civil Society and the Democratization Process in Nigeria. Monograph Series 1/95. Dakar: CODESRIA.

⁷⁹² Jibrin, I. (et al) (Eds.) (2015), Op. cit. P. 21.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid. P. 22.

7.2.3 The Church as Part of Civil Society Organization?

It has often been debated whether a religious community is part of civil society or not. Often, the connection between the Churches and the concept of civil society is questioned both by members of the church hierarchy and by social scientists.⁷⁹⁶ Strachwitz (2017) gives some practical clarifications using America, United Kingdom and Germany. “In the United States of America, the situation is quite clear. All religious communities, be they established Churches or new movements, are convinced they are part of civil society. On the other hand, for example in the United Kingdom, and in many Islamic countries, the religious and political establishments are closely intertwined, and the Church leaders see themselves as part of a universal authority commonly associated with the state. Germany is in the process of adopting a position somewhere between these two extremes. While the established Churches enjoy preferential public status under the constitution, they would not want to be associated with the state in a strict sense. This position is maintained by the chairman of the German Catholics’ lay organization, and in a more cautious way, by members of the hierarchy.”⁷⁹⁷ These three different examples create a confusing scenario of the relationship between CSO and religion.

Indeed, politics and religion steadily influence one another. According to Obiora Ike “[...], religion can never be separated from life and the realities of life that exist in the society. It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustices and utter prophetic denunciations; the words will lack real weight unless they are accompanied for each individual by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility, and by effective action.”⁷⁹⁸ According to Pope Benedict XVI [religion] has a stake in the area of politics, because politics is about justice, and justice is an issue of social ethics.⁷⁹⁹ Ugwu (2017) argues that the nature of the Church as part of civil society during the colonial period in Nigeria and Africa in general “could be described as rather ambivalent.”⁸⁰⁰ This is because the Church, on the one hand, was very prominent and affected different areas of the society and human endeavor; education, health

⁷⁹⁶ Strachwitz, R. G. (2007), Op. cit. P. 30.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid. Pp. 30-31.

⁷⁹⁸ Ike, O. (2016), Op. cit. P. 53.

⁷⁹⁹ Pope Benedict XVI (2005), *Deus Caritas Est*. Encyclical Letter to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful on Christian Love. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. §.20. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html. Retrieved on 18.12.2020.

⁸⁰⁰ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. P. 116.

care services, welfare services like clothing, feeding, etc. On the other hand, some missionaries were prejudicial and intolerant of the African Traditional Religion and culture.⁸⁰¹ Although some of the missionaries were intolerant to the traditional ways of life and considered traditional religion primitive or heathen, it is important to note that the Church played a major role as part of civil society in this period under review. However, the Church has continued to play a major role as part of civil society in the post-colonial period through her actions and teachings.

7.3 Religions as Role Model of Best Practices for Politics?

There is an increasing feeling of discontentment among Nigerians over the inability of political leaders to fulfil their electoral promises. They no longer feel certain about the economic situation, security challenges of insurgents like Boko Haram, and ethnic cohesion. These concerns have affected the trust of the people in the political system. Hence, the relevance of the commitment of religion towards building confidence in democratic politics. The question here is, does religion have the competence to serve as a role model of best practices for politics? The word 'Competence' means "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently."⁸⁰² It involves 'both 'ability' and 'responsibility', both of which indicate two-digit relations ("who" may "what"? and "Who" can "what"?).⁸⁰³ According to Bloom & Akiran (2013a), some religions generate abstract opposition to democracy, while increasing ambivalence towards democratic principles; on the other hand, the social aspect of religion leads to greater endorsement of the democratic system and generates stronger support for democracy.⁸⁰⁴ While religious belief is associated with traditional values and an emphasis on material and physical security that generates opposition to democracy, religious social behaviour improves social

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Oxford Dictionary, Definition of Competence. No page. Available online at: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/competence>, Retrieved on 18.12.2020.

⁸⁰³ Kruip, G. (1999), Op. cit. §. ii, 4. P. 116. The translation is mine.

⁸⁰⁴ Bloom, P. B. & Arian, G. (2013a), Religion can both hurt and enhance democratic attitudes. London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2013/05/21/religion-can-both-hurt-and-enhance-democratic-attitudes/>. In Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit and Arian, Gizem. (2013b), Religion and Democratic Attitudes: A Cross-National Test of the Mediating Mechanisms. *British Journal of Political Science*. 43 (2): Pp. 379-380.

capital in the form of institutional trust and political engagement, which have positive effects on support for democracy.⁸⁰⁵

To understand the model of best practices of religion in this context, it is important to understand that there are doctrinal differences between and within the religions. “It is often these doctrinal differences that matter the most, not only to the adherents and practitioners of these religions, but to the country and the impact religion has on politics.”⁸⁰⁶ Religion has served as a role model of best practices in and for politics significantly in the areas of education, social welfare, and civil society organisations.

The competence of the religions could also be experienced in economic policy and in advocating a value orientation that serves the wellbeing of the people. The religions see it as their special obligation to express the concerns of those who are easily forgotten in the economic policies because they cannot effectively articulate their concerns themselves. These are the sick, the poor, the disadvantaged, the powerless, and the future generations.⁸⁰⁷ In this way the religions help to build standards that are based on solidarity and justice. Thus, religion makes an important contribution to the political culture of the country.

7.4 The Spaces of Dialogue (Common Grounds)

Dialogue is the coming together of diverse people for the purpose of unity, peace and development. It is Unity in Diversity. Olorunnisola (2019) listed out three of the ways in which dialogue could be understood. They are the local, academic and institutional dialogues.⁸⁰⁸

1. *The local dialogue:* This is a form of dialogue that occurs in the local communities amongst various ethnic groups and religious practitioners. It is the practical, most common expression of dialogue in the nation motivated by religion. It is a common practice for various religious practitioners or ethnic groups to assemble occasionally

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 380.

⁸⁰⁶ Grzymala-Busse, A. (2012), Why Comparative Politics Should Take Religion (More) Seriously. Annual Review of Political Science, 15, June. Pp. 421-442, (P. 423). Available online at: https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-polisci-033110-130442#_i2. Retrieved on 19.12.2020.

⁸⁰⁷ See chapter five on “Option for the Poor” (p. 137).

⁸⁰⁸ Olorunnisola, T. S. (2019), Beyond Interreligious Dialogue: Dialogue of Life as a Means to Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria. In: European Scientific Journal, June, 15(17). Pp. 28-45, (P. 35). Available online at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334208917_Beyond_Interreligious_Dialogue_Dialogue_of_Life_as_a_Means_to_Peaceful_Co-Existence_in_Nigeria. Retrieved on 16.06.2021.

and when a need arises to talk about how to live together in peace. “Traditional community leaders are often facilitators of this form of dialogue.”⁸⁰⁹

2. *The academic dialogue*: This is a form of dialogue that occurs in academic circles where scholars gather periodically to challenge one another on ideal ways of relating in an ethno-religiously plural nation. This form of interreligious dialogue focuses at educating the religious adherents about the basic theological concepts of beliefs and practices in a religion and how it relates to a peaceful co-existence.⁸¹⁰
3. *The institutional dialogue*: This form of dialogue is found in the political structures and government institutions like the Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC).⁸¹¹ “The composition of this third expression of interreligious dialogue has enjoyed the official recognition of the government and its agencies.”⁸¹²

These three forms of dialogue are relevant in every society. However, my focus in this research is on the institutional dialogue because of the ethno-religious diversity of Nigeria. The institutional dialogue can be viewed from the perspective of religious plurality. Dialogue in the context of religious plurality is defined as an ecumenical attempt to bring people of different faiths together on the platform of peaceful co-existence, co-operation, and tolerance.⁸¹³ This attempt to bring people of diverse religions is one of the aims of NIREC.

It is relevant to make a distinction between inter-religious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue. Ecumenical dialogue on one hand, takes place between people who share faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour and based on the Holy Scriptures, seek to bear common witness. Interreligious dialogue on the other hand, takes place between believers from different religions who share their lives, their struggles, their concerns and their experiences of God, making their differences a stimulus to grow and deepen their own faith.⁸¹⁴

Although the world is “increasingly interconnected, yet public discourse is often characterized by simplifying and polarized narratives which create groups of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The world

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid. P. 36.

⁸¹¹ Inter-religious dialogue would be discussed as one of the spaces of dialogue in this chapter. (See: 7.3).

⁸¹² Olorunnisola, T. S. (2019), Op. cit. P. 36.

⁸¹³ Daniji, F. (2007), Conflict Resolution Studies in Africa. Meks Links Publisher, Nigeria. P. 36.

⁸¹⁴ Synod of Bishops of Amazonia (2019), Instrumentum Laboris, Chapter IV. §.136. Available online at: <http://www.sinodoamazonico.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/documents/pan-amazon-synod--the-working-document-for-the-synod-of-bishops.html>. Retrieved on 24.07.2019.

hosts a plurality and diversity of values, voices, perspectives, and traditions. Yet the ‘global’ in the dominant discourses of global citizenship often represents values rather than any universal human interest.”⁸¹⁵ Thus, our unity (globalization) seems to expose how deeply divided the world has become and how dearly the spaces of dialogue are needed.

Dialogue is about increasing mutual understanding, identifying causes of tension among ethnic communities and religions, and breaking down the barriers and stereotypes which lead to mistrust, suspicion and bigotry.⁸¹⁶ According to KAICIID’s⁸¹⁷ Annual Report (2014), “Rising tensions along religious, regional, ethnic and political fault lines have damaged interreligious [dialogue] relations in Nigeria, which are under even more pressure due to the lack of sustained dialogue and a competition for available resources.”⁸¹⁸ Hence, there is the need for the spaces of dialogue. This is the idea of creating and encouraging an atmosphere of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among people of different religions and ethnic groups.⁸¹⁹ Achieving this requires the encouragement of direct contact and deep communication between local communities and neighbouring ethnic and religious groups. This creates the opportunity for an understanding of the other’s humanity, suffering and needs, etc. It also reduces fear and creates appreciation and support for each other. This groundwork of trust, safety and understanding is the foundation of any religious, ethnic, or political solution. The transformation would lead people from apathy and frustration to responsibility and involvement.⁸²⁰ It is my opinion that dialogue may not be successful unless the different groups

⁸¹⁵ ROOTS (2020), Creating spaces of dialogue for mutual understanding and trust. In: United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO). No page. Available online at: <https://en.unesco.org/interculturaldialogue/resources/485>. Retrieved on 21.11.2020.

⁸¹⁶ KAICIID Annual Report (2014), Peace and Reconciliation through Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nigeria: 2013-2014 KAICIID Annual Report. Available online at: <https://www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do/peace-and-reconciliation-through-interreligious-dialogue-nigeria>. Retrieved on 22.11.2020. No page.

⁸¹⁷ King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) is an inter-governmental organization that promotes inter-religious dialogue to prevent and resolve conflict. It does this by enhancing understanding and cooperation between people of different cultures and followers of different religions. The Centre was founded by Austria, Saudi Arabia, and Spain. The Holy See is the Founding Observer. Its Board of Directors comprises prominent representatives from five major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism). Available online at <https://www.kaiciid.org/>. Retrieved on 22.11.2020.

⁸¹⁸ KAICIID Annual Report (2014), Op. cit. No page.

⁸¹⁹ ROOTS (2020), Op.cit. No page.

⁸²⁰ Ibid.

are willing to show commitment to creating spaces (virtual and physical) for dialogue through debates and collaborations across religious, cultural, and political boundaries. It would also be relevant for stakeholders to explore and experiment on the principles, structures, methods, and routines needed to create these spaces of dialogue.

The current catalogue of incessant insurgency such as eruption of violence by extremists and religious intolerance threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a country. Through dialogue all could come to mutually rediscover and uphold common truths that is valuable and recognise that we could live according to the truths we uphold. We could come to recognize that we should avoid inter-religious conflict; and that where there could arise tension, we should patiently discern what is true, just and fair and what promotes the common good of all.⁸²¹

There are different possible ways in which dialogue can be strengthened in Nigeria. Olorunnisola (2019) listed five of such ways:

- 1.** Exploring the traditional African values of life by engaging the African traditional leadership institution is one of the ways in which dialogue can be strengthened. This is because the traditional institution is considered to be the custodian of culture and tradition which Africans value and respect.⁸²²
- 2.** Government must desist from initiating policies that are contrary to the goals of inter-religious dialogue. For instance, government's policies on the implementation of Sharia laws are contradictory to the efforts of inter-religious dialogue and are prone to violence. Government must strive to create an atmosphere of peace through the sponsorship of agencies like NIREC and intensify the organization of seminars and education in this regard.⁸²³
- 3.** The church can also play an active role through the education and sensitization of its members on the importance of dialogue and how to promote dialogue in the churches and places of religious gatherings. This would help in the social reconstruction of the country.⁸²⁴

⁸²¹ Iyiola, S. (2015), The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nigeria. In Academia.edu. P. 4. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/37446388/The_Need_for_Inter_Religious_Dialogue_in_Nigeria. Retrieved on 10.12.2020.

⁸²² Olorunnisola, T. S. (2019), Op. cit. P. 41.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. P. 42.

4. The media has an active role to play in the education of the citizens on the relevance of dialogue. This could be done through numerous platforms available in the internet to reach a greater number of the population in a very short time.⁸²⁵

5. The civil society organization have played active roles in the past but must not relent in its efforts. It must create awareness on the issues affecting Nigeria and its social integration.⁸²⁶

These studies advocated that religious education should be made compulsory at all levels. This proposal has been accepted to some extent at various universities, e.g., the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is currently studying interreligious dialogue as a unit.⁸²⁷

7.4.1 Inter-Religious Dialogue

Arguably, it is not religion that has failed man, rather it is human factor that has turned religion into two-edged sword i.e., cohesion and division. It is in this light we look at inter-religious dialogue as an avenue for proffering solution to this menace. Religion can also “boost inter-religious dialogue which can ultimately bring about religious tolerance in the society. Inter-religious dialogue is a platform where religious leaders discuss and orientate people about the essence of religion and its efficacy in the society. Hence, it is important for religious leaders to guide against hypocritical teaching that can disrupt peace and political stability. Therefore, exchange of ideas removes ignorance and eliminates religious conflicts.”⁸²⁸ From the perspective of the Church, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) “is the central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of interreligious dialogues in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the declaration ‘Nostra Aetate’. It has the following responsibilities:

- 1) To promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions.
- 2) To encourage the study of religions.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. P. 43.

⁸²⁸ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 9

3) To promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.”⁸²⁹

The PCID described interreligious dialogue as "a two-way communication" involving two or more parties that are open to each other's faith and belief. The two parties must engage in "speaking and listening" to each other for the enhancement of mutual growth.⁸³⁰ For instance, the Church, in the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, opened a new and more positive relationship with Islam and other world religions. In 1984 the Vatican issued another document, on mission and dialogue, which strongly encouraged interreligious dialogue and set out in detail the breadth of activities involved.⁸³¹

Nigeria is a country with ethnic and religious diversity which has featured several turbulent waves of religious intolerance. Sustainable development cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of sporadic religious violence.⁸³² However, it is important to note that, economic development and societal wellbeing can only be achieved in an environment cultural and religious tolerance is guaranteed. Religious diversity should not constitute a barrier to human relations and development rather it should be a tool or resource for national development.⁸³³ It is therefore, important to give inter-religious dialogue a significant consideration as an effective ecumenical strategy for peace building among diverse religious groups in a political community like Nigeria.⁸³⁴ This can also transcend crisis management to a joint action against bad governance, corruption, mismanagement and promotion of positive values.⁸³⁵ Although at interpersonal level, such as being members of the same political party, Muslims and Christians interact impressively in healthy atmosphere.⁸³⁶ This can be sustained with the help of the political leaders. According to Toyin Falola (1998) many of the inter-religious crisis in Nigeria can be

⁸²⁹ The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (2005), Nature and Goals of PCID. Available online at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html. Retrieved on 24.07.2019.

⁸³⁰ Ibid.

⁸³¹ Fitzmaurice, R. (1992), The Roman Catholic Church and Interreligious Dialogue: Implications for Christian-Muslim Relations. *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 3 (1), P. 83-107, (P. 83).

⁸³² Iyiola, S. (2015), Op. cit. P. 6.

⁸³³ Oluwatobi, S. (2015), Religious Dialogue as Panacea for Peace in Nigeria. In: Academia.Edu. P. 16. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/28149405/Religious_Dialogue_as_Panacea_for_Peace_in_Nigeria. Retrieved on 29.07.2019.

⁸³⁴ Iyiola, S. (2015), Op. cit. P. 1.

⁸³⁵ KAICIID Annual Report (2014), Op. cit. No page.

⁸³⁶ Oluwatobi, S. (2015), Op. cit. P. 16.

traced to the influence of religion in politics, poverty, and secular ideologies of the two major faiths which are always at logger head, Islam and Christianity.⁸³⁷

There is need for the Christians and Muslims, as well as the adherents of African traditional religion to adopt tolerance and understanding for the building of a just and peaceful society. Arinze advocates that “when there is a dialogue across religions, there will be harmony, promotion of moral values, development, justice and peace. In addition, there will be solutions to the problem of religious extremism.”⁸³⁸ Hence, the researcher proposes five elements that must be present for the possibility of dialogue across religions. These include epistemic humility, commitment, tolerance, empathy, and hospitality.

7.4.1.1 The Scope of Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nigeria

The scope of inter-religious dialogue can be categorized into three intertwining frames:

1. The local communities: This is the most common and practical form of dialogue amongst different religious practitioners in the community. The traditional Chiefs and community leaders are often the facilitators of this form of dialogue and it is very effective because they live together in the community, share a lot of things in common and are often related to each other. Dialogue at this level is considered a personal responsibility to enhance peace and developments.⁸³⁹

2. The academic circle: This is more of an intellectual dialogue where scholars gather periodically to debate on the ideal ways of peaceful co-existence in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation. Conferences and seminars are often organized to discuss various concepts of religion, beliefs and practices. This form of dialogue is often concluded with a communique containing theoretical principles and resolutions.⁸⁴⁰

3. The institutional or structured: This form of dialogue exists among structured institutions that are both governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations like the Nigerian Inter-religious Council (NIREC) which was formed by the government for the purpose of enhancing inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁷ Falola, T. (1998), Op. cit. Pp. 2-3.

⁸³⁸ Arinze, F. (1998), Op. cit. P. 29.

⁸³⁹ Olorunnisola, T. S. (2019), Op. cit. P. 32.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid. Pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid. P. 33.

7.4.1.2 The Challenges of Inter-Religious Dialogue

There is no doubt that inter-religious dialogue is faced with different challenges and these challenges show us why interreligious dialogue has been quasi-effective. Let us briefly analyse these challenges in the following three major considerations:

1. Subtle Quest for an Islamic Agenda: There seems to be a frequent subtle quest for an Islamic theocratic state in Nigeria. A theocratic system of government is defined as a “government by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. In many theocracies, government leaders are members of the clergy, and the state's legal system is based on religious law”⁸⁴² Two reasons for this assertion are, the public implementation of Shari’a laws in northern Nigeria by the fifteen northern governors beginning with Zamfara State in the year 2000. The second reason is the Nigeria membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference, which later changed to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1986.⁸⁴³

2. Prejudice, Mistrust and Dishonesty: The three forms of interreligious dialogue in Nigeria as mentioned above are characterized by prejudice, mistrust, and dishonesty. It was barely a year from the inauguration of NIREC when the Shari’a law was implemented in some northern states in the year 2000.⁸⁴⁴ This showed that despite the on-going deliberations of the inter-religious council, the plans for the introduction of sharia in northern Nigeria was not halted by the Muslim counterpart of the NIREC.

3. Religious Extremism: Extremism is a major element that has inhibited true dialogue in Nigerian religious space.⁸⁴⁵ Arinze (1998) noted that the rise of extremism and fundamentalism are obstacles on the road to dialogue.⁸⁴⁶ This extremism is from Christian preachers who offer offensive statements to the members of the Muslim community. Extreme dimensions could also emerge from the Muslims on the issues that could have been settled amicably. An example

⁸⁴² Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: Theocracy. No page. Available online at: www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/theocracy/conciseEncyclopedia. Retrieved on 23.11.2020.

⁸⁴³ Olorunnisola, T. S. (2019), Op. cit. P. 36.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ Arinze, F. (1998), Op. cit. P. 111.

is the Miss World Beauty Pageant crisis of 2002 which ended up in the death of about 215 people and burning of 58 church buildings.⁸⁴⁷

7.5 A Summary of Chapter Seven

In this chapter, the researcher analysed the different roles played by the religions in affecting the politics of Nigeria from the perspective of the NSCIA and CAN. The actions of the CSOs through the age-grades, market women and different ritual/cult groups, and the role of the Church as part of CSO were also analysed. The need for a common ground that would create spaces for different forms of dialogue (especially the inter-religious dialogue), with some emphasis on the scope, principles and challenges of inter-religious dialogue was given adequate attention. It is the opinion of the researcher that dialogue could be employed to achieve learning and bridge building, political, ethnic, cultural and religious understanding, for the purpose of the common good. However, there must exist trust among the religions and the (subtle) quest for Islamic agenda must be avoided to achieve success in the goals of inter-religious dialogue.

Indeed, religion can be a role model of best practices in politics if the different religions or denominations become objective in their aspirations. They must put aside their doctrinal differences and play an objective role that would influence political decisions and bring transformation for the polity. This role should be significant in the areas of social welfare, education, justice, and the activities of CSO. Also, the religions must fight for policies that not only seem to affect them or their doctrines, but those policies that affect every citizen regardless of his or her religious affiliation.

⁸⁴⁷ Olorunnisola, T. S. (2016), *Jesus in Nigerian Christianity: An Exploration of Some Aspects of Christology That May Contribute to Peace and Mutuality*. University of Divinity, PhD Thesis. P. 60.

Chapter Eight: Recommendations and Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the researcher shall look at some important recommendations for a positive and effective role of religion in Nigerian politics. Some key factors that would enable both the state and the religions to actively impact the polity in a positive way shall be recommended. These recommendations would create opportunities for better political dividends and inter-religious understanding. In the recommendations, such factors as: the rule of law, massive education of the people, the practice of true democracy and the proper dispensation of justice shall be analysed. A critical evaluation and a general summary would bring this research to a conclusion.

8.1 Recommendations

Nigeria needs to elect responsible men and women into political positions of power, people with faith and belief in the country, its people, its resources and its future. However, in achieving good governance and political stability, religion should also serve as a guiding factor in all political activities that the country engages in. It is my opinion that no country can develop or prosper technologically, scientifically, economically, and socially without peaceful coexistence. "Therefore, in achieving good governance and political stability, religion should serve as a guiding factor in all political activities that the country engages in. The impact of religion on politics can enhance sustainable development if the impact is positive."⁸⁴⁸ I therefore advocate for religious tolerance and political cooperation in Nigeria.

It is also my opinion that a Christian political party would not be favorable to the Nigerian political climate. This would further divide Nigeria into religious lines. The Muslims would be probably influenced to also form an Islamic political party and the Traditional religionists would not be left out in a similar direction. Also from the Christian perspective, such a political party would divide the Christians along denominational lines through intra-party politics. This would not be favorable both to the Christian religion and the country in general.

A political cooperation influenced by religious tolerance will lead to an enhanced relationship between religion and politics in the country which in turn brings religious peace and peaceful co-existence. Then sustainable socio-economic and political development can be achieved in Nigeria. Hence, I recommend the following four steps;

⁸⁴⁸ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 10.

- Rule of law
- Massive religious and civic education,
- True democracy and
- Proper dispensation of social justice.

8.1.1 Rule of Law

Corruption is one fundamental problem that has eaten deep into the marrows of the country. People break the rules without consequences. There is impunity especially among top government officials. The rule of law must be applicable to everyone and people who break the rules must be seen to be severely punished as a discouragement to others. I agree with Ugwu (2017) that it is regrettable “that despite the huge earnings of Nigeria’s federal government especially from crude oil over the years, the country’s infrastructure and economic development have largely remained in shambles. This is despite the billions of naira being budgeted yearly for development in health, education, and air, land and sea transport in the federal and sub-national government sectors.”⁸⁴⁹

It is my opinion therefore, that adherence to the rule of law by both the political and religious leaders and followers will be greatly beneficial to the state. But importantly, the church, other religious organizations and probably other expert financial associations should take up the possible role of monitoring government fiscal activities. Hence, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria in collaboration with the Christian Association of Nigeria should support the civil society Organizations to establish a federal budget monitoring institute that would be involved in the budget planning and take up the responsibility of monitoring the execution of the approved budget. This would go a long way in reducing economic corruption.

8.1.2 Massive Religious and Civic Education

The government has not given priority attention to education in Nigeria and most of the technical and vocational schools owned by the government are either poorly equipped or poorly managed. Pupils and students in many schools are also compelled to study in uncondusive environments. The teachers are either unqualified or underpaid, leading to lack of motivation on the part of the teachers. The resultant effect is the graduation of half-baked students into the

⁸⁴⁹ Ugwu, S. U. (2017), Op. cit. Pp. 231-232.

society who become disasters waiting to happen. The fact is that most of these graduates are unemployable because they are not properly equipped with the theoretical and practical knowledge needed in the labour market. This has partly contributed to the high rate of unemployment in the country.

Also, the take-over of schools by the Nigerian government in the 1970s did not help the country because the government could not manage the schools effectively. Hence, academic performance, infrastructure and simple discipline were all lost.⁸⁵⁰ This has directly or indirectly affected the socio-political life of the country in terms of discipline and morality. The ripple effect has trickled into the economy because economy and education are two sides of the same coin. There can be no economic development in any nation without meaningful investment in its education sector. Education serves as a bridge builder in conflicts resolution and dialogue.

Nigeria needs educated and morally sound leaders with the passion for education and youths' development. Religion played a pivotal role in education both in the colonial and post-colonial periods through the establishment of missionary schools that helped in both moral and intellectual formation of great leaders in the history of Nigeria.⁸⁵¹ I therefore advocate that all religious bodies and the political authorities should come together and adopt the UNESCO (2010) program of spreading 'Education for Sustainable Development' in the southern and eastern African countries like Mauritius, Kenya, Botswana, Malawi, etc., to be also implemented in the Western African countries like Nigeria. This program, incorporates economic, health, and socio-ethical issues for practical learning by students in the schools.⁸⁵² The Church on her part should build qualitative schools that would groom students and pupils intellectually, morally, skilfully and in character. Such schools should be made free or affordable for everyone. Also, the need for proper updating of the knowledge base of the teachers in our institutions is very important.

8.1.3 True Democracy

In 1944, Pope Pius XII in his Christmas message spoke favourably of democracy after a long period of its disapproval. He agrees that "Taught by bitter experience, [people] are more

⁸⁵⁰ Ujummadu, V. (2011), Obi hands over 1,040 schools to original owners. In: Vanguard News, November 22. No page. Available online at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/11/obi-hands-over-1040-schools-to-original-owners/>. Retrieved on 16.06.2021.

⁸⁵¹ Isichei, E. A. (1995), Op. cit. P. 270.

⁸⁵² UNESCO-UNEVOC (2010), International Centre for Technical and vocational Education and Training. P. 8.

aggressive in opposing the concentration of dictatorial power that cannot be censured or touched and call for a system of government more in keeping with the dignity and liberty of the citizens. These multitudes, uneasy, stirred by the war to their innermost depths, are today firmly convinced – at first, perhaps, in a vague and confused way, but already unyieldingly – that had there been the possibility of censuring and correcting the actions of public authority, the world would not have been dragged into the vortex of a disastrous war, and that to avoid for the future the repetition of such a catastrophe, we must vest efficient guarantees in the people itself.”⁸⁵³ He added that “If, then, we consider the extent and nature of the sacrifices demanded of all citizens, especially in our day when the activity of the state is so vast and decisive, the democratic form of government appears to many as a postulate of nature imposed by reason itself.”⁸⁵⁴

Thus, true democracy is not only the best form of government, but also reasonable and controlled by the people in freedom. However, we live in a modern world where conservatism is strongly opposed. It is relevant that the different religions “recognize that their members not only are religious individuals and as such subjected to religious authority, but that they are also free citizens with individual rights in society – subjects who legitimately claim individual liberties and, perhaps, practice forms of life differing from traditional religious conceptions.”⁸⁵⁵ Also, it is important for the religions and their hierarchy to realize that “their authority is not automatically accepted in society and that they cannot exercise complete control over factors influencing what their members think.”⁸⁵⁶ I solicit that the different religions allow their members to freely participate in democratic processes of electing or being elected into political positions. Although, it is still the case that Catholic priests are prohibited from contesting for or holding public office as stated in the Code of Canon Law,⁸⁵⁷ it is relevant to note that the Clergy form part of the citizens and “democracy needs committed citizens.”⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵³ Pope Pius XII (1944), Christmas Message. In: The New York Times: Official English Translation of Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message, Broadcast to World, 25 December. P. 10. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1944/12/25/archives/official-english-translation-of-pope-pius-xiis-christmas-message.html>. Retrieved on 10.03.2022.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁵ Kruip, G. (2007), Op. cit. P. 15.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁷ Coriden, J. A. (et al) (Eds.) (2001), The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary. The Canon Law Society of America. Geoffrey Chapman, London. Can.285 §3, and 287 §2.

⁸⁵⁸ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2019), Op. Cit. Nr. 26. §.3.

Democracy needs citizens who feel responsible for the success of this demanding order.⁸⁵⁹ Responsibility is about personal decision to follow certain good and ethical behaviours that may not be enforced in democracy, namely that citizens actively participate, take positions in democratic elections and are also willing to stand for political office and mandates.⁸⁶⁰ Hence, every citizen should be responsible, irrespective of his or her religious status or affiliation.

Politically active religious groups and religious associations usually owe their emergence to the awareness that their faith must have political consequences in a certain way, and the discovery of common political interests and positions, which often have similarities in origin, life situation and the extent to which certain symptoms of a crisis are related.⁸⁶¹ For any democratic process to succeed, above all else, respect for those who think differently is required. This includes the effort to justify your own positions with arguments, as well as the willingness to listen to and consider the arguments of others.⁸⁶² Thus, true democracy in my opinion means opposing all forms of discrimination, exclusion, violence and racism, and most importantly, the willingness to participate in or take up positions in the democratic process.

8.1.4 Proper Dispensation of Justice

According to Oputa (1992), “access to justice can be looked at from two main perspectives: the narrow and the wider senses. In the narrow sense of the term, it can be said to be co-extensive with access to the law courts while in the wider connotation it embraces access to the political order, and the benefits accruing from the social and economic developments in the state.”⁸⁶³ One may therefore say that access to justice implies access to social and distributive justice. Without access to justice, it is impossible to enjoy and ensure the realization of any other right, whether civil, political, or economic. Some factors inhibiting the access to social justice in Nigeria include delay in the administration of justice, cost of litigation, illiteracy, undue reliance on technical rules, etc.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Kruip, G. (1999), Op. cit. §ii.2. P. 114.

⁸⁶² Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2019), Op. cit. Nr. 26. §.1.

⁸⁶³ Oputa, A. C. (1992), In the Eyes of the Law. Friends Law Publishers. P. 50.

⁸⁶⁴ Okogbule, N. S. (2005), Access to justice and human rights protection in Nigeria: problems and prospects. International Journal on Human Rights. Number 3, Year 2, Dec. Pp. 94-113, (P. 96). Available online at: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Access-to-justice-and-human-rights-protection-in-Okogbule/3a5eef22991666eb9bffe291a492ff177de83a>. Accessed on 19.12.2020.

In Nigeria, “the level of illiteracy is unacceptably high, and the cost of litigation is expensive for the poor masses to bear because the conditions of existence are extremely difficult for many people to survive. Hence, issues concerning human rights protection necessarily take a secondary position in the scheme of things.”⁸⁶⁵ It is relevant to note that some of the rights important in the West are of no interest and no value to most Africans. This is because of the level of ignorance that exists in the continent. For instance, freedom of speech and freedom of the press do not mean much for a largely illiterate rural community completely absorbed in the daily rigors of the struggle for survival.

Moreover, to enhance access to justice in any society it is necessary for certain basic infrastructures to be put in place and the requisite number and quality of the personnel involved in the scheme. “For instance, where the courts are not sufficiently manned, or manned by men and women who are morally depraved, then such a state can hardly guarantee social justice to its citizens.”⁸⁶⁶ Indeed, “corrupt judicial officers may very well act as serious impediments to the attainment of justice even where the infrastructures and legal instruments are well-wrought and structured.”⁸⁶⁷ To a large majority of Nigerians, issues of human rights protection appear to be luxuries that they can hardly afford.⁸⁶⁸ The result is that human right is often seen as a political adventure exclusively designed for the rich even when the underlying objective is the promotion of corporate good.

Another aspect of great importance is the implementation of human rights. It must be noted that “[t]here is a wide gulf between official pronouncements of respect for human rights and their actual implementation. The explanation for this appears to be that there still exist a number of substantive and procedural obstacles or impediments that not only inhibit the actual implementation of such measures but preclude the masses in general from having access to justice in Nigeria.”⁸⁶⁹ It is relevant to note that access to justice is an important yardstick for assessing not only the rule of law in any country but also its quality of governance. Although, while justice itself is an elusive concept, it can loosely be said that it implies equity and fairness: and for there to be meaningful access to justice, there must be some element of fairness and

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 98.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 97.

⁸⁶⁷ Oputa, A. C. (1992), Op. cit. P. 12.

⁸⁶⁸ Aguda, T. A. (1986), *The Crisis of Justice*. Eresu Hills Publishers, Akure, Nigeria. P. 31.

⁸⁶⁹ Okogbule, N. S. (2005), Op. cit. P. 95.

equity in a system to guarantee the realization of basic fundamental rights.⁸⁷⁰ This is where the religious organizations can play an active role through its agencies like NSCIA, JNI, CAN, CIDJAP, etc., to guarantee and ensure total adherence to fundamental human rights by the government.

There is also the need for the enhancement of greater access to justice and the protection of human rights in Nigeria. From my personal experience in the legal department of CIDJAP, I met a lot of young men and women who were languishing in our prisons for crimes they insisted that they never committed, while some have spent so many years, exceeding the prescribed years for punishment of the offence they were accused of, while they were still awaiting trial. I discovered that two factors were responsible: lack of access to justice and slow dispensation of justice. Thus, I recommend a total review of the Nigerian legal system. The aim of such review would be that the cost of litigation should be reduced for the poor masses to access justice and the access to justice should be broadened to reach the poor. This review would also ensure that justice would be dispensed speedily with equal opportunity given to every party whether rich or poor, and the technicalities in the legal system should be clarified in simple language for everyone to understand and maximize its use.⁸⁷¹ It is only when we approach the issue along these lines that the concern for increased access to justice in Nigeria will be realized. Then religion would have succeeded in playing her true role of being light in the darkness, hope for the hopeless and freedom for the oppressed in a nation suffering from different forms of human rights abuses, religious crises and lack of responsible political leadership.

8.2 A Critical Evaluation

All over the world, the effect of religion on politics “is bi-focal, in the sense that it is both positive and negative. In the positive sense, religion is value- driven and it naturally robs off on the polity through the participation of ardent religious believers. In the negative sense, the effect of religion could be viewed from the perspective of sectarian tendency: where religious bigots do anything in the name of religion to ensure that positions or offices are gained or

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid. P. 97.

⁸⁷¹ Olujinmi, A. (2004), *Agenda for Reforming the Justice Sector in Nigeria*. A Publication of the Federal Ministry of Justice, Nigeria. P. 6.

retained by their adherents. Such people stand on the position that their ideals and beliefs dominate any environment they find themselves.”⁸⁷²

In the context of an evaluation of this research, some critical questions are relevant: What effect does religion have on democratic attitudes? Does religiosity hinder or enhance democratic attitudes? Is political authority to be grounded in the claims of revelation or reason? What is the nature, extent, and justification of political authority? Do political and religious leaders owe their authority to divine right? Does the state retain any authority when its principles conflict with religious principles? Is the authority of the natural law ultimately grounded in divine law? These and other questions bothering on the relationship between religion and politics have influenced this research. The problem in this relationship is often primarily one about authority in relation to the polity. It is a problem of power or influence, a case of who would affect the other and effect dominance. Who plays what role and how? Religion no doubt plays a role in politics, but the point is: what and how?

From the perspective of individual religious beliefs, religion plays a role in politics. Religion subtly affects the lives of the religious individuals and by extension, the lives of the general polity. In Nigeria for instance, the beliefs of the citizens are affected by religion and this affects their way of interpreting political issues. Human life is unified by religion and religion acts as a source or element of social solidarity and the religious man is responsible for himself, social environment, values and counter values. This directly or indirectly affects the political behaviour of the people. Thus, the religious individual tends to act in certain ways as allowed by his or her religion. He or she feels responsible toward his or her God and feels obligated to be sensitive regarding his or her activities in the society. Also, he or she may feel obligated to fight a bad or corrupt government. Thus, religion subtly affects the lives of the religious individuals and by extension, this may influence the lives of the general polity.

From the perspective of the religious hierarchy, religion plays a significant role in politics. It is noteworthy that in Nigeria, religion plays a huge role in the lives of the people but not always in the expected ways. From the hierarchical perspective, some religious leaders align themselves to some political parties for personal benefits especially from the ruling party in terms of land deeds, gifts of cars, private jets, or huge financial donations for projects. When analysed ethically, such religious leaders would be working against the values and virtues of

⁸⁷² Ginsberg, A. (2005), Op. cit. No page.

[religion].⁸⁷³ It is relevant to note that the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, the Pentecostal Federation of Nigeria or similar Islamic religious bodies like the National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, are not the praying wing of any political party in power at national or state levels. This kind of abuse of religion is an insult to the religious faith and undermines the mission of God in Nigeria.

Therefore, religion should serve as the conscience of the nation and the voice of the voiceless.⁸⁷⁴ The religious leaders [like the bishops, Imams, chief Priests, etc.] must maintain a visible neutrality in politics and must never be seen or considered through their actions or words, to favour any political party. They must always understand that they have a huge influence on their followers who also belong to different political parties. Thus, it would be difficult for the people to distinguish the difference between the opinion of their religious leaders and the general opinion of the religious groups. The religious leaders should in addition to challenging the political structures of injustice and corruption, make sincere efforts in educating their followers on ethical values and moral responsibilities. “If religion fails to inculcate a sense of ethics and morality in the people, then it has failed in its creed and is not in a position to help bring about good governance and sustain political development in a country where it has failed to raise the moral standard of the people.”⁸⁷⁵

There is a huge divide between the love of God and the love of the country. This has adversely affected the development in the country because nepotism has not only become the order of the day, but people consider a kinsman who confesses a different religious belief as an enemy. In such a pluralistic country like Nigeria, there can be no progress without unity. Religion must help people to develop the right kind of love for God and the state, and the right kind of love and affinity to temporal things. This is the first and most important service which the religion owes the people; it is the starting point. “In that light, one can think of the kind of love which governs the hearts of Nigerians: love of God or love of money, love of country or love of ethnic group, love of self or love of neighbour, love of hard work or a culture of corruption, love of

⁸⁷³ Ilo, S. (2015), *There is God: Reimagining the Place of the Christian Religion in our National Life*. Centre for World Catholicism and Inter-Cultural Theology, DePaul University, Chicago. In: Academia.Edu. P. 2. Available online at:

https://www.academia.edu/9491144/There_is_God_Reimagining_the_Place_of_Christian_Religion_in_Nigerias_National_Life. Retrieved on 29.10.2020.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid. P. 11.

⁸⁷⁵ Uchebue, C. O. (2013), *Op. cit.* P. 141.

truth and integrity or love of falsehood and dishonesty; etc.”⁸⁷⁶ The choice people make determine their fate as a country. Religion should guide the people to make a good moral choice for the good of the country.

According to Onapajo (2012), Nigeria has suffered from series of ethno-religious violent conflicts and electoral frauds.⁸⁷⁷ The decaying socio-economic and political condition of the country is taking its toll on the most populous nation in Africa. Nigerian democracy is indeed not Liberal Western democracy. Although in theory, the process represents ideals of party politics and elections, in practice the opposite is the case.⁸⁷⁸ Therefore, making religion relevant in our cotemporally politics is very important. This is because religion encourages and fosters the pursuit of human rights, the defence of human dignity and the promotion of freedom for all in the society.⁸⁷⁹ The function of religion in politics is compared to that of the yeast in the dough. “Yeast must not stay in one part of the dough. It does not serve its purpose in the baking of bread. It must spread throughout the dough to be of benefit.”⁸⁸⁰ Indeed, religion has a significant role to play in the cultural, social, economic and political life of Nigeria.

Since independence, the unity of Nigeria has been constantly threatened by the negative effects of religions, starting from the Biafra war to the various religious violence culminating in the Boko Haram Islamic extremism that has taken a religio-political dimension. The politicization of religious extremism has led to a sense of religious reawakening in Nigeria. Although this religious re-awakening is supposed to have a positive impact on the political development of the country, it has unfortunately achieved a negative effect which is the further polarization of the country into religious lines. However, I strongly agree that “religion can contribute to national integration, political mobilization, reformation of ethnic identity, nationalism, and peaceful co-existence, economic social and political development.”⁸⁸¹ Indeed, religion should play such a liberating role that would be so effective to positively influence not only the political authority, but the social and economic order without jeopardizing her spiritual. This role “will involve her challenging every unjust, oppressive and exploitative structure.”⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁶ Ilo, S. (2015), Op. cit. Pp. 2.

⁸⁷⁷ Onapajo, H. (2012), Op. cit. P. 57.

⁸⁷⁸ Ike, O. (2016), Op. cit. P. 53.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 53.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 53.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸⁸² Uchegbue, C. O. (2013), Op. cit. P. 148.

8.3 General Conclusion

It is relevant to note that the reoccurring issue in this work is the function or role of religion in politics. The question once more is: should religion be (actively) involved in politics? Or rather put directly: what is the role of religion in politics? This question was approached from the perspective of Christian social ethics. The work is divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of the first three chapters. This is the introduction of the work with a general overview of Nigeria, an analysis of the political system of the country and how the military disrupted the system.

The second part is comprised of chapters four and five. This is the analysis of the three main religions in Nigeria, their political responsibility and the use or misuse of these religions in the political system. Also, the normative bases for development in the context of basic rights and norms that provide the right to accountability in policies that affect the lives of the people and grant protection to the environment, the poor and the less privileged among the polity was analysed. The socio-ethical contributions of the church through a common responsibility and the failure of the political institution came into perspective.

The third part is comprised of chapters six and seven. In these two chapters, the researcher analyses the concrete actions of the religions as a response to the structural and institutional failure in Nigeria. Also, the actions of CIDJAP in the areas of education, social welfare, and conflict resolution and the actions of both the CSOs and the religious groups like the CAN and NSCIA in the context of inter-religious dialogue were effectively analysed.

Nigerians have witnessed and are still witnessing “the greatest socio-political and economic upheavals resulting in increased bitter politics, increased religious and political intolerance, more forced migrations and internal displacements, economic loses, increased social injustice, increased tension in politics and greater danger to the peaceful and corporate existence of Nigerian state. All these are, however, not due to the use but the misuse of religion.”⁸⁸³ Religion can serve as a unifying factor for socio-political development in Nigeria because of its influence on every aspect of human life in Nigeria. Indeed, “[e]mbedded in each religion are the beliefs, practices and ethics that serve as check for excesses in human behaviour. Thus,

⁸⁸³ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), *Op. cit.* P. 7.

values in religion are viable mechanisms for political stability and development.”⁸⁸⁴ According to Omoregbe (2003), “Religion can bring about sustainable political development through the inculcation of high sense of morality, sense of duty, selfless service, public accountability, respect for human lives, love of one’s neighbour, sense of humanity, abhorrence of violence, love for peace, contentment with what one can legitimately have, corruption, justice etc. in the citizens as well as the leaders.”⁸⁸⁵

Religion plays a liberating role both for the people and the state. This liberation gives birth to an ideal, healthy and transformative politics. On the other hand, this healthy and purposeful role played by religion, has often been used or misused to cause violence and crisis by politicians. Thus, religion has been converted into an object of manipulation by both its leaders and the politicians.⁸⁸⁶ According to Mohammed and Saidu (2013), in Nigeria, “various religious leaders have contributed to the misuse of religion in our body polity through their utterances and actions. This has lured most of Nigerians into religious politicking.”⁸⁸⁷ Consequentially, the misuse of religion by politicians often leads to ethno-religious violence and sectional divisions and lack of trust among the various religions. It is worthy to note that the use or misuse of religion in Nigerian politics has heated the polity (Sharia, elections, North-South divide, etc.), created unhealthy religious and political rivalry among Nigerians and as a result, most political activities especially elections are today largely influenced by religious violence.

Also, the proliferation of religious misuse in Nigerian politics could be arguably linked to the failure of the state and the religious leaders to discharge their responsibilities. This lack of responsibility has also largely contributed to the use of religion as a cheap means of vote catching device by the politicians. It is relevant to note that the citizens who are adherents of the religions also share in this lack of responsibility. I agree with Afolabi (2015) that “if people truly make use of their religious beliefs, values and attitudes inherent in religion into politics, it will bring about focused and resolute political leaders in the country who will be devoid of sanctimonious hypocritical attitude. It will also help in bringing about fair play into politics.”⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁴ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. P. 9.

⁸⁸⁵ Omoregbe, J. I. (2003), Op. cit. P. 309.

⁸⁸⁶ This was discussed in chapter seven of this research (7.5)

⁸⁸⁷ Mohammed, I. S. & Saidu, A. (2013), Op. cit. P. 7.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid. P. 47.

Hence, I agree with Afolabi (2015) that “religion can either bring conflict or peace, development or destruction, growth or retardation, stability or instability, security or insecurity. It depends on how it is made use of along with politics. The mixing of both religion and politics is not a problem, but the level of moral standard, patriotism towards the country and proper understanding of religion [especially by the citizens] is the determining factor.”⁸⁸⁹ The people must play active and effective roles in influencing a positive political change in the country. On this note, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria in a joint Pastoral letter, stressed on the civic and political responsibilities of every citizen.

The church must also play a leading role in this regard. The Catholic bishops conference of Nigeria have made some laudable efforts through her communiques, pastoral letters and even leading a delegation to the president of the country. However, more efforts are needed in the areas of practical political engagement with the leaders and stakeholders. Writing of communiques and pastoral letters is good but some issues require a more practical approach than writing. The bishops and the religious leaders in general, must take concrete steps towards proffering practicable solutions. They should also unite in supporting and encouraging the right candidates from any of the political parties seeking for political offices without ethnic, religious, or denominational bias.

It is, therefore, the conclusion of this research that religions in Nigeria are varied so also do the adherents and their doctrines. The relationship between religion and politics should be a mutual relationship because a well-managed relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria would lead to peace and development while a badly managed relationship could generate conflict. This is because religion is about access to a spiritual experience and divine powers, while politics is about gaining access to political power for either selfless or selfish reasons. Both religion and politics are mutually and exclusively related. Thus, there is constant need for a good relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria and a proper ethical education for the people.

⁸⁸⁹ Afolabi, O. (2015), *Op. cit.* P. 49.

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ATTACHMENTS

Table of past and present Nigerian leaders⁸⁹⁰

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (NORTH)	1960 – 1966
Major Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (EAST)	1966
General Yakubu Gowon (NORTH)	1966 – 1975
General Murtala Mohammed (NORTH)	1975 – 1976
General Olusegun Obasanjo (WEST)	1976 – 1979
Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari (NORTH)	1979 – 1983
Major Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (NORTH)	1983 – 1985
General Ibrahim Babangida (NORTH)	1985 – 1993
Chief Ernest Shonekon (WEST)	1993
General Sani Abacha (NORTH)	1993 – 1998
General Abdulsalami Abubakar (NORTH)	1998 – 1999
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (WEST)	1999 – 2007
Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (NORTH)	2007 – 2010
Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (SOUTH)	2010 – 2015
Muhammadu Buhari (NORTH)	2015 – ?

⁸⁹⁰ The table shows the names of the Nigerian leaders, region of origin (North, South, East, West), and the duration of leadership. The table also reflects the systemic marginalization of a particular region of the country with an appearance of a leader once in the entire history of the nation.

Zusammenfassung

Eine Analyse der Rolle der Religionen in der Politik in Nigeria aus der Perspektive der christlichen Sozialethik.

Politik ist ein grundlegender Aspekt jeder Nation. Sie beeinflusst alles, was in einem Land vor sich geht, in den Dörfern, in den Schulen und sogar in den Kirchen, Moscheen und anderen Gotteshäusern.⁸⁹¹ Daraus folgt, dass die Politik eine entscheidende Rolle für die soziale und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung einer Nation spielt. Die Religionen wiederum dienen als das Gewissen der Gesellschaft und spielen somit die Rolle eines moralischen Leitfadens sowohl für die Bürger als auch für die politische Klasse.⁸⁹² Die Funktion der Religionen in der Politik ist mit der Aufgabe der Hefe im Teig zu vergleichen. Hefe darf nicht in einem Teil des Teiges zurückbleiben, denn sie muss sich ganz im Teig verteilen. Eine konstruktive und im moralischen Sinne gute Beziehung zwischen Religionen und Politik kann zu einer Gesellschaft führen, die das Leben und die Freiheit jedes Einzelnen in der Gesellschaft respektiert und die Rechtsstaatlichkeit garantiert. Eine solche Beziehung bleibt die Vision einer jeden Gesellschaft. Die Frage ist jedoch, welche konkrete Rolle die Religionen in einer solchen Gesellschaft spielen sollten. Die Suche nach dieser Rolle der Religionen führt uns zu der Aufgabe, die Interdependenz zwischen Religionen und Politik darzustellen.

In der Geschichte der Menschheit haben Religionen und Politik oft nebeneinander existiert. Oft war es eine bestimmte Religion, die sich exklusiv neben der Politik behauptet hat.⁸⁹³ Diese Koexistenz wurde entweder falsch ausgelegt oder missverstanden.⁸⁹⁴ Man könnte die beiden wohl auch als „unbequeme Bettgenossen“ bezeichnen, weil sie nicht automatisch eine gute Partnerschaft bilden, dennoch müssen sie beide koexistieren, wobei entscheidend ist, wer einen größeren Einfluss auf den anderen hat. Es ist eine bittere Ironie, dass Nigeria eine traurige Geschichte von Korruption und verantwortungsloser Führung erlitten hat,

⁸⁹¹ Afolabi, O. (2015), The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and its sustainability for political development. Ein Artikel in der Net Journal of Social Sciences, 3 (2). S. 42-49, (S. 44).

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ Wenn ich im Folgenden grundsätzlich auf das Verhältnis von Religion und Politik zu sprechen komme und dabei auch nicht direkt auf die Pluralität von Religionen Bezug nehme, benutze ich „Religion“ im Singular.

⁸⁹⁴ Uchegbue, C. O. (2013), The Place of the Church in the Socio-Political and Economic Liberation of Nigeria. Vortrag gehalten bei: The 1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC, 24-26 April, Azores, Portugal. In: European Journal. European Scientific Institute. S. 141 – 154, (S. 141). Online verfügbar auf: <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/download/1322/1331>. Zuletzt überprüft am 01.02.2021.

überraschenderweise gerade von Politikern, die sehr religiös zu sein schienen. Tatsächlich hat Nigeria viele Politiker erlebt, sowohl Männer als auch Frauen, die sich zur christlichen, islamischen oder traditionellen Religion bekannten, deren Verhalten in politischen Angelegenheiten jedoch im Widerspruch zu den moralischen Prinzipien eben dieser Religion, zu der sie sich bekannten, stand.

Dies wurde treffend von Maduagwu (2017) beschrieben, der feststellte, dass es in Nigeria "keine Korrelation zwischen der religiösen Gesinnung der Menschen und dem allgemeinen Mangel an moralischen Werten im Land gibt, was sich in der Verbreitung von Korruption, Betrug, mutwilliger Zerstörung von Leben und Eigentum, manchmal im Namen der Religion, bewaffnetem Raub, Menschenhandel, rituellen Tötungen, der Unempfindlichkeit der Führer gegenüber der Notlage des Volkes und allgemeiner Disziplinlosigkeit und Gesetzlosigkeit zeigt."⁸⁹⁵

Politik ist von fundamentaler Bedeutung für das Gemeinwohl, das Wohlergehen des Volkes und das Überleben des Staates. Die Politik beeinflusst alles, was in unserem Staat, in unserem Land, in unseren Städten, in unseren Schulen und sogar in unseren Kirchen, Moscheen und traditionellen Heiligtümern vor sich geht. Die Religion wiederum spielt eine bedeutende Rolle in der Politik, wenn sie sich in die politische Ordnung einbringt, "indem sie als prinzipiell höhere Instanz, moralischer Wachhund, spiritueller Ratgeber und Gewissen der Gesellschaft fungiert."⁸⁹⁶ In ihrem Engagement für die politische Ordnung respektiert, unterstützt und kritisiert die Religion die politische Autorität, sofern es notwendig ist. Einige Wissenschaftler argumentieren jedoch einerseits, dass eine starke Einbindung der Religion in die Politik den spirituellen Status der religiösen Körperschaften oder Organisationen gefährden kann, während andererseits viele zu bedenken geben, dass eine zu große Distanz zur Politik die Funktion der Religion als Licht und moralisches Leuchtf Feuer der Gesellschaft in Frage stellt. Dies verdeutlicht die funktionale Ambivalenz von Religion und wirft einige grundlegende Fragen auf wie: Sollte die Religion überhaupt eine aktive Rolle in den politischen Angelegenheiten der Gesellschaft spielen? Und wie kann die Religion diese aktive Rolle in einer multiethnischen Gesellschaft wie Nigeria mit verschiedenen religiösen Bekenntnissen

⁸⁹⁵ Maduagwu, M. O. (2017), State and Religion in Nigeria: Towards an Appropriate Relationship in the 21st Century. Publiziert in: African Journal for Security and Development. 2 (1). Dieses und die folgenden wörtlichen englischen Zitate habe ich für diese Zusammenfassung selbst übersetzt. S. 104-117, (S. 2).

⁸⁹⁶ Uchegbue, C. O. (2013), Op. cit., S. 141.

wahrnehmen, ohne religiöse und ethnische Grenzen zu verstärken? Diese Fragen bilden den Ausgangspunkt für meine Forschungsarbeit.

So soll diese wissenschaftliche Untersuchung zeigen, dass die Religion eine moralische Rolle bei der Gestaltung der nigerianischen politischen Gesellschaft und bei der Beeinflussung eines konstruktiven und positiven sozialen Wandels spielen muss. Dieser Wandel ist notwendig für die Transformation der Gesellschaft zum Wohle der Allgemeinheit. Der zentrale Fokus dieser Untersuchung liegt demnach auf Nigeria und der Frage, wie Religion die Politik des Landes beeinflusst. Es wird jedoch auch auf die universellen Beiträge der Religion in der globalen Politik, insbesondere in Afrika, hingewiesen.

Diese Forschungsarbeit ist in acht Kapitel unterteilt. Das erste Kapitel beginnt mit einer allgemeinen Einführung. Ich erläutere die Motivation für diese Arbeit, grenze das Thema ein und gebe eine kurze Darstellung des Forschungsstands sowie der verwendeten Methode. Auch gebe ich einen ersten großen Überblick über die politische Entwicklung Nigerias von der vorkolonialen Zeit bis zur Gegenwart und die Rolle, die die Religion in diesen Perioden spielte. Vor der Kolonisierung Nigerias lebten Christen und Muslime in einer relativ friedlichen Atmosphäre zusammen. Damals gab es noch keinen Bundesstaat Nigeria. Es existierten nur die Stämme der Ijaw, Igbos, Urhobos, Itsekiri, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Kanuri, Ogonis, Gwani, Kataf, u.a., sowie auch einige Königreiche wie Nri, Oyo, Lagos, Calabar, Brass, Itsekiri, Benin, Tiv, Borno, Sokoto Kalifat, Kano, Ilorin, Zaria, Bonny, Opobo u.a.⁸⁹⁷ Diese Stämme und Gemeinschaften waren unabhängig voneinander.⁸⁹⁸ Ungeachtet ihrer Ursprünge und Migrationsräume begannen die Menschen, nachdem sie sich in ihren heutigen Regionen und Wohnorten niedergelassen hatten und allmählich konsolidierten, Regierungs- und Verwaltungssysteme zu entwickeln und auszuarbeiten, die je nach geografischer Umgebung, verfügbarer Militärtechnologie, wirtschaftlichen, spirituellen und moralischen Kräften in

⁸⁹⁷ Sagay, I. (2003), True Federalism in an Emerging Democracy: A case study of Nigeria. A lecture delivered in commemoration of the inauguration of His Excellency Asiwaju Bola Tinubu as Governor of Lagos state (2003-2007) at Le'meridian Hotel, Lagos. In: Adedoja, T. (2003), ThisDay Newspaper, Nigeria: Prominent Scholar Renews Call for True Federalism. 29, May, Keine Seite. Online verfügbar auf: <https://allafrica.com/stories/200305290113.html>. Zuletzt überprüft am 08.01.2022.

⁸⁹⁸ Nande, M. (et al), (No date), Federalism and Political Development in Nigeria. S. 2. Online verfügbar auf: https://www.academia.edu/32769660/FEDERALISM_AND_POLITICAL_DEVELOPMENT_IN_NIGERIA, Zuletzt überprüft am 07.01.2019.

Umfang und Komplexität variierten.⁸⁹⁹ Obwohl es in der vorkolonialen Zeit gelegentlich zu Konflikten über Themen wie die Landaufteilung und Handelswege kam, waren diese verschiedenen ethnischen Gemeinschaften tolerant und gingen kompromissbereit miteinander um.⁹⁰⁰

Diese unabhängigen Stämme und Königreiche wurden jedoch von der britischen Kolonialarmee erobert, was zu einer langen Periode des Kolonialismus führte. Die traditionellen Stammesgebiete wurden in zwei regionale Kolonien aufgeteilt: Nord und Süd. Im Jahr 1914 wurde der Staat Nigeria durch die Zusammenlegung der beiden Kolonien durch die britische Kolonialregierung von Sir Fredrick Lugard geschaffen.⁹⁰¹ Laut Whitaker war das ultimative Ziel der Briten die Durchsetzung der britischen Interessen um jeden Preis.⁹⁰² Der erzwungene Zusammenschluss Nigerias brachte viele schwierige Herausforderungen mit sich, wie Tribalismus, Regionalismus, Sektionalismus usw., die aus ethnischen, kulturellen, religiösen und sprachlichen Unterschieden resultierten. Diese Herausforderungen führten wiederum zu sozialen Problemen und einen Mangel an Einheit. Die britische Regierung hatte durch ihre Politik strukturelle Ungleichgewichte innerhalb der kolonialen Nation Nigeria geschaffen, vor allem in Bezug auf sozioökonomische Projekte, die soziale Entwicklung und die Einrichtung von Verwaltungszentren.⁹⁰³ Dies erzeugte immer mehr Misstrauen des Volkes gegenüber den Kolonialherren.

Der Kampf um die Unabhängigkeit wurde erstmals von Herbert Macaulay im Jahr 1920 initiiert.⁹⁰⁴ Daher wird Macaulay als der Begründer des nigerianischen Nationalismus angesehen, der Nigeria als Nation mit Betonung auf seine kulturelle Einheit behaupten

⁸⁹⁹ Ogbaji, J. U. (2012), Political Development of Nigeria, a lecture note prepared for the Department of History and International studies, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria. S. 2. Online verfügbar auf: <https://www.academia.edu/people/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=Political+Development+in+Nigeria>. Zuletzt überprüft am 07.10.2019.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid. S. 5.

⁹⁰² Whitaker, C. S. (1970), The Politics of Tradition: Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. S. 49.

⁹⁰³ McKenna, A. (Ed.) (2010), The History of West Africa. Britannica Educational Publishing, London. S. 173.

⁹⁰⁴ Uka, L. U. (1989), Mass media, people, and politics in Nigeria. Concept Publishing Company, Enugu. S. 23-24.

wollte.⁹⁰⁵ Das Hauptziel der nigerianischen Unabhängigkeitsbewegung war es, eine Einheit und ein Nationalbewusstsein unter den Menschen zu schaffen, um dem britischen Kolonialismus widerstehen zu können.⁹⁰⁶ Nach einem langen Kampf einiger bedeutender Männer und Frauen, wie Sir Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Dr. Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Tafawa Balewa etc., erlangte Nigeria am 1. Oktober 1960 seine Unabhängigkeit von den britischen Kolonialherren. Heute ist Nigeria das bevölkerungsreichste Land in Afrika und steht hinsichtlich der Einwohnerzahl an 7. Stelle der Welt.⁹⁰⁷ Es wird oft als der Riese Afrikas bezeichnet mit 36 Bundesstaaten und 774 lokalen Verwaltungsgebieten. Nigeria hat über 250 ethnische Stämme, die über 500 Sprachen sprechen, und ist in drei Hauptstämme aufgeteilt: Igbo, Hausa und Yoruba.⁹⁰⁸ Die drei Hauptreligionen sind: Christentum, Islam und die afrikanische traditionelle Religion (ATR).⁹⁰⁹

Im zweiten Kapitel wird eine Analyse des politischen Systems in Nigeria vorgestellt und dabei die vorkoloniale Zeit, die Kolonialzeit und die postkoloniale Zeit betrachtet. Ich habe insbesondere den Föderalismus als politisches System und seine Stärken und Schwächen betrachtet, wobei Korruption und Ethnizität als besonders große Herausforderungen gelten, mit denen das staatliche System konfrontiert ist, was häufig auch zu Gewalt in Wahlkämpfen und ethnischen Konflikten führt. Wenn man die aktuelle politische Situation in Nigeria untersucht, zeigt sich, dass das föderale politische System und die staatlichen Verwaltungsstrukturen im Land nicht effizient entwickelt und gefördert wurden. Dies führt auch dazu, dass das soziale und politische Verhalten der Nigerianer in Konflikt mit den heutigen politischen Autoritäten und Institutionen steht. Meine Untersuchung führt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die politischen und religiösen Akteure es versäumt haben, das Wissen, die Einstellungen und die Reaktionen der Menschen mit den einheimischen Werten in Einklang zu bringen.

⁹⁰⁵ Guntram, H. H. (et al) (2008), Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview. ABC-CLIO, Inc. Santa Barbara, California, USA. S. 1184.

⁹⁰⁶ Falola, T. & Saheed, A. (2010), Nigeria, nationalism, and writing history. Rochester. University Press. Rochester, New York, USA. S. 256.

⁹⁰⁷ Eze, D. I. (2018), Nigerians Now 198 million: NPC Boss. In: Vanguard News Nigeria. April 11. Keine Seite. Online verfügbar auf: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/04/npc-puts-nigerias-population-198m/>. Zuletzt überprüft am 13.11.2018.

⁹⁰⁸ Falola, T. (2008), A History of Nigeria. Cambridge University Press, UK. S. 158.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Nigeria war und ist zu einem großen Teil der weit verbreiteten Willkürherrschaft und der Diktatur ausgeliefert, was zu Machtmissbrauch, Korruption in öffentlichen Ämtern und der Misswirtschaft der ökonomischen Ressourcen führt. Dabei wird die wirtschaftliche Stagnation größtenteils durch Ethnizismus und Vetternwirtschaft verursacht. Dies zeigt sich auch in dem unerbittlichen Kampf um die politische Macht und damit verbundenen Wahlfälschungen, die oft zu Gewaltausbrüchen bei Wahlen führen. In der globalen Öffentlichkeit wird Nigeria häufig als Beispiel für Armut, Terrorismus (Boko Haram, landraubende Fulani-Hirten) und schlechte Regierungsführung betrachtet. Im Kontext meiner Arbeit stellt sich die Frage, ob dieses Phänomen auch von der Beziehung zwischen Religion und Ethnizität beeinflusst wird. Afolabi stellt 2015 dazu treffend fest, dass "politische Amtsträger die Religion als Werkzeug missbrauchen, um an die Macht zu kommen, während religiöse Amtsinhaber sie missbrauchen, um sich persönlich zu bereichern."⁹¹⁰ Die soziale und politische Situation im Land degenerierte so stark, dass ethnische Rivalität, religiöse Gewalt und politische Täuschung die Oberhand gewannen. So wurde Nigeria zu einer Nation ohne Nationalbewusstsein, Loyalität oder Identität, eine Nation, die von den Spaltungen der Stämme und der ethnischen Zugehörigkeit zerrissen wurde, ein Land, das von Wahlfälschungen, weitverbreiteter Korruption, heftigen und häufigen religiösen Unruhen, sozialem und kommunalem Chaos, Gewaltexzessen und wachsenden Spannungen heimgesucht wurde, eine Nation, in der die Regierten das Vertrauen und die Hoffnung in die Regierung und vor allem in ihre führenden Köpfe verloren haben.⁹¹¹

Gerade die junge Generation – mehr als die Hälfte der Bevölkerung ist unter 20 Jahre alt – trägt die Hauptlast für den sozialen und gesellschaftlichen Wandel und ist am stärksten von Veränderungen im gesellschaftlichen und politischen Kontext Nigerias betroffen. Diese demographische Struktur in Nigeria ist somit ein großer Gewinn für eine sozio-politische Transformation Nigerias in ein demokratisches Gemeinwesen.⁹¹² Daher sollten der Jugend alle

⁹¹⁰ Afolabi, O. (2015), Op. cit. S. 42.

⁹¹¹ Mile, T. J. (et al) (2013), History and the Shaping of Nigerian Leadership. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 15 (2), Sep. - Oct., S. 30-34, (S. 31). Online verfügbar auf: <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol15-issue2/E01523034.pdf?id=6940>. Zuletzt überprüft am 19.01.2022.

⁹¹² Jimoh, A. (et al) (2016), Youth and political change in Nigeria: Historical note and critical discourse. AFFRIKA: In: Journal of Politics, Economics and Society, 6 (2), December, S. 119 – 137, (S. 119). Online verfügbar auf: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317717969_Youth_and_political_change_in_Nigeria_Historical_note_and_critical_discourse. Zuletzt überprüft am 29.04.2021.

Chancen von Schule, Bildung und Ausbildung ermöglicht werden, denn Bildung ist der Schlüssel für eine erfolgreiche Entwicklung und eine Investition in die Zukunft des Landes. Dann werden sich auch viele junge Menschen aktiver für Politik und Gesellschaft engagieren.

Im dritten Kapitel habe ich die höchst problematische Rolle des Militärs für die Entwicklung des Landes analysiert. Kurz nach der Unabhängigkeit betrieben einflussreiche Politiker eine ethnische Mobilisierung, die strukturell zur Bildung ethnisch orientierter politischer Parteien führte, in dem verzweifelten Bemühen, sich an der Macht zu halten. In dieser Zeit intensivierten ethnische Minderheiten in Nigeria ihre Kämpfe gegen tief empfundene soziale Ungerechtigkeiten und Ausgrenzung, die von ethnischen Mehrheiten verursacht wurden, was zu zunehmender politischer Gewalt führte und im Ergebnis auch zur Militärintervention von 1966. Der Zusammenbruch des demokratischen Systems⁹¹³ in Nigeria hat sich seither nicht von den verheerenden Auswirkungen der Militärherrschaft und des Biafra-Bürgerkriegs von 1967 bis 1970 erholt. Die Militärführer betrieben die Umwandlung der institutionellen Strukturen weg vom Föderalismus hin zu einem zentralen unitären Regierungssystem. Die föderale Verfassung wurde aufgegeben und die verschiedenen Militärregierungen haben neue, an ihren Interessen orientierte Verfassungen erlassen. Diese Entwicklung führte das Land nur noch tiefer in die Krise. In dem Zeitraum von 1966 bis 1999 erlebte Nigeria acht verschiedene Militärregierungen. Mit Hilfe von religiösen Gruppen, Bürgerrechtsorganisationen und der internationalen Gemeinschaft wurden schließlich die Militärregierungen unter Druck gesetzt, die Macht an eine zivile, gewählte Regierung zu übergeben. Dieser konstitutionelle Übergang fand sogar dreimal statt, und zwar 1979, 1993 und 1999.

In der darauffolgenden Periode wurden bis 2021 sechs verschiedene Präsidentschaftswahlen abgehalten. Aber auch mit der zivilen Regierung an der Macht wurde Nigerias Stabilität wiederholt durch gewaltsame Konflikte zwischen fundamentalistischen Muslimen und Christen durch die Ausbreitung des islamischen Gesetzes und die Etablierung der Scharia im stark muslimischen Norden bedroht. Mehr als 10.000 Menschen sind bei religiösen Auseinandersetzungen ums Leben gekommen, seit 1999 die Macht vom Militär an die zivile Regierung übergeben wurde.⁹¹⁴ Es gab auch Abspaltungsbestrebungen verschiedener

⁹¹³ Ademoyega, A. (1981), *Why we struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup*. Evans Printers, Ibadan. S. 15-22.

⁹¹⁴ Harnischfeger, J. (2008), *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. Falola, T. (1998) kommentierte auch die religiöse Krise, die durch die Einführung des

ethnischer Gruppen, wie z.B. der Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) und des Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC). Obwohl es schwierig ist, religiöse Faktoren von der ökonomischen und politischen Entwicklung in Nigeria zu trennen, zeigt eine genauere Betrachtung der Konflikte, dass deren Ursachen meist in der fehlenden Befriedigung menschlicher Grundbedürfnisse wurzeln, was auf die rücksichtslose Verfolgung sozioökonomischer und politischer Ziele der jeweiligen Regierung zurückgeht.

Im vierten Kapitel steht die Geschichte der drei großen Religionen in Nigeria und ihre Beziehung zum politischen System im Mittelpunkt. Die Geschichte des Christentums in Nigeria lässt sich bis ins 15. Jahrhundert zurückverfolgen, als „die ersten [...] portugiesischen Seefahrer und Händler (und einige christliche Missionare) den Atlantischen Ozean wegen ihres Interesses an westafrikanischem Gold durchsegelten.“⁹¹⁵ Leider scheiterten die Missionare, weil die afrikanischen Könige, denen sie begegneten, mehr am Geschäft als am Christentum interessiert waren.⁹¹⁶ Ein weiterer Grund für den Misserfolg war die enge Verbindung der Missionare mit dem Sklavenhandel. Es bestand ein grundsätzlicher Widerspruch zwischen dem Ziel der „Bekehrung von Afrikanern und dem Kauf von Sklaven.“⁹¹⁷ Die wesentliche Voraussetzung für den Erfolg der Missionstätigkeit war jedoch die Abschaffung des Sklavenhandels im Jahr 1807.⁹¹⁸ Einige der befreiten Sklaven, die zu Kaufleuten wurden, reisten nach Nigeria. Sie predigten das Evangelium in Lagos, Badagry, Abeokuta und später in der Ostregion wie Onitsha, Calabar usw. Viele Menschen bekehrten sich daraufhin.⁹¹⁹ Die Christen in Nigeria gehören im Wesentlichen drei Konfessionen an: (1) den Katholiken, (2) den Protestanten und (3) den Pfingstkirchen.

islamischen Rechts der Scharia verursacht wurde, in ihrem Buch; *Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of Religious Politics and secular ideologies*. S. 212.

⁹¹⁵ Anagolu, K. (2019), *The Relationship Hermeneutics in the Context of Pastoral and Catechesis – Locus for Dialogue with Culture in the Missio Ecclesiae*. LIT VERLAG GmbH and Co. KG Wien, Zürich. S. 93.

⁹¹⁶ Owolabi, J. (2009), *Christianity in Nigeria*. National Open University of Nigeria, CTH071, Lagos. S. 2. Siehe auch: Onyeka, A. (2011), *Dialogue with Culture. A new Method of Evangelization in Igboland*. San Press Enugu. S. 108.

⁹¹⁷ Isichei, E. A. (1995), *A History of Christianity in Africa; From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, Lawrenceville: W. B. Eerdmans: Africa World Press, Lawrenceville. S. 71.

⁹¹⁸ Berman, E. (1975), *African Reactions to Missionary Education*. Teachers College Press, New York. S. 80.

⁹¹⁹ Owolabi, J. (2009), *Op. cit.* S. 2.

Die Ankunft des Islam in Nigeria geht dem Christentum voraus, da arabische Händler bereits im elften Jahrhundert, etwa 200 Jahre nach dem Beginn des Hausa-Königreiches,⁹²⁰ erste Kontakte mit dem Land knüpften.⁹²¹ Isichei (1983) berichtet, dass islamische Missionare erstmals Kano erreichten und den König während der Herrschaft von Yaji dan Tsa Miya (ca. 1349-1385) bekehrten. Zu Yajis Zeiten kamen die Wangarawa aus Mele (Mali) und brachten die muslimische Religion mit.⁹²² Im Zuge der Verbreitung der islamischen Religion in Nigeria sind verschiedene islamische Konfessionen und Organisationen entstanden. Sie werden gemeinhin als islamische Bruderschaften bezeichnet. Einige dieser Organisationen und Bruderschaften sind die Islamische Bewegung von Nigeria (IMN), die Jama'at Nasr al-Islam, der Nigerianische Oberste Rat für Islamische Angelegenheiten (NSCIA) usw.

Die Afrikanische Traditionelle Religion (ATR) ist die größte der zahlreichen anderen religiösen Gruppen neben dem Christentum und dem Islam in Nigeria. „Sie ist die Religion, die aus dem anhaltenden Glauben der Vorfahren der heutigen Afrikaner hervorgegangen ist.“⁹²³ Nach Chukwuma (1985) ist sie „nicht nur die Religion verschiedener Völker, die durch eine Art theologischer oder ontologischer Überzeugung zusammengeführt werden, sondern eine Religion, deren Mitglieder durch ihre Geburt in die religiöse Gruppe hineingeboren werden und ihr Schicksal innerhalb des Rahmens der Religion sehen.“⁹²⁴ Heute sind die beiden dominierenden Religionen in Nigeria der Islam und das Christentum.⁹²⁵ Nur sehr wenige Menschen in den Dörfern bekennen sich noch (öffentlich) zur ATR.

Grundsätzlich bedarf es einer differenzierten und präzisen Definition der Rolle der Religion in Staat und Politik des Landes. Religiösen Führern muss verfassungsmäßig der gebührende

⁹²⁰ Isichei, E. A. (1983), *A History of Nigeria*. Longmans, New York. S. 304.

⁹²¹ Jega, A. D. (2013), *The role of Religion and Politics in Nigeria for Sustainable National Development*. Online verfügbar auf: https://www.academia.edu/40342464/ISLAMIC_PAPER. Zuletzt überprüft am 20.04.2021. S. 9.

⁹²² Isichei, E. A. (1983), S. 305.

⁹²³ Spencer, B. A. & Spencer, D. W. (1988), *The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God: Listening to God and Learning from Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, Michigan. S. 65.

⁹²⁴ Chukwuma, M. (1985), *Nigerian Politics and the Role of Religion* (Dissertation). Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn. S. 59.

⁹²⁵ Ibrahim, J. (1991), *Religion and political turbulence in Nigeria*. In: *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29 (1), S. 106-117, (S. 116).

Respekt entgegengebracht werden, damit sie sich in Nigeria zugehörig fühlen.⁹²⁶ Erst wenn diese Geistlichen ein Bewusstsein dafür entwickeln, dass sie Führer im Sinne wahrer Hirten und nicht über den Menschen und der Gesellschaft stehende Amtsträger sind, werden sie die Motivation und Verantwortung übernehmen, sich aufrichtig für die Interessen der Menschen und der Nation einzusetzen. Dadurch werden sie auch eher in der Lage sein, ihre Anhänger zu kontrollieren und sie vor Gewalttaten zu warnen. Außerdem werden sie auch ein Gefühl des Stolzes entwickeln und mit neuem Selbstbewusstsein weniger abhängig von selbstsüchtigen Politikern sein. Mehrere Studien haben gezeigt, dass in Gesellschaften, in denen die Religion eine einflussreiche Rolle spielt, wie auch in Nigeria, diese sehr wirksam zur Förderung des Friedens beitragen kann.⁹²⁷ In diesem Sinne können religiöse Autoritäten und Institutionen, wenn sie sich aufrichtig für die Menschen engagieren, wichtige Vermittler von Frieden und Freiheit sein und helfen Gewalt zu vermeiden. Folgerichtig ist laut Maduagwu (2005) "Religion ein wichtiger Faktor im persönlichen und sozialen Leben der Nigerianer."⁹²⁸ Aber auch im politischen Bereich Nigerias nimmt die Religion eine wichtige Stellung ein. Es gibt grundsätzlich einen spirituellen und moralischen Aspekt in der Gesellschaft, der nicht unterschätzt werden darf, denn das nationale Leben in Nigeria ist durch religiösen Glauben und religiöse Praxis geprägt. Das liegt an der unterschiedlichen Rolle, die Religion für zahlreiche Menschen und verschiedene soziale Gruppen spielt. Für die Armen ist die Religion die letzte Hoffnung zum Überleben. Für die Reichen ist sie ein Ventil, um Gott oder die Götter zu besänftigen, wohingegen viele Politiker ihre Religion als ein mächtiges Werkzeug für politische Kampagnen und ihre eigene Popularität nutzen. Dieses Kapitel hat gezeigt, dass die Religion eine herausragende moralische Rolle bei der Gestaltung des politischen Systems und der Gesellschaft Nigerias spielt. Die Beeinflussung eines konstruktiven und nachhaltigen sozialen Wandels durch die Religion ist also notwendig für die Transformation der Gesellschaft zum Wohle der Allgemeinheit.

Im fünften Kapitel habe ich die normativen Grundlagen für Entwicklungs- und Handlungsempfehlungen für Nigeria zusammengestellt. Normativ bedeutet, sich auf einen

⁹²⁶ Arjomand, S. A. (Ed.) (1993), *The political dimensions of religion*. New York: State University Press New York. S. 59.

⁹²⁷ Ibid.

⁹²⁸ Maduagwu, M. O. (2005), *Religion and National Security: The Challenge for Nigeria in the 21st Century*. In: Ikonne, C. & Ima, O. W. & Nwagbara, E. (Eds.), *Security, Social Services and Sustainable Development in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press. S. 8-27, (S. 8).

allgemein anerkannten, prinzipiellen Standard zu beziehen. Dabei sind die Fragen relevant: Welchen Kriterien gehorcht die Entwicklung in Nigeria und hat die nigerianische Politik überhaupt werteorientierte Prinzipien? Jede Gesellschaft besteht aus unterschiedlichen wirtschaftlichen, politischen, kulturellen, religiösen und sozialen Gruppen. Die Aktivitäten dieser Gruppen werden oft in einem institutionalisierten System organisiert, in dem im Rahmen der klassischen Gewaltenteilung drei Hauptorgane in den meisten modernen Gesellschaften die konstitutiven Grundlagen des Staates bilden. Die drei Organe, die sich als Legislative, Exekutive und Judikative definieren, sind für die Formulierung von Politik, die Umsetzung staatlichen Handelns und die Schaffung von Gesetzen und Verordnungen sowie deren Auslegung und entsprechende die Rechtsprechung zur Versöhnung in Konfliktfällen zuständig.⁹²⁹ Daraus ergibt sich, dass Regierungshandeln eine Machtstruktur mit eigenen hierarchischen Kategorien voraussetzt, die die wirtschaftlichen, sozialen, kulturellen und politischen Spannungen innerhalb der Gesellschaft berücksichtigt und so eine Eigendynamik zur Schlichtung und Lösung von Konflikten entwickelt, um friedliche und effektive Lösungen für existenzielle Probleme der Gesellschaft und ihrer Menschen zu gewährleisten.⁹³⁰

Entwicklung zielt darauf ab, die Lebensqualität der Menschen zu verbessern.⁹³¹ Die wichtigsten Merkmale der Lebensqualität sind in diesem Zusammenhang Bildung, Gesundheit, Wirtschaft, soziale und politische Zufriedenheit. Durch eine so zielorientierte Entwicklung haben die Menschen die Möglichkeit zu Beschäftigung, wirtschaftlicher Tätigkeit, Wohlstand und einem menschenwürdigen Leben. Eine solch konstruktive Entwicklung wird hauptsächlich vom Staat durch politische Maßnahmen realisiert. Diese Maßnahmen haben direkt oder indirekt elementare Folgen für die Bürger. Daraus ergibt sich die Notwendigkeit eines Werturteils darüber, wie Politik zu gestalten ist. Die Orientierung an Grundwerten ist die normative Grundlage für Entwicklung, denn Entwicklung basiert auf Werturteilen.⁹³² Daraus folgt, dass Regierungshandeln auf einer normativen Grundlage beruhen sollte, um eine am Menschen orientierte Entwicklung zu erreichen. Ein normativer Rahmen politischer

⁹²⁹ Yagboyaju, D. A. & Adeoye, O. A. (2019), Nigerian State and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Exposition. Sage Journal, 9 (3), S. 1-10, (S. 5). Online verfügbar auf: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244019865810>. Zuletzt überprüft am 03.04.2021.

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Alkire, S. & Deneulin, S. (1979), A Normative Framework for Development. Textbook. Ophi, UK. S. 3. Online verfügbar auf: https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Textbook_Ch1.pdf, Zuletzt überprüft am 19.04.2021.

⁹³² Ibid. S. 4.

Entscheidungsfindung führt im Ergebnis zu einer besseren und effizienteren Berücksichtigung des Gemeinwohls, wodurch essenzielle Themen wie Sicherheit, Bildung, Gesundheit u.a. eine größere Bedeutung erlangen, was gleichzeitig einer moralischen bzw. ethischen Orientierung entspricht.⁹³³ Ein normativer Rahmen für die politische und soziale Entwicklung würde sicherstellen, dass das Wohl des Menschen das eigentliche Ziel ist. Die normative Grundlage für politisches Handeln würde auch einen Ausgleich zwischen wirtschaftlichem und sozialem Fortschritt ermöglichen und zu wachsendem Verständnis zwischen der natürlichen Umwelt und den Bedürfnissen der Menschen in der Gesellschaft führen. Diese Perspektive, ja nahezu utopische Harmonie, würde erheblich beeinträchtigt werden, wenn die Entwicklung nicht mit einem „echten sozialen und moralischen Fortschritt“⁹³⁴ einhergeht, also die Menschen nicht mehr das Hauptziel der Entwicklung wären.

Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt der normative Rahmen für die politische und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung sicher, dass das wirtschaftliche Wachstum nicht über eine menschenwürdige Entwicklung gestellt wird. Die normative Verankerung politischen Handelns überträgt dem Staat eine umfassende Verantwortung für die Bereitstellung grundlegender Infrastrukturen, wie Schulen, Krankenhäuser, gute Straßen, Sicherheit, Strom und Wasser für die Bürger. So erhält der Bürger auch das Recht auf ein menschenwürdiges Leben und ein entwicklungsförderndes soziales Gemeinwesen.

Die normative Orientierung an Grundrechten, wie das Recht auf einen angemessenen Lebensstandard, das Recht auf ausreichende Nahrung und Gesundheit sowie das Recht auf kostenlose staatliche Bildung sind ein fundamentaler Bestandteil der Menschenrechtsverträge der Vereinten Nationen und der Verfassungen vieler demokratischer Staaten. Dies spiegelt sich in der Erklärung der Vereinten Nationen über die Rechte auf Entwicklung, in der Afrikanischen Charta der Menschenrechte und in der Verfassung der Bundesrepublik Nigeria wider.

Die Idee einer übergeordneten gemeinsamen Verantwortung bezieht sich in diesem Zusammenhang auf Staat und Gesellschaft wie auch auf die einzelnen Individuen. Der Mensch ist auch „für seine Entscheidungen verantwortlich, weil er mit einer rationalen Natur ausgestattet ist und in der Lage ist, Projekte zu verfolgen, die dem Leben auf individueller und

⁹³³ Ibid. S. 5.

⁹³⁴ Pope Francis (2015), Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Kapitel 4, §.4. S. 14.

sozialer Ebene einen Sinn geben.“⁹³⁵ Dies impliziert, dass das soziale Leben des Menschen nicht etwas Unverbindliches oder gar Verzichtbares ist, sondern Teil einer wesentlichen und unveräußerlichen Dimension des Menschen selbst.⁹³⁶ Die gemeinsame Verantwortung führt zu einem Entwicklungsprozess, der sowohl eine kollektive als auch eine individuelle Verpflichtung und konkretes Handeln bedingt. Er basiert auf der verbindlichen Anerkennung einer gleichberechtigten Partnerschaft zwischen allen Beteiligten, um einen Austausch von Fähigkeiten, Bewusstsein, Wissen und Erfahrung zu ermöglichen und so einen Wandel herbeizuführen.⁹³⁷

In sechsten Kapitel wird das Catholic Institute for Development Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) als Beispiel für die christliche Perspektive dargestellt. Das CIDJAP spielt eine wichtige Rolle in Politik und Gesellschaft vor allem durch seine politische Sensibilisierung und Bildungsarbeit, die Entwicklung von Konzepten, die die sozialen Probleme der Armen und Arbeitslosen zu lösen helfen, außerdem durch die konkrete Bereitstellung von geistlicher Betreuung für Studenten, Jugendliche und Gefangene, durch sein praktisches Engagement in den Bereichen Entwicklung, Gerechtigkeit, Frieden, Bildung, Forschung, Rechtshilfe für Gefangene, Menschenrechte, interreligiöser Dialog, soziales Wohnungsbauprogramm, Gesundheitsdienste, Kleinprojekte und Kooperativen unter der ländlichen Bevölkerung, Landwirtschaft, akademische Förderung, Wasserressourcenmanagement, Personalschulung und Rehabilitationsdienste.⁹³⁸

Das CIDJAP stellt ein hoffnungsvolles Zeichen der Bereitschaft und der Entschlossenheit dar, gegen „die Strukturen der Unterdrückung, Agenten der Ungerechtigkeit und andere religiöse ideologische Gruppen des nigerianischen Staates und der Gesellschaft sowie mit den Armen,

⁹³⁵ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004), Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: To His Holiness Pope John Paul II Master of Social Doctrine and Evangelical Witness to Justice and Peace. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Kapitel 8, No. II, §384. Online verfügbar auf: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html. Zuletzt überprüft am 25.04.2021.

⁹³⁶ Ibid.

⁹³⁷ Ismail, M. (2009), Corporate Social Responsibility and its Role in Community Development: An International Perspective. In: Journal of International Social Research. 2 (9), January, S. 199-209, (S. 204). Online verfügbar auf: http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt2/sayi9pdf/ismail_maimunah.pdf. Zuletzt überprüft am 25.04.2021.

⁹³⁸ Nwafor, C. J. (2002), Church and State: The Nigerian Experience. IKO – Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation Frankfurt am Main. S. 303.

den Obdachlosen und den weniger Privilegierten der Gesellschaft sowohl in Nigeria als auch in ganz Afrika zu kämpfen, die ebenfalls einen Anspruch und ein Recht auf Leben, respektvolles und menschenwürdiges Leben, Religionsfreiheit und ausgewogene Bildung haben.“⁹³⁹ Ich hatte das Privileg, drei Jahre lang als stellvertretender Direktor des CIDJAP in Enugu zu arbeiten, weshalb meine Erfahrungen eine wichtige Rolle bei meiner Motivation für diese Forschungsarbeit spielten. Trotz der spirituellen, intellektuellen und sozialen Bemühungen des CIDJAP, die darauf abzielen, die Würde der menschlichen Person durch den Schutz der Menschenrechte, der Religionsfreiheit und der Toleranz zu gewährleisten, gibt es einige Herausforderungen oder Hindernisse, die die volle Verwirklichung der Ziele des Instituts behindern. Solche Herausforderungen sind z.B. die Verbesserung des organisatorischen Managements, die ökonomische und zielorientierte Verwaltung der Finanzen, die Rückzahlung von Krediten und überhaupt die Bekämpfung der steigenden Armutsrate in Nigeria. Diese Aufgaben sind schwierig und die Herausforderungen zahlreich, aber die Aussichten halte ich für vielversprechend.

Im siebten Kapitel wird exemplarisch die bedeutende Rolle untersucht, die die Religion in der Politik Nigerias spielt, und zwar anhand einer Reihe von Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft (CSO), insbesondere der Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) und des Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). Die Auswirkungen des interreligiösen Dialogs zwischen den Religionen und die Möglichkeiten und Chancen der Religionen, sich aktiv und konstruktiv in die Politik einzubringen, primär durch die Förderung von Bildung, Schulungen und die Befähigung der Jugend zu einem aktiven Engagement in der Politik sowie die Verbesserung der sozialen Situation armer Bevölkerungsgruppen habe ich ebenfalls in meine Untersuchung miteinbezogen. Es hat schon viel zu oft Heuchelei, Missbrauch und die Instrumentalisierung religiöser Motive und Gefühle durch politische Propaganda und Stammesrivalitäten gegeben. Mit einem intensiven Dialog könnte erreicht werden, die Interessen und gemeinsamen Werte, die für beide Seiten von Vorteil sind, wiederzuentdecken und erneut schätzen zu lernen. Durch die Vermeidung religiöser Spannungen und Konflikte könnten die Menschen besser erkennen, was dem Zusammenleben dient, ja sogar, was wahr und gerecht, tolerant und fair ist und was das Gemeinwohl aller fördert.⁹⁴⁰

⁹³⁹ Ibid. S. 32.

⁹⁴⁰ Iyiola, S. (2015), The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nigeria, S. 4. Online verfügbar auf:

Im interreligiösen Dialog diskutieren religiöse Autoritäten miteinander und klären die Menschen über das Wesen der Religion und ihre Bedeutung für die ganze Gesellschaft auf. Daher ist es für religiöse Führungspersonlichkeiten wichtig, heuchlerische Lehren und falsche Parolen zu entlarven, die den Frieden und die politische Stabilität gefährden können. Im Ergebnis „beseitigt der Austausch von Ideen die Unwissenheit und letztlich auch religiöse Konflikte.“⁹⁴¹ Obwohl bisher enorme Ressourcen in verschiedene Formen des interreligiösen Dialogs in Nigeria investiert wurden, hat er sich aufgrund von gegenseitigem Misstrauen, Propaganda und unaufrichtigem Engagement für das gemeinsame Ziel, mit diesem Dialog zur Förderung des Miteinanders in einer religiös pluralen Gesellschaft beizutragen, als wenig effektiv erwiesen.

Eine weitere Herausforderung besteht darin, eine nachhaltige Entwicklungschance für die Armen zu schaffen, d.h. Bedingungen dafür herzustellen, dass die Stimmen der Marginalisierten gehört und die Schutzlosen verteidigt werden. Politik und soziale Institutionen müssen sich daran messen lassen, wie effektiv sie Armut bekämpfen. Den Armen eine Option für die Zukunft zu geben, bedeutet also, dass Staat und Gesellschaft die Verantwortung und Verpflichtung haben, sich in besonderer Weise um die zu kümmern, die am meisten Hilfe brauchen. Vor allem die Religion fordert die Menschen auch auf, die Notlage derjenigen zu erkennen, die um ihr Überleben kämpfen, und die Notwendigkeit zu akzeptieren, die Bedürfnisse der verletzlichsten Mitglieder unserer Gesellschaft über die individuellen egoistischen Interessen zu stellen. Eine relevante Frage in diesem Kapitel ist: Was kann die Religion noch tun, um im sozio-politischen Leben der Menschen wirksame Hilfe zu leisten? Eine zentrale politiktheoretische Antwort findet sich in einem gemeinsamen Kommuniqué der Deutschen Katholischen Bischofskonferenz und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (2019), wonach Kirchen die Pflicht haben, sich „aktiv für die Demokratie einzusetzen und unser gesellschaftliches Handeln auf eine Stärkung der demokratischen Ordnung auszurichten.“⁹⁴²

https://www.academia.edu/37446388/The_Need_for_Inter_Religious_Dialogue_in_Nigeria. Zuletzt überprüft am 10.03.2021.

⁹⁴¹ Jega, A. D. (2013), Op. cit. S. 9.

⁹⁴² Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2019), Vertrauen in die Demokratie stärken. Ein Gemeinsames Wort der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz und des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland. 11.04.2019. Gemeinsame Texte Nr. 26, S. 28. §.3. Online verfügbar auf:

Im achten Kapitel ziehe ich in Form von Empfehlungen einige wichtige Schlussfolgerungen aus meiner Arbeit. Ich verbinde damit die Hoffnung, einen alternativen methodischen Ansatz für die Gestaltung der nigerianischen Politik und die Zukunft des Landes gefunden zu haben. Eine konstruktive Beziehung zwischen den Religionen würde zweifellos zu einer positiven politischen Entwicklung Nigerias führen, da die Religion - wie bereits erläutert - eine bedeutende Rolle für den Fortschritt jeder Nation spielt. Der Kampf um die Stabilisierung und Zusammenführung von Nigerias zersplitterter Gesellschaft hat in den letzten Jahrzehnten zu weitreichenden institutionellen Experimenten geführt, einschließlich ziviler und militärischer Herrschaftsformen, zentrifugaler und zentralisierter Föderalismen, präsidentialer und parlamentarischer Systeme und verschiedener, aber wenig effizienter Programme zur Eindämmung der systemimmanenten politischen Korruption, die den Kern der desintegrativen ethnopolitischen Konflikte des Landes bildet. Insbesondere die Macht und der Einfluss der Religion könnte potentiell als wirksamstes Mittel dafür eingesetzt werden, um die nigerianische Bevölkerung zu mehr patriotischer Verantwortung zu bewegen und zu mehr Toleranz und Disziplin zu ermutigen. Diese Perspektive würde Nigeria die Chance geben, wieder zurück auf den Weg einer erfolgreichen, zukunftsorientierten Entwicklung zu finden, wie ihn sich die Gründerväter bereits vorgestellt hatten.

Der Einfluss der Religion auf die Politik in der ganzen Welt ist ambivalent, da er sich sowohl positiv als auch negativ ausprägen kann. Positiv in dem Sinne, dass Religion werteorientiert ist und sich durch das Engagement gläubiger Menschen auf natürliche Weise und unmittelbar auf das Gemeinwohl auswirkt. Der negative Effekt beruht auf einer radikalen und sektiererischen Praxis, indem z.B. religiöse Fanatiker alles im Namen der Religion tun, um sicherzustellen, dass Positionen oder Ämter von ihren Anhängern übernommen werden. Außerdem hat die Religion bedeutende, wenn auch oft unbewusste intuitive Auswirkungen auf die Menschen, was oft sichtbar wird in ihrem Einfluss auf die politische Einstellung der Wähler und die entsprechenden Wahlergebnisse, auf die Macht religiöser Körperschaften als institutionelle Akteure, Lobbyisten und Koalitionspartner, auf die Rolle der Religion bei der Entstehung von Institutionen, die Auswirkung der Religion auf die Einstellung gegenüber einer Politik der

https://www.dbk-shop.de/de/deutsche-bischofskonferenz/gemeinsame-texte/vertrauen-demokratie-staerken.html?info=29080&dl_media=30817. Zuletzt überprüft am 04.12.2020.

sozialen Wohlfahrt und ihr breiter Einfluss auf die Art und Dauerhaftigkeit von Regimen.⁹⁴³ Kurz gesagt, Religion ist wichtig, nicht nur weil ihre Anhänger ihr verpflichtet sind, sondern weil die Ideen, Identitäten und kulturellen Mechanismen, auf denen sie beruht, das politische Leben prägen.

Fazit

Diese Untersuchung hat aufgezeigt, dass die Religionen in Nigeria so vielfältig sind, wie ihre Anhänger und ihre Lehren. Das Ausmaß, in dem Religion eine positive oder negative Rolle spielt, hängt maßgeblich von den religiösen Autoritäten und dem guten Willen der Menschen ab. Im Ergebnis wird durch den gestalterischen und prägenden Einfluss religiös orientierter Menschen auch die Beziehung zwischen Religion und Politik definiert.

Da Religion und Politik in einer interdependenten Spannung stehen, sich also prinzipiell in einer gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit befinden, ist es für beide Seiten von essenzieller Bedeutung, gute Beziehungen anzustreben. Die friedliche Koexistenz und der Ausgleich der Interessen zwischen Religion und Politik können den entscheidenden Impuls geben für Frieden und Freiheit zum Wohle der Menschen. Dagegen führen schlechte Beziehungen und die Konfrontation zwischen Religion und Politik – wie die Vergangenheit schon häufig gezeigt hat – zu schweren Konflikten und Auseinandersetzungen. Deshalb ist eine gute wechselseitige Beziehung zwischen Religion und Politik, die von gegenseitigem Respekt, Interessensausgleich und Nutzen für die Menschen geprägt ist, für die zukünftige Entwicklung Nigerias unverzichtbar.

Vor diesem Hintergrund und als Ergebnis meiner Forschungsarbeit komme ich zu einigen Schlussfolgerungen, die als konkrete Empfehlungen bzw. als Option für eine erfolgreiche und nachhaltige Entwicklung Nigerias gedacht sind. Von zentraler Bedeutung ist vor allem, dass bei der Realisierung von – dem ethischen wie effektiv praktischen Anspruch nach – guter Regierungsführung, politischer Stabilität und Prosperität, Religion als leitender Faktor und Richtschnur in den politischen Aktivitäten des Landes dienen sollte. Infolgedessen ist empfehlenswert, dass die Regierung dem National Religious Advisory Board (NARAB) und dem Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIRC) mehr Einfluss bei der Förderung des interreligiösen Dialogs und der religiösen Toleranz durch die Organisation von Seminaren und

⁹⁴³ Grzymala-Busse, A. (2012), Why Comparative Politics Should Take Religion (More) Seriously. Annual Review of Political Science, Vol. 15: June, S. 421-442, (S. 426). Online verfügbar auf: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-033110-130442>. Zuletzt überprüft am 19.12.2020.

Workshops für die Anhänger der Religionen einräumt. Diese Aufgaben werden nicht nur zu einem besseren Verhältnis zwischen den verschiedenen Religionen beitragen, sondern auch zu einer nachhaltigen politischen Entwicklung der Regionen Nigerias, denn Bildung ist der Schlüssel für eine erfolgreiche Zukunft des Landes. Nigeria braucht deshalb gebildete und moralisch integere Führer mit der Leidenschaft und dem Ziel, der Jugend eine zukunftsorientierte Bildung und Ausbildung zu ermöglichen.

In der Kolonialzeit spielte die Religion eine zentrale Rolle in der Bildung durch die Einrichtung von Missionsschulen, die sowohl bei der moralischen als auch bei der intellektuellen Ausbildung großer Führungspersönlichkeiten und Vorbilder in der Geschichte Nigerias halfen.⁹⁴⁴ Aufgrund dieser guten Erfahrungen wäre es wünschenswert, dass alle ehemaligen Missionsschulen, die derzeit unter staatlicher Kontrolle stehen, in die Obhut und Verwaltung der ehemaligen Träger zurückgegeben werden. Außerdem besteht die Notwendigkeit, die Wissensbasis und Ausbildung der Lehrer in unseren Institutionen auf den neuesten Stand zu bringen, indem das Programm der UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) zur Verbreitung von "Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung" wie in den südlichen und östlichen afrikanischen Ländern wie Mauritius, Kenia, Botswana, Malawi usw. auch in den westafrikanischen Ländern wie Nigeria eingeführt wird. Dieses Programm beinhaltet wirtschaftliche, gesundheitliche und sozial-ethische Themen für das praktische Lernen der Schüler in den Schulen.⁹⁴⁵

Wie bereits aufgezeigt ist Korruption ein grundlegendes Problem, das sich tief in das Mark des Landes gefressen hat. Daher müssen sowohl die politischen und religiösen Führer als auch ihre Anhänger die Kultur und Respektierung der Rechtsstaatlichkeit verinnerlichen. Dies wird für das gesamte staatliche Handeln und die ganze Gesellschaft von großem Nutzen sein. Einen wichtigen Beitrag dazu könnten aber auch die kirchlichen Institutionen, andere religiöse Organisationen und weitere soziale und ökonomische Fachverbände leisten. Dadurch wäre auch eine transparentere Kontrolle des Regierungshandelns und bessere Verfolgung der fiskalischen Aktivitäten möglich. Korrupte Beamte, Politiker und Bürger könnten somit leichter überführt und auch bestraft werden, um als Abschreckung für andere zu dienen. Dies impliziert allerdings, dass ein glaubwürdiger Zugang zu einer im Sinne der Gewaltenteilung

⁹⁴⁴ Isichei, E. A. (1995), Op. cit. S. 270.

⁹⁴⁵ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2010), Internationales Zentrum für technische und berufliche Bildung & Ausbildung. S. 8.

unabhängigen Jurisdiktion geschaffen wird. Während Gerechtigkeit selbst ein schwer fassbarer Begriff ist, kann man erwarten, dass durch eine unabhängige und glaubwürdige Rechtsprechung Gleichheit und Fairness auch praktiziert werden. Diese Einschätzung bestätigt auch Okogbule, denn damit es eine angemessene Rechtsprechung gibt, muss es die Gewährleistung von Fairness und Gleichheit in einem System geben, um die Verwirklichung grundlegender Rechte zu garantieren.⁹⁴⁶

In der Praxis wird in Nigeria allerdings der Zugang zu einer unabhängigen und objektiven Gerichtsbarkeit und zu sozialer Gerechtigkeit behindert oder gar verwehrt, wie z.B.: durch Verzögerungen in der Rechtsprechung, Kosten für Rechtsstreitigkeiten, Analphabetismus, übermäßiges Vertrauen in verwaltungstechnische Regeln, etc.⁹⁴⁷ Um den Zugang zu einer unabhängigen Justiz in jeder Gesellschaft zu verbessern, ist es notwendig, dass bestimmte grundlegende Infrastrukturen geschaffen werden und die erforderliche personelle Ausstattung und Qualifikation des Personals, das am Rechtsprechungsprozess beteiligt ist, garantiert wird. Wenn beispielsweise die Gerichte nicht ausreichend und qualifiziert ausgestattet werden oder mit moralisch nicht integren Männern und Frauen besetzt sind, kann ein solcher Staat seinen Bürgern kaum soziale Gerechtigkeit garantieren, weil korrupte Richter ein ernsthaftes Hindernis für eine glaubwürdige Rechtssicherheit und die Erlangung von Gerechtigkeit darstellen, selbst wenn die Infrastrukturen und rechtlichen Instrumente gut strukturiert sind.⁹⁴⁸

Um den Anspruch einer funktionierenden Gewaltenteilung, insbesondere einer unabhängigen Jurisdiktion zu gewährleisten, sollten religiöse Organisationen wie NSCIA, JNI, CAN, CIDJAP usw. eine aktivere Rolle und Kontrolle übernehmen, um die Einhaltung der Prinzipien der grundlegenden Menschenrechte durch die Regierung, wie sie von den Vereinten Nationen festgelegt wurden, zu garantieren und sicherzustellen. Meinen Anregungen bzw. Empfehlungen folgend sollten sich die Religionen gemeinsam für eine grundlegende Überarbeitung des nigerianischen Rechtssystems einsetzen, um u.a. auch die Kosten für Rechtsstreitigkeiten zu reduzieren und den Zugang zur Justiz für die Armen zu erweitern. Mit der Verwirklichung dieses großen Vorhabens wäre auch die Chance verbunden, dass die

⁹⁴⁶ Okogbule, N. S. (2005), Access to justice and human rights protection in Nigeria: problems and prospects. In: International Journal on Human Rights, 2 (3), Dezember, S. 95 – 114, (S. 96). Online verfügbar auf: <https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/sur3-eng-nlerum-s-okogbule.pdf>. Zuletzt überprüft am 09.06. 2021.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid. S. 101.

⁹⁴⁸ Oputa, A. C. (1992), In the Eyes of the Law. Friends Law Publishers, Nigeria. S. 12.

Gerechtigkeit von Seiten der Justiz schneller und objektiver ausgeübt wird und jeder Partei, ob reich oder arm, vor Gericht die prinzipielle Gleichbehandlung eingeräumt wird und, dass die geltenden Regeln des Rechtssystems in einer transparenten und möglichst einfachen Sprache erklärt werden, damit jeder sie verstehen und optimal nutzen kann.⁹⁴⁹ Bei einer weitgehenden Realisierung dieser so vielversprechenden und hoffnungsvollen Perspektive würde es die Religion auch schaffen, ihren wahren Aufgaben für die Menschen eher gerecht zu werden, nämlich Licht in der Dunkelheit, Hoffnung für die Hoffnungslosen und Fanal der Freiheit für die Unterdrückten zu sein, in einer Nation, die unter verschiedenen religiösen Krisen und dem Mangel an verantwortungsvoller politischer Führung leidet.

Ich hoffe, dass die Ergebnisse meiner Forschungsarbeit einen Beitrag dazu leisten, zum einen die Kluft zwischen Christentum, Islam, ATR (African Traditional Religion) und Atheisten etwas zu verringern, und zum anderen zu einer kontinuierlichen Annäherung und konstruktiven Zusammenarbeit zwischen Religion und Politik zum Wohle des Volkes führen mögen.

⁹⁴⁹ Olujinmi, A. (2004), Agenda for Reforming the Justice Sector in Nigeria. Eine Veröffentlichung des nigerianischen Bundesjustizministeriums. S. 6.