INTERROGATING RELIGION, POLITICS AND CONFLICTS IN AFRICA: THE CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA
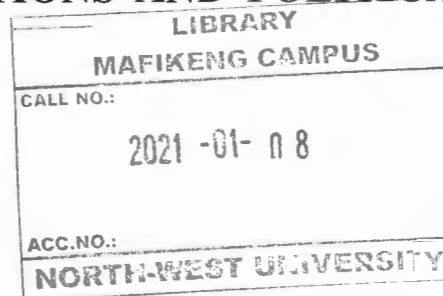
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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTERS OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL STUDIES.

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SUPERVISOR

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DECLARATION

I, NdjepelMbiadjeuLiselotte Laure, declare that, my dissertation entitled: Interrogating religion, politics and conflicts in Africa: the case study of Nigeria,is my own unaidedwork and is submitted in partial fulfillment of the Masters degree in International Relations and Political Studiesin the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, in the Department of Politics and International Relations of the North West University: Mafikeng Campus, South Africa. I have not submitted it in part or as a whole to any other university. All sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

Signature.....................

L. L. M. Ndjepel

Date: Day.15.of ...April...2014

Signature....................

Prof. V. Ojakorotu

Date: Day 15.of.....4.......2014

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated in solidarity with the millions of people that have been affected by the Nigerian religious political conflict that have promoted instability until date in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, especially to woman and children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a pluralistic society in which secularism has been proposed as an alternative to the practices in democratic states.Although all religions have differing ideologies and ways of life, they all playa dominant role in the political calculations and outcomes of elections in the country.Under the democratic regime, there arosein the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) an unwritten gentlemen's agreement of power rotation between the political representatives of the North(dominated by Muslims) and the representatives of the South (dominated by Christians).

The existence of such an agreement did not prevent Nigerians from integrating religion to the state's political activities and thus creating an atmosphere governed by conflicts as a result of religious factors. One can argue that most conflicts in Nigeria are not only caused by political motives such as the issue of bad leadership or the corrupt character of government but also by religious factors. Additionally, economic reasons such as the improper distribution of Nigeria's resources, which helps increase unemployment and low living standards of Nigerians, have also been accounted to cause conflicts in the country. The reality however remains that it is as a result of religion being associated with Nigeria's politics which indirectly contributed to the formation of the Boko Haram Sect, which has as its principal objectives the Islamizationof the country and rejection of all forms of western education or lifestyle, that the country has not been able to enjoy political, economic and social stabilityfor a long time.

The thesis employed a qualitative research method alongside the content and triangular method of data analyses. Data collected were derived from primary sources such as interviews and questionnaires, and secondary sources such as published and unpublished books, journals and newspapers.

The thesis argues that religion influences Nigeria's political activities and electoral processes as well as playing a role in fuelling some conflicts such as the recent Boko Haram sectarian violence. The argument is based on the reasoning that in order to get support,most Nigerian political elites rally behind the church or mosqueto attract the believers of that group. Similarly, such political elites, in order to make sure their interests are widely known and manifested across the country,contribute to the formation and financing of religious organizations like theBoko Haram sect whose activities help in destabilizing the incumbent government.

Therefore,Nigerian political elites by using religion either to campaign for votes or through religious organizations to publicly express their intentions, help to demonstrate and encourage the influence of religion in the Nigerian society. The resultant effect is the occurrence of a number of religio-political conflicts that contribute to sinking the country into political, economic and social instability. Therefore, it is advisable for the Nigerian government, like most pluralistic societies, to create awareness among the elites on the importance of classifying religion as an individual's private affair.

ACRONYMS

ISS   Institute for Security Studies

TBC   Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation

OIC   Organization of Islamic Conference

IDB   Islamic Development Bank (IDB)

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

ZANU-PF   Zimbabwe African People's Union (Patriotic Front)

ATRs   African Traditional Religions

EAMWS   East African Muslim Welfare Society

TEC   Tanzania Episcopal Conference

ELCT   Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

ACT   Anglican Church in Tanzania

CCT   Christian Council of Tanzania

FBOs   Faith-Based Organizations

BALUKTA   Baraza la UkuzajiKurani Tanzania; Tanzania Council for readers of the Koran

SANU   Sudan Africanist National Union

SACDN   Sudan African Closed District National Union

FGM   Female Genital Mutilation

KANU   Kenyan African Union

UECK   United Evangelical churches of Kenya

IPK   Islamic Party of Kenya

UMA   United Muslims of Africa

NPC   Northern People's Congress

TPU   Tiv Progressive Union

MZL   Middle Zone League

MBPP   Middle-Belt People's Party

UMBC   United Middle-Belt Congress

BPU   Birom Progressive Union

PDP   People Democratic Party

NPLF   Northern Elders Political Forum

SIM   Sudan Interior Mission

SUM   Sudan Union Mission

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Religion, like ethnicity, has long been established as socially divisive, instigating political competition within and between societies. Since the existence of human beings, groups of people and individuals have been politically mobilized along the lines of spiritual beliefs, or joinly belonging to an ethnic group and a religious group. Religious groups include Traditional religion, Islam and Christianity, which is itself sub divided into Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Moravian, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist and the Pentecostal churches (Gahnström, 2012). Focusing on Africa, there exist principally three dominant faiths on the continent namely the African Traditional religion and the foreign religions of Islam and Christianity. The African traditional religion is based around specialized beliefs according to Thomson (2010: 68) who posits that religion is the belief that the physical world is controlled by several kinds of spirits amongst whom are the spirits of earth, river, rain, sun and hunting animals.

However, African traditional religion also entails the worship and contact with ancestors and ghosts of the dead who have obtained partial divinity. Christianity on the other hand entails worship and obedience to God's commandments while Muslims on their part strongly believe in Allah. In most cases, these beliefs give a strong political position to individuals, priests and clan elders, such as rainmakers, diviners, prophets who act as intermediaries to the spirits, who in turn play a role in the determination of political decisions as well as being behind the launching of conflicts in some African states (Thomson, 2010).

According to Ahanotu (2012:1), some African religious leaders having confidence in their own belief systems strongly uphold that religion should be the foundation stone in both one's personal life and the accomplishment of state obligations. Contradicting this position meant going against the majesty of God's work, which, according to these leaders, states are expected to comply with. Simeon Mesaki (2011: 249-250) demonstrated how on several occasions religion has become part and parcel of Tanzanian politics and society. He pointed out that religion formed part of the national anthem, the opening prayer of the Legislative Assembly sessions, taking of oaths (Bible or Quran) of allegiance and faithfulness to the constitution in emiting their duties, by holders of major public positions, the Tanzanian

Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) begins and closes transmissions with prayers of both Christian and Islam religions, the existence of a ministerial portfolio dealing with religious affairs (Policy, Coordination and Parliamentary Affairs) under the Prime Minister's Office, and finally, that religion is examinable and recognized by the National Examination Council of Tanzania.

This explains why Haynes (2007: 305) emphasizes that a large number of conflicts leading to civil wars in Africa are often attributed to the religious diversity and plurality of many of the region's countries. In contrast to this view, Collier and Hoeffler (2012: 1) argue that:

> "a more systematic analysis of the causes of conflicts leading to civil war suggests that Africa's civil wars conform to a global pattern that is better explained by political and economic factors as well as by the extent of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the society".

To this end, it could be said, as Ahanotu (2012: 1) states 'religion in Africa is found to be constantly present in the discussion about the national question: Who shall rule, and how shall the state be governed?' In a series of historical happenings some of which include the system of apartheid in South Africa with the blessing of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, the official formation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Rabat, Morocco, in 1969 and the formation of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in 1975, it was indicated that religion in some African countries would have a say in addressing the question of governance (Ahanotu, 2012: 1).

As a result of the fact that religion became part and parcel of politics and state activities, African states became confronted in their earlier stages with conflictual relations in the interaction between the two great religious traditions in their midst. This led to an atmosphere of a love-hate relationship between the state and the two great religious traditions. This was concretely experienced with the National Islamic Front in Sudan. Although religion was accredited with liberating Sudan from colonialism, religion coupled with other factors like the struggle over resources, against marginalization and the quest for democracy and political rights have all been held responsible for causing unrest between North and South Sudan (Moller, 2006: 6-7). Similarly, Ahanotu (2012: 1) pointed out that religion contributed to promoting political unrest in Kenya and this was because the Islamic

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Party in Kenya was immediately denied official recognition during the presidency of Daniel arap Moi. Such behaviour by the president of denying a religious party participation in the political affairs of the country emancipated the Kenyan bishops to strongly oppose the Moi regime on the basis that the same treatment could well be given to Christians too (Gifford, 1995).

Despite these arguments, religion has proved to be a crucial element in the fight against pariah countries like South Africa and Rwanda. South Africa was considered as a pariah state following the practice of apartheid that led to the exclusion of the country by other states from the international system. During this period, the Muslim community and a counter religious consciousness among Black liberation theologians initiated a powerful ideological attack on the ideology of apartheid. Considering apartheid as a great social sin, the liberation theologians sought to persuade the religious community including the South African Council of Churches, the World Lutheran Federation, the World Council of Churches, and, more important, the World Alliance of the Dutch Reformed Church to make joint efforts against apartheid. The joint role of all these organizations alongside the efforts of both Christians (Ranger, 2008: 10) and Muslims, contributed immensely to the downfall of apartheid in 1994 (Ahanotu, 2012: 1).

More relevant is the role that religious leaders have played in the areas of social justice and their implementation of sympathetic charities to help bridge the deep gap between the rich and the poor on the African continent, as well as removing African dictators such as Arap Moi of Kenya (Academia, 2012). It was also on the basis of some Christian and Muslim principles that to commit adultery, to kill, to lie, to steal and to engage in prostitution are all sins, that most African countries implemented them in their systems of law as being unlawful and hence practicing them meant the individual should be accountable before the law. As a result, religious principles have been found to inspire various African governments on how to draft their constitutions as well as the laws binding upon its citizens.

Even though some analysts will put religious differences as the principal source of conflict in some African countries, other scholars nevertheless contradict this as they believe religion is just a weapon to gather massive support to participate in conflicts which are generally aimed at terminating the poor and unequal economic conditions in a country as well as the corrupt nature of the system in place in the country (Academia, 2012). As Uzodike and

Whetho point out in this regard, the rise of Muslim and Christian fundamentalist movements from the mid 1980s onwards that inclined to promote instability in most African countries has commonly been seen in close connection to the grievous and persistent economic, political and social crises that troubled many African countries at the time (Uzodike and Whetho, 2008: 197-200). Usually common arguments have linked instability explicitly to the negative aspects of globalization and neo-liberalism or the general crisis of "modernity", coupled with unemployment of urban youth, everyday violence, political and economic exclusion and the failure in obtaining foreign aid (Marshall 2009: 22; Haynes 1996: 12-13).

Economic reasons alongside religious motivations was applicable with the case of Zimbabwe under President Mugabe whom on several occasions seized the land of those who were against his leadership and handed it to his supporters, hence promoting the gross inequality between the rich and the poor (Ndjepel, 2011). As earlier pointed out, Sudan is also a country where religion has been used as a weapon to gather massive support to fight against political and economic discrimination by the northerners against the southerners. However, recent events saw the Republic of Nigeria faced with religion being both associated with politics as well as being used as an instrument to raise supporters in the launching of the recent conflict in the quest for political and social changes to counter economic disparity in the country.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea between Benin and Cameroon. Sharing borders with Cameroon (1,690 kilometres), Nigeria has a surface area of 923,768 square kilometres, this include 13,000 square kilometres of water. The country is endowed with more than 350 ethnic groups, amongst whom there are major ethnic groups; the Hausa and Fulani dominating in the North, Yoruba in the Southwest, Igbo in the east. English is the official language of the country, a legacy of its colonial history of British administration in the country (Library of Congress, 2008). Having a population of about 160 million, Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 after 33-years of military intrusion. From 1966 to 1999, (except for the brief Second Republic which lasted between 1979 and 1983) Nigeria was ruled by the military who seized power in coups d'état and counter-coups (Nweke, 2012).

Nigeria, like many African countries, is endowed with numerous religious faiths of which the dominant ones are Islam and Christianity. Their influence emanated after having been in contact with colonialism, most especially following the colonial civilization agenda, and coupled with the resultant demonization and paganization of the classic African gods, which further gave way to traditional religions being exterminated in the religio-cultural life of the Nigerian people. As a result, the Nigerians have chosen to be classified as members of either Muslim or Christian faith and hence allowed government to make these two religions official as a necessary step towards enabling national unity to take place in the country (Ibrahim, 1991: 116-117).

Christianity was facilitated through trade and commerce into Africa South of the Sahara, Islam on the other hand found its way into the Yoruba speaking peoples of south-west Nigeria following their commercial relationship with the peoples of the Northern part of the country, most especially the Nupe and Fulani. Similarly, the Northern part of Nigeria, through the Kanem-Borno Empire in the 11th century, witnessed the advent of Islam before spreading to other Northern parts. Doi (2006, part 3 of 3) argued in the same vein that Islam had already reached Nigeria in the early 14th century when 40 Wangarawa traders brought Islam with them from the Northern parts of Africa.

It has however been argued by other scholars that the spread of Islam in the region was facilitated following the conversion to Islam of some influential rulers and chiefs in the Northern region of Nigeria and hence significantly contributed to the spread of Islam amongst the Yoruba's (Sodiq, 2009: 650-651). Also, former enslaved civilians who returned to Lagos from Sierra-Leone and Brazil in the 19th century played a great role in evangelizing the region (Gbadamosi, 1978). Again, polygamous marriages that were commonly recognized by Islam helped in promoting the religion in the region, most especially to those who believed having many women and children signified wealth. Coupled with these common practices as mentioned above, Islam was further boosted in Nigeria following the incorporation of contradictory customs in the core of Islam and the dis-respecting of some Islamic principles by the ruling class which on its own paved the way for the launching of the Holy Jihad by Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio in the 19th century. Consequently, Islam became wide spread in the rural areas of some Western Nigerian communities such as Ilorin after the end of the Jihad and the establishment of the expansive Sokoto Caliphate (Rasmussen, 1990; Kukah and Falola, 1996).

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Alongside Islam, Christianity as incorporated in the Nigerian community dates back to the 15th century following the constant visits from the Roman Catholic missionaries to the coastal areas of the Niger-Delta. Even though the missionaries in their evangelization process attempted to build some churches, Christianity, like Islam, became more active and widespread after the liberation and return of former Sierra Leone and Brazil ex-slaves in 1842. Erivwo (1979) in the same trend pointed out that Christianity reached Nigeria in 1842 when Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was part of the abolitionist movement of the 1800's, introduced Christianity to the Okwagbe people who belong to the Urhobo ethnic group.

Christianity was further boosted by its opposition to the slave trade and the enhancement of western education. Also, in 1888 Christianity showed how it could grow following the construction of an indigenous church by some believers who accused European missionaries of racial discrimination (Onapajo, 2012: 45). It was in line with this event that many indigenous churches were being established, hence demarcating the first wave of Christianity in Nigeria. On the other hand, the second wave of Christianity was demonstrated after the propagation and phenomenon of the Aladura churches that erupted from the Yoruba Christians (Olupona, 1991: 31-41; Sodiq, 2009: 646-688; Adogame, 2010: 479-498). Accordingly, the creation of several Christian churches and their evangelization programmes helped in spreading the religion widely in the territory as well as creating awareness to Nigerians who were still under European domination.

Consequently, the Nigerian population is now said to be comprised of about 50% Muslims, who are mostly found in the northern and south-western parts of the country, while on the other hand Christians constitute about 40% of the Nigerian population who are situated in the southern part of the country and around the part known as the Middle belt. The remaining 10% of the population are characterized to be neither Muslims nor Christians and hence are practicing one form of indigenous religion or another (Falola, 1999: 1). Viewing such statistics, it can be realized that the Muslim community constitutes the majority of the Nigerian population followed by the Christians. As such, it becomes easy for the Muslims, despite their lower educational level as compared to the Christians, to want total control of Nigeria, and forcefully convert those of other religious groups in the territory.

It is however worthy of note here that despite the diversity of faiths in the Nigerian communities, religion has been considered to play a positive role in both private lives and Politics. Many scholars such as Falola, 1998; Mu'azzam and Ibrahim, 2000: 62-85; Best, 2001: 63-81; Obadare, 2006: 665-678; Loimeier, 2007: 43-72; Imo, 2008; Marshall, 2009; Wakili, 2009; Adebanwi, 2010: 121-142; Sodiq, 2009: 646-688, who have previously researched the role of religion in the Nigerian community helped to demonstrate the relevance of religion to Nigerian politics. They portrayed the importance of religion to the formation of political parties, political mobilization, political legitimacy and voting behaviour of the people in previous democratic experiments of the country (Onapajo, 2012). Indeed, religion from this perspective is seen to have emancipated democracy, the quest for political reforms as well as shaping Nigerian society in a positive way and hence greatly contributed to terminating the military regime that had been experienced for so long in the country.

Huntington (1993: 22-49) helped by pointing out that religion, including its cultural compositions, will be a major driver of contemporary global and national politics. Similarly, Fox and Sandler (2003: 562) reacted to this observation when they suggested an important and strategic area where religion takes a central stage in the politics of the state is in its ability to support or weaken the political legitimacy of a state and hence indirectly lead to conflicts. It is therefore on this basis that Juergensmeyer (1995: 379-391) pointed out that religion can be an instrument either to legitimatize or illegitimatize political regimes in some countries. This view is made effective when we take a close look at countries where it is legal to raise religion in political debates and also where there is diversity in religious beliefs amongst the citizens of a given country (Fox, 2001).

Contrary to the above analysis, religion could be considered as an element of ethnicity and a source of identity which on its own portrays the basis of class discrimination and grievances against the minority religious and identity groups by the majority group in particular nations. On this basis, religion, through its specialized organs, can undoubtedly be a tool in the mobilization of violent protest and rebellion and this is most especially seen when religion advocates and supports the use of force when its fundamental prerogatives are under attack (Fox and Sander, 2003: 566). It is on this premise that Juergensmeyer's (2003) work shows that popular modern religions have a strong connection with situations of violence.

Though both Islam and Christianity have existed and been recognized in the Nigerian community and have also played a positive role in political mobilizations, it does not however imply that they have been harmoniously cooperating. This is based on the reasoning that Nigeria's contact with Islam posed a threat to Christianity and European colonialism. Consequently, Nigeria according to previous studies has been frequently characterized as an extremely divided state in which crutial political issues are excessively and violently contested on the grounds of ethnic, religious and regional divisions in the country (Smyth and Robinson, 2001), and hence promoting the formation of religious organizations that aim at indirectly protecting the interests of Nigerian political elites.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although religion in the past, as demonstrated with the case of South Africa, has played a great role fighting against apartheid and colonialism in countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania, religious 'fault lines' could in some cases lead to conflicts on the African continent. Consequently, it becomes relevant to determine whether religion is a critical component in African politics specifically looking into conflicts, electoral processes and outcomes in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Despite the numerous writings by most scholars on religious politics and conflicts leading to instability of states in Africa as a whole, and Nigeria in particular, as discussed above, one realizes that the long-existing political and social conflicts between the Muslims and Christians in the North and the Middle belt, and more recently, the rise of Boko Haram that became violent in its attempt to affect the political status of the state and which caused the death of many Nigerians have not been examined by scholars. Given this gap, this work shall analyze the influence of religion in Nigerian politics and electoral processes and outcomes in the state of Nigeria and how religion is used as a tool to fuel and mobilize people during conflicts as it was vividly seen with the 2012 Boko Haram conflict. These aspects are of importance especially as they help determine that violent conflicts on the African continent have changed their dimensions.

With Nigeria embroiled in a religio-political conflict in the recent Boko Haram violent activities, it therefore becomes necessary to determine how religion, which is considered, according to liberal societies, to constitute an aspect of an individual's private life can turn to be associated with politics and other activities of the country to the extent of causing a conflict as it was recently experienced with Boko Haram in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to interrogate religion, politics and conflict in Africa with reference to the 2012 Nigerian conflict.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are deduced from the research problem above.

The research questions are:

1.4.1 What influence does religion have on Nigeria's politics and electoral processes and outcomes?

1.4.2 Does religion play any significant role in fuelling African conflicts with reference to the recent Boko Haram case in Nigeria?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1.5.1 To identify the influence of religion on Nigeria's politics and 2011 electoral processes and outcomes.

1.5.2 To identify the role of religions in fuelling conflicts in Africa with reference to the recent Boko Haram case in Nigeria

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The study is intended to provide an insight into practical challenges faced by states in which religion is said to be related to a state's politics and activities, elections and conflicts. Following the recent events in the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria, religion has been alleged to play a critical role in the decision about who should rule the country as well as how government activities should be carried out. By so doing, proponents who believe religion should not be placed at the centre when concerned with the issue of leadership tend to

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contradict pro-religious supporters and fanatics who associate religion with Nigeria's politics as well as elections outcomes and hence leads to violence in the country.

Since the advent of Nigerian independence in 1960, the two dominant faiths (Islam and Christianity) had not been peacefully cooperating as a majority of the Muslims in the North would want to combine religion and politics into one. This has consequently led pro-Muslim supporters in the North imposing the conversion of Christians in the region into Muslims or to prevent those Christian leaders who do not see the relevance of combining one's private faith with public activities and politics from participating in some government activities and regional politics and hence limiting the chances for a Christian to stand for the post of governor in the Northern region of Nigeria, and vice versa. Coupled to the differences in various faiths, the country is also associated with a series of challenges such as poor governance and difficult social conditions which paves the way for religion to be used as a tool to gather supporters in each religious camp to fight for what they think is right politically.

To investigate religion being used as a tool by disgruntled citizens to seek political changes or to impose obedience or conversion by the fighting religious groups makes the study vital to warn other African countries against combining religious feelings with state activities and politics, which in most cases are the causes of conflicts, as in the case of the 2012 Nigerian conflict. The study is also vital because events in Nigeria fuel conflicts in the region and if there is peace in Nigeria it will reduce conflicts in Sub- Saharan Africa. However until now, Nigeria is still embroiled in violence resulting from the activities of the religiously founded sect known as Boko Haram. Away from publicity in the media, and experiencing persistent failures in acquiring promises for humanitarian aid, the population of Nigeria will need massive assistance and cooperation from both the international community and the Nigerian government.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study is important in the sense it will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of Political Science and International Relations. The primary significance of this study is geared to provide us with a comprehensive analysis by interrogating religion, politics and conflicts in Africa with particular reference to the recent 2012 Nigerian conflict. The people who are set to benefit from this study are academics, decision makers, and policy makers.

The research will benefit all state holders in that it will be a paradigm for peace making in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, West Africa, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in order to prevent future problems caused by religio-political factors or human security.

The study will further be helpful to Africa in general, particularly to those countries that still merge private religious life with politics to be aware of what could happen to them in case religion and politics are not separated. This study will add value to the literature that already exists regarding interrogating religion and electoral conflicts and what are the implications of such a relationship.

The study is also of importance as it will help to portray the gap between religious principles and those of democratic principles which, when closely merged, help in spreading instability in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In a personal sphere, the thesis shall provide the researcher with tangible arguments on how to prevent future religious conflicts which in some cases affects the electoral processes of some countries as well as create awareness in readers of this thesis on how to separate his/her private life from that of the political activities of states and hence pave the way to a well organized and reasoned human being in our contemporary society.

The research is again significant as it deals with the theory of religious fundamentalism which is characterized as rejecting the distinction between religion and politics given that its advocates believe politics affect religion (Heywood, 2007). Being a theory that arises mostly in deeply troubled societies, particularly societies afflicted by an actual or alleged crisis of identity in which fundamentalists view religion as a concept made of unchallengeable principles which guide both the personal conduct of people and the organizations of social, economic and popular life, the theory shall help elucidate the recent conflict occurring in the Federal republic of Nigeria and hence portray the validity of the theory in the events of our contemporary society.

1.8 Methology of the Study

Methodology is a general approach to studying research topics; it involves the whole aspect of conducting a research project, developing appropriate methods of data collection and the aspect of comparing and constructing different techniques and methods. According to social science researchers such as Silverman (2006) the whole issue of methodology is devoted to explaining why certain methods are used in the research project. It also categorically addresses the issue of the method used to gather data, why such method is chosen; its advantages and disadvantages; how such data was analyzed and finally the limitation of using the method of data analysis.

This research is a case study falling under the Social aspects of a society, more precisely focusing on the religio-political conflict facing the Federal Republic of Nigeria in attempting to resolve the question on the influence of religion in the politics of the country as well as the role of religion in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts. Geoff Payne and Judy Payne (2004) define a case study as a detailed study of a single social unit. Yin (1984:23), on the other hand, suggests that a case study should be defined as a research strategy, an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study research means single and multiple case studies; can include quantitative evidence; relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. Yin further points out that a case study should not be confused with qualitative research and pin points that it can be based on any mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

As such, case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. It emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Social scientists, in particular, have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. In essence, with case studies the researcher is depicting one case amongst the numerous cases that exist so as to portray the relevance of his topic.

To this end, in investigating the topic interrogating religion, politics and conflicts in Africa, specifically the recent Nigerian case, the researcher shall make use of a qualitative research method given that it helps exemplify a common belief that can provide a deeper understanding of social phenomenon. A qualitative research method is concerned with symbolic material that requires interpretation; different interpretations of the same material can be valid; and it deals with research questions exploring personal or social meanings (Schreier, 2012: 21).

A qualitative research helps to draw out the vital clues by developing discussion, getting people to talk through their own words how they see a particular idea or subject. The modes of data gathering from visual data, journals, newspapers, articles, artefacts, internet and theses will be used in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the research problem as well as giving much room for interpretation. Given that there are similar cases peculiar to sub-Saharan Africa, a specific case study will also be used to exemplify the general trend of the role of religion in politics and electoral processes and also how religion plays a role in fuelling conflicts in Africa. The case study chosen is the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

1.8.1 Data Collection methods

The study limited the techniques of data collection to documentation review, which is a critical qualitative method of data collection so as to ensure that the study does not lose sight of the original purpose. It also entailed an analysis of previous regional religio-political conflicts on the African continent and deductive reasoning from facts of evidence as well as the assessment of qualitative data, and therefore the type of data collection method adopted in this research was largely qualitative.

1.8.1.1 Primary Source of Data Collection

The study will make use of primary sources of data such as field work in which interviews, questionnaires and focus groups shall be used in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This source of data is important as it helps extract data from target groups and individuals. The core concern of this method is to seek out and interpret the meaning that people bring to their own actions rather than to describe any regulations on statistical association between variables. Interviews are a common approach used in social sciences to get information through well placed individuals in relevant institutions and in society.

1.8.1.1.1 Key Research Subjects

- Political science and international relations graduates possess vital information on political studies

- Citizens from Nigeria, refugees, civil societies possess vital information especially primary data.

- Research Institutes such as ISS, AISA, and the ASS possess vital researched information on Nigerian religio-political and Boko Haram conflicts which the country recently experienced in 2012 as a result of religion being associated with the political activities of the country.

A key member of personnel involved in conflict related issues in Africa who was interviewed was:

- Research Officer at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS)- Mr David Zounmenou

1.8.1.2 Secondary Source of Data Collection

The study will principally rely on secondary data which are sourced from published (and un-published) materials, such as: books, journals, newspapers and internet/electronic sources. These data are collected from existing documentation on the subject matter from libraries lecture notes, theses, websites of African research institutions and think tanks such as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and the Institute for Global Dialogue. This method helps provide an in-depth knowledge of the researcher's area of study.

1.8.2 Data Analysis Methods

There are several techniques normally used in analysing the multiple sources of data which a case study research like this engenders. Considering that data was collected from interviews as well as documentation review, information was categorized to address the initial propositions and purpose of the study. Content analysis is the most suitable as it looks at documents, text, speeches and presentations then sees what themes emerge. This method of analysis entails the transforming of texts into interesting objects of research. Second, content analysis is essentially systematic and detailed in both qualitative approaches. Third, it is not tied to a single theoretical interpretation in addition to qualitative orientations.

Throughout the research process, another research analysis method used included discussing the information through a focus group study with other students conducting similar studies in order to gain the advantage provided when a variety of perspectives and insights are applied to the same data. In order to strengthen the findings and conclusions, a system of triangulation was applied for the purpose of validating the data. This triangulation method uses multiple methods such as the qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure that a single phenomenon is examined thoroughly from different perspectives.

Following this perspective, the triangulation method is appropriate in the context of the complexities associated with the subject matter of this study: the influence of religion in Nigerian politics and electoral processes and outcomes in the state of Nigeria and how religion is used as a tool to fuel and mobilize people during conflicts, as was vividly seen with the 2012 Boko Haram conflict.

1.8.2.1 Triangulation Method of Data Analysis

The term triangulation refers to the practice of employing several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Patton, 2002: 247). According to Sarantakos (2005: 145) the term Triangulation came into existence since it usually entailed three parts of action and was initially used to reflect what was known as multiple operations or convergent validation. As Todd D. Jick (1979) contends, triangulation in its constructive role can inspire the creation of inventive methods, new ways of capturing a problem to balance with conventional data-collection methods. This procedure permits the researcher to view a particular aspect in research from more than one perspective, and thus to enrich knowledge and test validity of the subject matter as well as allow the researcher to be more confident of her results.

Denzin (1978b) identified four types of triangulation which are: data triangulation wherein we use a variety of data sources in a study; investigator triangulation which uses several different researchers or evaluators; theory triangulation in which there is the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, and finally methodological triangulation which is the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program.

The purpose of triangulation according to Flick (2000c) and Burgess (1984) is to enable the researcher to increase the amount of research data and hence increase knowledge, to enrich the nature of research data, to achieve higher degree of validity, credibility and research utility and finally to overcome the deficiencies of single-method studies. Denzin (1978b: 28) reiterates the above view by commenting on the logic of triangulation as being based on the premises that:

> "No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed. This is termed triangulation. I now offer as a final methodological rule the principle that multiple methods should be used in every investigation".

Triangulation within a qualitative inquiry strategy can be achieved by combining both interviewing and observations, mixing different types of purposeful samples, for example both intensity and opportunity sampling, or examining how competing theoretical perspectives inform a particular analysis, for example the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl vs the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger. However, a study can also be designed to cut across inquiry approaches and obtain triangulation by combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Patton, 2002: 248).

Denzin (1978: 301) points out that triangulation could be of a within-method kind. By this, the researcher uses multiple techniques within a given method to collect and interpret data. In the case of quantitative methods such as survey research, this can take the form of multiple scales or indices focused on the same construct while on the other hand in cases of qualitative methods such as participant observation, this can be reflected in multiple comparison groups (Glaser and Strauss, 1965: 7) to develop more confidence in the emergent theory. Although Lamnek (1993) and Silverman (1985: 105-6) argue that expanding the spectrum of research via the use of triangulation does not necessarily guarantee better results, reality however remains that the use of the method of triangulation generally produces more valid and reliable results than the use of single methods.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is centered on interrogating religion, politics and conflicts in Africa with reference to the Nigerian case. The study was an assessment of the influence of religion in Nigeria's politics and electoral processes and outcomes that consequentially led to the role of religion in fuelling the 2012 Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria. Much of the attention is focused on how religion influences politics and electoral processes and outcomes in the state of Nigeria and how precisely religion fuels conflicts given the recent Boko Haram case in Nigeria. Given that the religio-political state in Nigeria helps exemplify the general trend in Africa, some attention will be given to Africa by examining the role of religion in politics and and state activities which at times have led to violence in the states of Sudan, Tanzania and Kenya, while more emphasis shall be laid on the 2012 Boko Harem conflict in Nigeria basically because it is still an ethnym that needs to be explored and elucidated in order to bring relevant suggestions on how to solve the problem. Consequently, given that Nigeria is used as a case study to exemplify the general trend, more focus will be placed on analyzing the influence of religion in politics and electoral processes in the state of Nigeria and how religion is used as a tool to fuel and mobilize people during conflicts, as vividly experienced with the 2012 Boko Haram conflict.

1.10 Limitations of the study

1.10.1 Not enough funds and security risk travelling to collect data

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is thousands of miles away from base which is the University of North West. This was a limitation because there were not funds to go to Nigeria to observe and collect primary data directly from people. Although the researcher tried to go to Cameroon, one of the neighbouring countries around Nigeria, the lack of enough funds and sufficient security measures, most especially as there are still signs of violence in the region prevented the researcher to travel to the field where the violence was manifested. The researcher depended on data from Nigerian refugees found in Kumba and Douala, phone calls to Nigerians in Nigeria, other foreigners such as Tanzanians and Kenyans who had experience of conflicts as a result of religion, and from documentaries, media deduction and academic presentations about religio-political and Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria.

Some of the people that the researcher had wanted to interview could not turn up for appointments as in most cases they were busy. The researcher therefore decided to study some of the documents written by people that were supposed to be interviewed.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The research will be composed of the following:

Chapter 1 (Introduction) presents the subject of the study, which is interrogating the religion, politics and conflicts in Africa with reference to the Boko Haram case in Nigeria. The chapter presents the background in the general trend of the role of religion in politics, electoral processes and outcomes in Africa and later pays more attention to the researcher's area of study which is the influence of religion in Nigeria's politics, electoral processes and outcomes as well as the role of religion in fuelling the 2012 Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria. The chapter proceeds with the problem statement, research questions, aim of study, objectives of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, research methods explaining the use of the qualitative method of data analysis, scope of the study and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 constitutes the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework. The literature review provides the background in the general trend of the influence of religion in African states public activities, politics and electoral processes and outcomes as well as the role of religion in fuelling some conflicts in Africa. The states of Tanzania, Sudan and Kenya will be used as examples to portray the general trend of religio-political conflicts in Africa. The theoretical framework, on the other hand, will look at the theories of religious fundamentalism and modernization theory in order to portray the relevance of the researcher's area of study.

Chapter 3 includes the data presentation, analysis and findings. The data presented was collected from a series of previous scholars work, news-papers etc and were later analysed through the content analysis method and triangulation method of data analysis. The findings are endowed with some of the discoveries the researcher came across while investigating the subject matter.

Chapter 4 contains the Conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion provides a summary of findings of the study while the established recommendations make some

suggestions which the Nigerian government is expected to implement and apply in order to limit itself from integrating religion with politics and hence preventing future conflicts instigated by religion.

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CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is basically comprised of the literature review and theoretical framework. The purpose of the literature review is to present a critical and in-depth evaluation of previous researcher's works on the subject matter. It also ensures that the works of others are not duplicated; instead it goes further in identifying gaps in literature which may be explored in further studies (Denscombe, 2007). Literature review is very important in a research because it sharpens and deepens the theoretical framework of the research as well as familiarizes the researcher with latest developments in the area of research and in related areas. The researcher becomes acquainted with the problems, hypothesis and results obtained by other researchers and can discover the connection, contradictions or other relations between different research results by comparing investigations.

A theoretical framework, on the other hand, is important in every research since it defines the theoretical support of a specific or targeted study. Its purpose is to identify and outline the important variables that are relevant and linked to the research problem. This enables the researcher to relate the dependent variables with the independent variables and if possible elaborate any moderating variables.

2.2 Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted on the role of religion in politics as well as its role in fuelling conflicts in Africa. Ever since pre-colonial times when European powers set foot in Africa in the 15th century and introduced religion in order to convert the African continent from their various traditional religions, religion remained a tool to gain peoples' hearts and favors or a means by which people could gather to launch a protest against a patterning issue. Religion on the African continent constitutes three main religious groups i.e. what is, for lack of a more relevant term, known as "traditional religion" as well as the diversified types of Islam and Christianity (Moller, 2006). Even though they are being differentiated from one another, all of them as the BBC News (2012) pointed out, share some common features among which are a belief in one God above a large number of lesser gods or semi-divine figures; a belief in ancestral spirits; the idea of sacrifice, often involving the death of

a living thing to ensure divine protection and generosity; the need to undergo rites of passage to move from childhood to adulthood, from life to death.

However, long before the emergence of the foreign religions Islam and Christianity on African soil, African traditional religion had existed and been practiced on the continent. The African traditional religion encompasses wide and diversified varieties of traditional beliefs shared in different societies, depending on various states societal needs. It is focused around animist beliefs according to Alex Thomson (2010: 68) who posits that:

> "Religion is the belief that the physical world is controlled by numerous kinds of spirits amongst some of which are the spirit of earth, river, rain, sun, and hunting animals. Thomson further adds that African traditional religion also entails the worship and communication with ancestors and of the dead who have obtained partial divinity".

Similarly, Stringer (1999) defined African traditional religion as:

> "The belief that nature is animated by spirit(s) sometimes referred to as animism either in the pantheistic form of one supreme deity present everywhere or in a polytheistic fashion with specific deities or spirits for trees, water, etc".

Bever (2000) further contributes by defining African traditional religion as:

> "the belief in magic, sometimes seen as either good ("white") or bad ("evil" or "black"), but more often as ambivalent. In either case it is assumed to presuppose skills only mastered by specialists such as witches or sorcerers, against the machinations of whom people may feel the need for protection from others with access to magical powers such as shamans or healers".

Considering the fact that Africa is a large continent with a multitude of nations who have complex and differing cultures, uncountable languages and a very large number of dialects, it is important to note that traditional religion as practiced on the African continent is mostly inherited from various ancestors and transmitted from generation to generation in a bid to be upheld and practiced today and forevermore (Awolalu, 1976). In many parts of the African continent, Christianity and Islam have consistently displaced indigenous beliefs, though it is

common for Africans to combine or complement their obedience to multiple belief systems. However, each and every individual in Africa is free to choose whether to practice traditional religion, Christianity or Islam.

According to Lewis (2009), Christianity on the African continent traces its origin from the first century A.D. when it was found to be present and exercised on Egyptian soil, while the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia was dominant there from the fourth century. He continued by pointing out that local indigenes on the African continent came across foreign religion when the European Christian missionaries arrived on the continent along with early explorers and traders in the 15th century and later on their religious activities became more widespread in the mid-19th century during the scramble for Africa, and the ensuing colonization after 1885. Wilhelmine (1922) further contributes by outlining that the coming of Christianity to the African continent was with the arrival of the catholic Portuguese. In 1493, these Portuguese explorers had been granted by Pope Alexander VI, the right to explore the world east of line running a hundred leagues west of the Azores and leaving everything west of the line to their Spanish rivals, an agreement that was later codified in a bilateral Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494 (Wilhelmine, 1922).

Scholars such as Förster, Stig, Wolfgang and Robinson et al (1988), on the other hand, emphasize that the real breakthrough for Christianity in Africa came with the scramble for Africa in the late 19th century through European Christian missionaries, where the European powers attempted to establish actual control over their respective portions of the continent. One of the conversions to Christianity in Africa was the ruler of the Kingdom of Kongo in the present day Angola, who Christianized his kingdom (Steed, 2000).

Islam on the other hand was defined in a piece of work by Danjibo (2012: 3) as:

"The total submission to the will of Allah (God) as revealed by the prophetic message of Muhammad the prophet of Islam".

Danjibo (2012: 3) further perceives Islam as being guided by the five pillars of the belief in one monotheistic God; prayer (through the medium of Arabic); fasting; alms giving; and pilgrimage to Mecca.

According to Holger (1995), Islam traced its origin on the African continent via four different routes. The first appearance of Islam in Africa was through conquest and expansion which was vividly seen with the initial Arab expansion into North Africa (Gilbert and Reynolds, 2004), followed by an Ottoman expansion into some countries like Sudan (Spaulding, 2000). The second road of Islam into Africa was through international trade. By this route, the Muslim community entered Africa via trans-Saharan trade, which created gradually expanding Muslim centers in the Sahel area (Tambo, 1976), and the Indian Ocean trade and slaving routes, where Arab and other traders established enclaves along the coast of East Africa which also gradually expanded (Pouwels, 2002). Lewis (2009) further adds that Muslim traders and preachers had been spreading Islam from the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, and later on by the 15th century, the religion was widespread along the Red see coastal areas and the Sahelian region, stretching to the West African coast.

The third phase of Muslim arrival in Africa was via the import of labor by the European colonialists from India and other Asian countries. Among the labourers were many Muslims, the descendents of whom now constitute fairly large Muslim communities, for example in a large part of South Africa. Finally, a massive proportion of Africans were deliberately converted to Islam either through lectures from Sufi "holy men" or by interacting with the Muslim community in their region (Ryan, 2000). The lectures by the holy men to the African citizens have indeed helped in shaping their character on how to dress or behave in contemporary society and hence preparing them to better determine what is good or bad in their attitude and politics.

As a result of embracing the foreign religions Christianity and Islam, practiced along with traditional indigenous religion, Africa has been left with a legacy of about 45 percent of the population believing and practicing Christianity, about 40 percent practicing Islam with 10 percent practicing traditional religion. Viewing these estimated figures, it appears that about 48 countries south of the Sahara as well as the southern and central portions of Africa are characterized as Christian states, though a number of Muslim-majority countries can be found in West Africa and the Horn of Africa (Lewis, 2009).

It is however worthy to note here that despite the diversity of faiths on the African continent, religion has been thought to play a positive role in both the private lives and Politics of various African states. Traditional religion was credited with playing a great role in fighting against colonial domination in Africa. The indigenous local authorities (chieftains and royalty) whose entitlement to rule rested on foundations of traditional religion organized resistance against colonial rule in Africa. Even though they did not have success in most of their resistance efforts, they nevertheless managed to bring change by the battles of Ashante Wars (1873-84), which eventually led to the 1900 uprising against the indigenous monarchy, who claimed divine sanction of its rule manifested in the "Golden Stool" (Edgerton, 1995). Other academics such as Alexander, McGregor and Ranger et al (2000) further participate by pointing out that traditional belief in magic has greatly contributed in boosting the morale of combatants during the battles of Chimurenga in the 1970s in present day Zimbabwe against the white minority regime.

Christianity like other religions on the African continent has been awarded praise for fighting against colonialism. According to a report by the BBC News (2012), religion is considered to have had a powerful effect on political change, most especially in aspects such as spirit mediums who have led revolts against European and African rulers, and ancestral spirits have commanded acts of destruction and called for the overthrow of rulers and chiefs (BBC News, 2012). Simultaneously, Christianity, through the Council of Churches in the late 1980s has played an influential role in the fight against apartheid in South Africa (Collin, 2000).

Islam along with Christianity has been upheld by some scholars such as Moller (2006) to be a source of standards for government to which the ruling elite must either conform, or face opposition and risk being overthrown by the opposing party. According to Muhammad (2002), Islam played a significant role in the struggle against European colonial rule and also during the scramble for Africa. This was shown in armed resistance such as the Jihads proclaimed by the Sokoto Caliphate, as well as in the Mahdist revolution in Sudan and the 1895 rebellion in British Somalia. In some cases however, as in the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Maitatsine riots of December 1980 and the recent 2012 Boko Haram riots in Nigeria, Islam could be said to be playing a negative role on African stability and politics given that it has been used to fuel conflicts in Africa (Danjibo, 2012).

All traditional religions, as well as Islam and Christianity were alleged to have played a negative role in the political activities of African States when they exerted an influence on the conduct of civil wars mainly in West and Central Africa. As presented by Stephen Ellis in his analysis of the Liberian civil war, it was observed that some fighters on opposite sides practiced rituals from indigenous religion as an integral part of their struggle as well as ones regarded as unacceptable such as cannibalism (Ellis, 1999). In the same vein, the same phenomena also occurred in the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone in which the government, in order to fight for what was deemed right, recruited traditional hunters from the Mende ethnic group, some of which were based on the "secret" Poro initiation societies (Lansana, 2005). Closely linked to the above, Liberian leaders such as Charles Taylor employed traditional charms and invocations to build an image of strength and destiny. Ritual oaths or pledges were constantly present in movements across Africa, from the Mau Mau of Kenya to the MayiMayi of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the militants of Nigeria's Niger Delta (Lewis, 2009).

Foreign religions such as Islam also contributed to promoting political instability in some parts of Africa. Academics such as Ahanotou (2012: 1) have recently established a link between al-Qaeda activities and some religious organizations in Africa, in which by working through companies, al-Qaeda operatives were allowed to trade in African gold, diamonds, and other gems, thus providing the economic resources and networks that led to the bombings in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam and the possible assistance given to those who destroyed the World Trade Centre in the 9/11 attacks on the USA.

In other cases such as the Rwandan genocide of 1994, some Christians quoted verses from the bible such as Genesis 9: 21-27 which were used by the Hutu extremists in order to portray the Tutsis as alien conquerors from Ethiopia, to which country they should be returned. This was specifically formulated in a speech by Léon Mugesere in 1992, who obviously referred to dumping the bodies of the "Hamites" in the Nyabarongo River leading to Ethiopia and thus contributed to the political instability of Rwanda (Eltringham, 2004: 22). Moreover, as was stated by Maxwell (2000) and Gifford (1998), Christianity, or more precisely the Pentecostals may be used to boost the legitimacy of regimes which do not really deserve to rule. This was made evident with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU-PF) regime of Robert Mougabe in Zimbabwe and the reign in

Zambia of "born again" Frederick Chiluba, who went so far as proclaiming the country a "Christian nation".

Consequently, it could be understood that religion, by constituting part of the private life and practices on the African continent, can find itself being associated with the politics of states as well as being an instrument used to instigate conflicts as was recently seen with the 2012 Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria. As such, religion seen from this perspective could be seen as both playing the role of maintaining peace as well as an element in promoting political instability through conflicts.

However, although some analysts will put religious differences as the principal source of conflict in some African countries, other scholars nevertheless contradict this as they believe religion is just a weapon to gather massive support in a conflict which is generally aimed at terminating the poor and unequal economic conditions in the country as well as the corrupt nature of the system in place in the country. Academics such as Hoffman and Gurr (1993) strongly uphold this view when they opine that many conflicts which are classified as religious conflicts are not actually religious conflicts but rather deeply rooted from either political factors such as the 2011 election violence in Ivory Coast (Ndjepel, 2011) or economic factors such as poor management of state resources, or low gross domestic product which on its own has eventually contributed to a state's unemployment rate and low living standards. As such, they argue that religion is just a way of mobilizing people who have a common interest and aggrieved political and economic status to participate in a conflict.

Stewart (2009: 5) contradicts the view of Hoffman and Gurr when he points out that:

> "while all conflicts have several motives with political and/or economic ones generally central, mobilization frequently occurs on the basis of particular identities, and conflicts can then be classified as 'ethnic' or 'religious', or class or ideological, on the basis of how people are mobilized rather than with respect to the political or economic motives for such mobilization".

Indeed, viewing the recent trend of events in the international system, religion on certain occasions has proven to play a role in the political activities of a state as well as being a tool in fueling conflicts on the African continent. In the writings of several scholars on religion and politics in Africa, political power and religion are commonly considered to be closely inter-related. To this effect and despite the previous separation of religion and politics, Haynes (2004: 80-81) pointed out that:

"it is difficult to be sure where 'religion' ends and 'politics' begins in Africa".

On the other hand, focusing specifically on Africa, Marshall (2009: 20) argues that:

"the religious has had a tendency to spread into a range of other domains, especially the political, and Bompani and Frahm-Arp contend that religious and public political spaces in Africa are commonly used concomitantly".

Considering this perspective, the states of Tanzania, Sudan and Kenya shall be used to elucidate the role of religion in African politics as well as the role it plays in the launching of conflicts on the African continent.

2.2.1 Religion as a part and parcel of Tanzania's Politics and State affairs

The state of Tanzania is endowed with three religions namely; Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion, often called ATRs (African Traditional Religions) (Gahnström, 2012). While Islam set its roots in the area from 9th and 10th centuries onward (Tambila 2006b: 172-3), Christianity on the other hand emerged in the 19th century during missionary activities in the region (Tambila and Sivalon 2006: 225-8). Before the advent of colonial rule by first the Germans and later the British, it was difficult to portray a distinction between religion and politics since commonly, political and religious authority overlapped, sometimes even in the same person (Koponen, 1988). This accounts for one of the reasons why, since the first two decades of independence in the state of Tanzania, the country enjoyed a tolerant and cordial religious atmosphere until the departure from active politics of Julius Nyerere in 1985, when deep tensions and strains began to emerge not only between the state and major religions in the country, but also inter and intra-religious violence became common (Mesaki, 2011: 249).

During the government of Julius Nyerere and his one party system, it could be argued that religion was associated with the political functions of the country in that the inclusive system of governance incorporated inclusion on the basis of religion. The same was also true with the more direct political role religion had through the close church-state relations given that there was a measure of expected reciprocity behind the maintenance of these relations (Mbogoni, 2005, Ludwig, 1999). This is practically in line with Jeff Haynes' (1996) perception of state-religious relations, where he foresees that 'mainline religions will strive at attempting to maintain stable and cordial relations with the government'. In this respect, Haynes defines mainline religions as those religious institutions which have "established regularized forms of interaction with the state over time, and which are regarded by the latter as official representative of large numbers of people" (Haynes, 1996: 20).

To account for one of the reasons for the emergence of religious politics, Gahnström (2012) pointed out that gross inequality had developed between the various religious groups in Tanzania, which in turn facilitated mobilization on the basis of religion. These gross inequalities could be seen in terms of real or punitive group-based grievances regarding discrimination which in essence relate to inclusion or exclusion from state activities. To complement the above view, Marx strongly opined that according to him religion is the:

> "sigh of the oppressed", the "opium of the people" which abolishment can only occur by emancipation from "the estranged world of human objectification". (Tucker, 1978: 54).
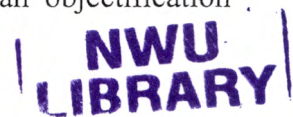
However, as Liviga (2006: 327) succinctly suggests, religion and religious institutions have had an important contribution in the political dimensions of governance not only in supporting the country's socialist ideology but also in the provision of social services, the Muslims through their organization, the East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS) and Christian churches in the provision of education and health services. Ludwig (1999) supplements the above view by pointing out that all major Christian religious groups had their corresponding institutions which took part in the political debates of the country to a greater or lesser extent. Ludwig continued by demonstrating that the Christians are represented by the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), the Lutherans by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and the Anglicans by the Anglican Church in Tanzania (ACT), previously referred to as the Church of the Province of Tanzania. The

protestant churches are further organized under the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), which has taken an active political role both during the one-party state and after its abolition (Ludwig, 1999).

Furthermore, religious organizations like the Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have had an increasingly important and relevant position in the provision of social services in Tanzania (Leurs et al 2011; Green 2006) and religious leaders have long occupied important social and political positions both at national and local level. Besides these Christian institutions, the Muslim organization known as BALUKTA (Baraza la Ukuzaji Kurani Tanzania; Tanzania Council for readers of the Koran) had taken part in the increasingly provocative religious speeches or writings in Tanzania in the early 1990s (Lodhi and Westerlund, 1997).

Viewing the role of religion in the political dimensions of government, Prof. Rwekaza Mukandala, the current Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, asserts that religions in Tanzania are; ". . . pervasive, useful and seemingly powerful" (Mukandala 2006: 1). Tim Kelsall (2005: 37) of the University of Newcastle further describes Tanzania as "a deeply religious society (as) …many Tanzanians use a religious idiom to account for their day-to- day actions". Following the same trend, an American Emeritus Professor wrote about the saliency of religion in Tanzania as follows, "…Religion has become a salient issue, (...) people at the grassroots level advance religious identities in pursuit of their interests in regard to spiritual, material, and political interests all across Tanzania" (Glickman, 2011: 3).

However, it is important to note that not all religio-political relations in the country were favorable to the political advancement of Tanzania. Scholars such as Liviga (2006: 328) critically denounced the negative role religion played in state affairs and political issues of the country when he stated that;

> "…the role of religion in governance issues (state vis-à-vis religion) has been
> one area of contention for both politicians and religious leaders". This instigate a
> renowned historian in the country to claim that; "…in recent times religion has
> re-emerged as a major issue in Tanzanian national politics…at the heart of this is
> the struggle between the Muslim and Christian establishments for pre-eminence
> in national affairs (which) has entailed competition between them for control of

the secular nation-state… (that)…the ruling party strove to build as part of its national unity project" (Luanda, 1996: 109).

Practically, both Christian and Muslim organizations were considered to have contributed in one way or the other in shaping the results of the 2010 presidential elections in Tanzania and thus portrayed the extent to which religion, which is expected to control the private lives of individuals, tended to influence electoral processes in a country. Among the political leaders was the incumbent CCM candidate, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, who was a practicing Muslim, while his main contender in 2010, Chadema's Willibrod Slaa, was a former Catholic priest and former Secretary General of the TEC. Each leader developed various ideologies and plans, which in most cases were contradictory and therefore led to accusations by both camps of the improper usage of political campaigning tools such as religion (Gahnström, 2012: 135).

In this respect, Mesaki (2011: 256-7) and Tanzanian Affairs (2009; 2010) pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church released a Pastoral Letter more than a year before the elections, whose aim was to create awareness in believers to make informed choices before the elections. The document which was set up to express the leadership problems of the country and to encourage Catholics to use their vote to choose appropriate leaders who planned to fight against corruption, became commonly referred to as the "election manifesto" of the church (Mesaki, 2011: 256-7; Tanzanian Affairs, 2009; 2010).

Essentially, Muslim organizations such as BALUKTA and CCM had on several occasions vocally advocated for the creation of an Islamic state ruled following Sharia Laws and therefore urged Muslims to vote for other Muslims, basically because they considered government by Christians as "blasphemy" (Luanda, 1996: 176-77). Consequently, Muslim desire to convert the state into an Islamic one was one of the reasons why tension arosed between the two major faiths in the country, hence affecting the politics of the country. The Muslims who felt marginalized and discriminated against in terms of education, employment and public or political representation by Nyerere's Catholic-influenced government, constantly accused the government of being corrupt and thus wanted to replace it by a 'holy' government backed by Sharia laws. The Christian churches responded to this attempt by expressing the view that Muslims were less tolerant of the religious plurality in Tanzania than the Christians and this accounted for the reason why they would seek to

establish an Islamic state if the Muslims were to assume power (Mbogoni, 2005: 131; Luanda, 1996: 170).

The culmination of tensions between the Muslims and Christians was later translated into actual physical fighting, the most notable being the attacks by Muslim fundamentalists on pork butcheries in Magomeni in Dar es Salaam in 1993, where three pork butchers were killed and a police arrest in a mosque in Mwembechai, also in Magomeni, all of which sparked protests in 1998 that eventually led to the death of two protesters. In 2002 two people died in front of the same mosque in a confrontation with police (referred to as the Mwembechai killings); and there was another series of further confrontations either between Muslims and Christians or between state authority and protesters (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002: 695; Luanda, 1996: 177-78). As a result of these series of conflicts, coupled with the increasing religious tensions in early 1990s, the state of Tanzania started developing concerns for the introduction of multi-party politics based on democratic principles rather than religious ones (Luanda, 1996: 181).

In sum, even though academics like Chabal (2009: 68) consider religion as the "glue that binds societies together" as well as an instrument for social advancement, in some cases religion could be used as a tool to instigate violence which in most cases obstructs the peaceful continuance of state and political affairs in Tanzania. The various religious institutions by actively participating in the transmissible networks as politicians in the 2010 presidential elections have had a vested interest in the maintenance of a stable political order in Tanzania. Despite these arguments, the reality nevertheless remains that religion according to liberal states, remains a part and parcel of individual private lives and as such it should be restricted from being associated with states political activities given that the competition between the various religious groups will indirectly also affect the political and social activities in the country.

2.2.2 Religion Influencing Political and States Affairs in Kenya

In the Republic of Kenya as in most African countries, religion has been found to be present in day-to-day state political activities. The population is mainly Christian, both Protestants and Catholics but other religions such as Islam, Hinduism and other traditional religions also constitute a good fraction of the Kenyan population. The state of Kenya being is estimated to be about 95 to 97 percent religious, in which about 70 to 80 percent of that being Christian, another 15 to 20 percent being Muslim, and maybe 2 to 3 percent being Hindu and others (Population and Housing Census result, 2010).

Although it is argued that these religions are different in their values, they nevertheless share some common aspects given that they have the same goals and even pray to a similar divinity (God or Allah). However, in areas where one religion is found to dominate, as is the case with Islam over Christianity in certain regions, the Muslims will request the implementation of Sharia Laws in such areas. Twaddle Michael (1995: 7) noted that;

> "In other areas of Eastern Africa, where non-Muslims and Muslims live in close proximity, demands for the imposition of Islamic laws have also been made in recent years. The coastal province of Kenya is one such example".

By so doing, the few Christians and other opposing religious groups living in that area will feel threatened and thus begin to protest, which can lead to fatalities. The protest can further contribute in shaping the political environment of the country be it positively or negatively.

Religion in the public or political affairs of Kenya, which at times has resulted in conflicts, first traced its roots during colonial rule by the British colonial powers in Kenya. In the view of Pederson (1991), during the British rule, in 1929, a cliterodectomy crisis occured which counter the Christian churches and missions against traditional Kikuyu and Maasai religious and cultural authorities, who wanted to uphold their custom of what is today referred to as female genital mutilation (FGM). The result of the crisis was the growth with the consent of the colonial authorities, of independent Christian Churches in Kenya that enabled the continuation of the traditional custom regarded as morally repugnant and life-endangering by Westerners (Pederson, 1991). Victory in upholding the tradition of FGM gave traditional religious groups the knowledge that they could affect the shaping of laws for their benefit by dialogue or by force.

Macharia (1995: 96) further added to the above opinion that religion played a role in the political affairs of Kenya in 1972 when a bill was drafted granting equal rights of inheritance between men and women, and this bill was eventually considered as a breakthough in ensuring equality between sexes. Given that the bill was touching on sensitive issues to both Muslims and followers of African traditional religion, a coalition of the two groups contested the reforms through various petitions based on the argument that the law was unconstitutional as it compromised their freedom of religion and worship as embodied in section 78 of the constitution, and they prevented the passage of the bill through parliament during Kenyatta's lifetime (Hassan, 2009: 8). However, during Moi's tenure as the second president of Kenya, the Law of Succession Act was nevertheless passed in July 1981 despite strong Muslim protest which contended that the law was an attempt to make them renounce Islam (Patricia, 1995).

In response to the imposed law, the Muslim community in Kenya resorted to constant petitions until a concessional amendment was added in 1990 excluding the Muslims from the Law of Succession. The amendment of the law by Moi's government was targeted at winning political support from the Muslim community so that it should support him against the Kenyans request for multi-party democracy (Ndzovu, 2009: 8). Moi's act of amending the law in favour of the Muslims vividly demonstrates how religion in some African societies influences the political aspects and statute laws of such countries. As such, this raise an ethnim that needs to be elucidated, whether African presidents are trying to introduce a new form of religio-political and statutory landscape that is contrary to the democratic legacy left to them by the former colonial powers because they want to satisfy their personal interests of holding onto political power indefinately.
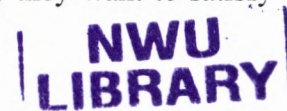
Further, during the presidency of Daniel arap Moi, he sought to cultivate his personal image as a devoted Christian which he later on transferred to his public speeches by quoting the bible, which was aimed at enhancing the brotherhood between the church and the state and hence integrating religion with politics. Despite such initiatives by Moi, the church was not excluded from criticizing his bad government as being authoritarian, disrespecting human rights, corrupt and principally based on a one-party system that did not allow room for pure democracy as in other African countries (Ndzovu, 2005: 280). Sabar-Friedman (1997) contented that the main Christian churches grew up to play an independent and critical

political role in situations such as the churches support for demands for democratic reforms and human rights. With respect to the role of the church in criticizing Moi's government, Gumo (2012: 34) further pointed out that many people including politicians themselves and experts strongly felt that churches should act as the nation's conscience in most matters of government even including moral aspects. In cases where the government turned out to be corrupt, churches were expected to be outspoken and point out such evils (Sussy, 2012: 34).

In this respect, David Throup cited in Gumo (2012: 34):

> "...only church leaders have the freedom to criticize the government without risking detention in Kenya".

Similarly, Mwai Kibaki also upheld the same views during his service as a minister in the KANU (Kenyan African Union) government and gave more powers to religious organizations or groups to be integrated into public affairs or political activities of the state (Gumo, 2012: 34). Gumo further notifies that in a discussion with the church leaders at an Annual General Meeting of the National Christian Council of Kenya at Limuru conference center, Kibaki reiterated that:

> "...a modern church is expected to be outspoken because other groups must be cautious. We must have at least some organization which speaks out for the rights of man regardless of what happens tomorrow". (Okullu, 1974: 27)

Accordingly, it was therefore in this respect that Moi found comfort with the fundamentalist churches which, according to Paul Gifford, are the new brand of churches in Africa that have resolutely refused to challenge government authorities on their bad record and reputation. One of the fundamental principles of these churches, which in Kenya include the Gospel Redeemed Church, African Church of Holy Spirit, Seventh Day Adventist and newer influenced American churches under the umbrella of the United Evangelical churches of Kenya (UECK) (Hassan, 2005: 280-281), was never to engage in any social analysis of political structures (Westerlund, 1996: 198-215).

Religion once more showed its face in the public activities of Kenya in the 1990s with the introduction of political reforms establishing a multi-party democratic process which on its own enabled Kenyan Muslims to become more engaged to the extent of making Islam more visible in politics. According to Ndzovu (2009: 2), prior to these reforms, the only political party that existed for all Kenyans including Muslims was the Kenya African National Union (KANU). But due to complains from the Muslims that KANU had paid inadequate attention to the development challenges specific to Muslims, they withdrew their support for the party and subsequently founded the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) in 1992 with the hope that a Muslim party would give priority to the particular development problems facing Muslims in Kenya (Ndzovu, 2009: 2).

Hassan continued to point out that the principal aim and objective of IPK was to bring about a just constitutional government that upheld the ideals of democracy, human rights and removal of all forms of discrimination at all levels, and joined the national voices for democracy and liberation. Although the approach of IPK was to make the electoral system more open, fair and honest rather than demolishing the existing system, President Daniel Arap Moi as well as his predecessor Khalifa Mohamed refused to register the IPK as a political party on the grounds that it was discriminatory, requiring specific religious beliefs of its members (Ndzovu, 2009: 2).

Bakari (2004: 7) contradicted Moi's opinion by stressing that the real reason for Moi's refusal to register IPK was because Moi's party, KANU, foresaw the possibility of losing support in the predominantly Muslim province on the coast and in the North East once IPK was allowed to compete in the elections. As a result, the government insisted that no political organization should employ religious names and symbols, hence hindering Islamic-oriented politics in Kenya. To this effect, Bakari (2004: 6) further argued that the popularity of IPK through its main activist Khalid Balala (who frequently criticized Moi's government) and the party's inability to respect Moi's decree, encouraged Moi's government to ban the party on the grounds that it was discriminatory, and tried to split the Muslim constituency along racial lines, and formed the United Muslims of Africa (UMA) which was aimed at drawing most of its support from Muslims of African background.

2.2.3 Religion Shaping the Politics and State Affairs of Sudan

The territory of Sudan like many other African countries has been characterized by the merging of religion, which is considered to constitute part of an individual's private life, with that of politics and public affairs, which in the long run helps to promote conflicts in cases where these two spheres contradict each other. Christianity, according to Ehret (2002: 305-307), first made its appearance in the small Nubian states in the present Sudan around the 6th century AD and became the dominant religion in the area about a century later. Christianity however, in the view of Holt (2000: 4-8) started losing its influence when in 642, and 652 Muslim Arabs invaded and enforced a merger of the kingdoms of Nobatia and Muqurra into a new kingdom of Dunqulah or Dongola in the late 7th century. Even during the first phase of colonization of Sudan and later on in the scramble for Africa, the Arabs were the dominant group who took control of large portions of Northern Africa and also extended to the present North Sudan where they not only introduced Islam but also spread Arab culture.

Møller (2006) observed that before the granting of independence to Sudan in 1956 by the British colonial powers, a series of questions were raised about the status and autonomy of faiths in South Sudan which was principally dominated by Christians, while the North was dominated by Muslims. Muslims, being the minor ruling class under colonial rule, because of their low educational level, gradually began taking control of the autonomous status of the South with acts such as putting an end to the "closed door" clauses, autorisation for Islamic missionary activities in the south and the instauration of Arabic as the official language applicable to all in the country all of which were aimed at establishing their influence in the country's politics and public affairs (Sharkey, 2002).

This demarcated the beginning of religion interfering in the public life of Sudan when in 1954 as Johnson (2003: 27) commented, the Christian community and leaders in the South along with the members of the Sudanese Legislative Assembly responded to the Muslim threat to implement Sharia Laws and introduce the Arabic language in the country, by convening a conference in Juba wherein participants made their consent to independence conditional upon the institutionalization of a federal system that would grant autonomy to the south, failing which the south demanded self-determination, i.e. the right to secede from would-be independent Sudan. Despite the numerous attempts to peacefully reconcile the different religious groups in both regions, that is the North and South, by the prospective

government in Khartoum, it did not prevent an armed rebellion breaking out in the South in 1955 that led to the formation of the Anya-nya movement (Edgerton, 2002: 119-123).

However, it should be noted here that the rebellion and fightings in Sudan were not because of a difference in ideology between the Muslims and Christians, but rather because of the interference of religion in the political affairs in both regions dominated by Christians or Muslims. Abdel Sidahmed (1996: 53-54) emphasized this argument when he pointed out that:

> "To be sure, this is not a question of Islam versus Christianity, but is rather the religious factor in Sudanese politics. The educated southerners, who eventually led the political activity of the South, were products of the Christian missionary acculturation and were essentially secular in their political activity, unlike the educated northerners, who were essentially conformist to their Muslim tradition. What should be emphasized, however, are not the "inherent" implications of Islam and Christianity as political and apolitical religions respectively, but rather the particular experiences of both religions in the Sudanese context. From the eighteenth century onwards, Islam gradually became associated with politics and ideology in northern Sudan (…) In contrast; Christianity in the south (…) was kept outside the sphere of politics".

The future role of religion in politics was moreover strongly noticed around the time of independence of Sudan. However, as argued by Sidahmed (1996: 67), this was rather "an attempt by the Islamist groups who had not yet constituted a strong pressure group to find a place on the Sudanese political scene". In essence, the Muslim elites had several times assimilated politics as well as public life into religion and this was evident through the building of Quar'an schools that could raise able leaders who would follow Sharia laws, as well as their decision to expel Christian missionaries in order to gain influence in the territory. By 1963 these Muslim policies had provoked a full-fledged guerrilla war, waged by the Anya-nya, the political wing of which was a movement in exile called Sudan Africanist National Union (SANU, initially called SACDNU, i.e. the Sudan African Closed District National Union) while on the other hand the Muslim Brotherhood emerged to represent the Muslims (Woodward, 2003: 39).

Considering that Sudan had consecutively been under civilian and military rule, the arrival to power of Ga'afar Nimeiri and his subsequent success in forging the Addis Ababa Agreement with the Anya-nya under the leadership of Joseph Lagu in 1972, contributed to modifying the constitution with the aim of bridging the divide between the Islamist and the Christian or secular forces and hence limiting any further role of religion in politics or public life. Some of the stipulations of the agreement as incorporated in the constitution in 1973 in order to separate religion from politics are provided for in article 16:

> "(a) In the Democratic Republic of Sudan, Islam is the religion and society shall be guided by Islam, being the religion of the majority of its people, and the state shall endeavor to express its values.
>
> (b) Christianity is the religion in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan which is professed by a large number of its citizens who are guided by Christianity, and the state shall endeavor to express its values. (...)
>
> (e) The abuse of religions or noble spiritual beliefs for political exploitation is forbidden (Sidahmed, 1996: 115-116)".

Even though an attempt was made in 1973 to separate religion from politics, according to Holt and Daly (2000: 175) in 1983 president Nimeiri disregarded these efforts when he took steps through the September Laws to introduce Sharia as the basis of the Sudanese national legislation, further promoting the influence of religion in politics and state affairs. In this respect, Hansen and Twaddle (1995: 32-44) point out that the intellectual ideas and works of some Sudanese Islamists were the driving force behind the creation of the Islamic republic of Sudan and Islam consequently received governmental support with the introduction of Sharia in September 1983. Ever since the implementation of Sharia, the Islamic penal code, it has been the major source of conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan. The South views Muslim leaders as using the sharia laws in order to hold onto power no matter how undemocratic their policies were viewed by non-Muslims or Southerners. As a result, it appears that as long as Sharia remains incorporated in the Sudanese constitutions as well as on the statute books, it will be difficult for any non-Muslim political movements to make peace with the northern administration (Hansen and Twaddle 1995: 32-44)

Religious elements were further seen in the 1998 Sudanese constitution as playing an essential role in the rules governing the state. The said constitution embodied rules such as apostasy as still punished by death, severe hudud punishments imposed under Sharia laws as well as flogging and, rarely, amputation. Moreover, Islam has been used to legitimate a severe oppression of women and also bombing raids against Christian churches and other facilities in the South (International Crisis Group, 2002: 93-98). Viewing this series of events, it appears that the Sudanese government is determined to uphold Islamic laws in the constitution in order to govern the country. When contradicted these laws lead to conflicts that disturb the peaceful continuance of governments and political issues.

However, in March 2006 during the preparation of a draft constitution for Sudan, the Sudanese government attempted to modify the lapsuses of the previous constitutions by reflecting on areas such as eligibility for public office and that the enjoyment of all rights and duties shall be based on citizenship and not on religion, beliefs, or customs. It also addressed the thorny issue of the national capital, Khartoum, stipulating that non-Muslims would not be subjected to Sharia law (art. 156-158). Simultaneously, a draft constitution had also been prepared for Southern Sudan, which clearly stipulated the separation of church and state and the principle of equal treatment of all religions (Møller, 2006: 65).

Therefore, looking at the series of events in Sudan, it could be seen that religion has contributed to shaping the politics of the country as well as fueling conflicts in the region. Though some scholars might advance economic reasons as being the principal cause for fighting in Sudan, other scholars, as cited above, strongly emphasize the desire by Islamist groups or Muslims as a whole to forcefully convert non-Muslims or Christians to the Muslim faith, which encouraged non-Muslims to launch protests against the incumbent government, all which was aimed at calling for the separation of religious aspects from political activities in the country. In this light, religion could be one characteristic of the conflict aimed at mobilizing people to fight against their common religio-political interests in Sudan and hence making the conflict a mixture of ethno-religious and economic conflict in order to ameliorate one's living standard and political status.

Viewing the previous literature written by a number of scholars pertaining to the influence of religion in politics and state activities as well as its role in fuelling some conflicts on the African continent, it could be realized that they omitted to critically view the new form of political ideology which some African states are trying to introduce in Sub Saharan Africa by integrating religion in politics and affairs of state. It appears that one result of failure in governance in some African states motivates and encourages some African political leaders who in the quest for political changes, opt to use religion to gather people of common interest in a bid to draw the attention of hungry believers so that they would protest against the incompetent government in the said African state. African political leaders by choosing to use religion in order to rally supporters during elections or in the processes of carrying on political activities, as well as using religion to influence the drafting of some state laws and constitution, are diverting from the modern form of democratic principles as called for by foreign European donors.

Considering the case of Sudan, it is evident that it was as a result of government failure to properly manage state resources which helped to promote gross inequality between the rich and the poor as well as Muslim domination over the Christian South in all aspects of society, hence resulting in Southerners seeking the separation of the country into two. Acknowledging that most of the Sudanese resources were coming from the South but its population mostly suffered from unemployment to the advantage of the Northern Muslims, religion became a good weapon used by political elites in order to gather supporters to end such gross political and economic inequality and Muslim domination in all aspects of state activities in the country. As such, the usage of religion by Sudanese political elites to rally support in the quest for political changes makes room for a new form of religio-politics that finds itself contrary to the democratic values as enacted in the previous Sudanese constitutions, thus paving the way to nurse the desire on discovering why such a change in the original democratic norms to that of religio-politics.

Similarly, in Kenya it could be realized that failure in governance by President Daniel arap Moi and his one party system pushed the Muslims to create the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) in 1992 with the aim of calling for pure democratic elections that were to end the authoritarian, discriminatory, disrespecting human rights, and corrupt nature of Moi's Christian mandate. Even though Moi had earlier attempted to appease the Muslims by excluding them from the Law of Succession in a bid to gain their votes in the upcoming

elections, it nevertheless did not prevent them from using religious politics in order to demand political changes from a Christian leader who was found to be a failure in Kenya.

Following this perspective, it appears that the political landscape in Africa is all about obtaining political support from the opposition religious group by granting satisfaction to their religious demands, and not on the basis of general satisfaction of the basic nessessities of all the population of a given African country. Consequently, such means used by former president Moi introduces a new form of electoral campaign in order to gain as many votes as possible and hence creates a gap in knowledge. It needs to be elucidated whether, if the same method is applied to all countries, a unanimous result shall be produced or it is simply a means to cover the poor leadership and undemocratic phenomena as experienced by most African states.

The thesis focusing on the Federal Republic of Nigeria, there are several religions practiced in the country but the two dominant religions of the country are Christianity, dominant in the South, and Islam, dominant in the North. There also exist alongside these two dominant religions the practice of indigenous traditional religions and other minor religious groups such as the pentecostals. Viewing such a religious landscape wherein each and every religious group has its laws and system of life and considering the mentality of each and every believer of a given religious group, it is alleged that Nigerians in all regions that is, the North, South, Middle Belt, West and East find it difficult to cohabit politically and socially with other citizens not practicing the dominant religion in that region.

The Muslim community feel their religion is superior to other religions in the country and this is based on their reasoning that Islam is the only right way to eternity and as such enforces traditional values as opposed to the Christians whom they consider as immoral, corrupt, practicing a Western system of education and life style, and so they request the Islamization of the country. In case their desire is granted, it shall imply that all other religion practiced in the country shall be prohibited, and Sharia laws will be binding on each and every citizen. As such, the incumbent government, knowing the consequences of granting such desire which could result in the continuous political, economic and social instability of the country finds it difficult to give in to such demands.

In due consideration of such an atmosphere between the Muslim North and the Christian South, it is alleged that religion has always been one of the most influencing factors that drives the politics of Nigeria as well as a perceived belief that it is a principal motive behind the launching of the Boko Haram sectarian violence in the country. Since independence in 1960 from the British colonial rule, the country has witnessed a series of military rulers and later on a democratic regime under the leadership of Muslim political rulers. Under the deomcratic regime and considering the grievances of the Christian South in their desire to participate also in the polical activities of the country, a gentleman's agreement of power rotation between the North and South political leaders in the ruling PDP party was agreed upon. This gentlemen's agreement, though not officially written on paper, provided that if a Muslim leader ruled and finished his mandate, the next leader should be a Christian and vice versa.

Following such agreement by the Nigerian ruling political party, it could be realized that religion, which according to modern states such as the USA constitutes part of the private life of an individual, finds itself associated with the political activities of Nigeria. This has gone to the extent of seeing Nigerian political elites using the church through disparaging speeches, and association with pastors or Muslim clerics in order to gather support for a political party. Other political elites in a bid to destabilize the government of the opponent Christian or Muslim leader, secretly promote and finance the growth of private organizations that will publicly protest and demonstrate on the behalf of such politicians, all of which actions are aimed at raising criticism and the desire for political changes against the incumbent government.

Having this in mind, it could be said that religion is not the principal factor behind the formation of the Boko Haram sect which on several occasions has destabilized the country politically, economically and socially, but other economic factors have played a part. These include the gross inequality between the rich and the poor as well as the improper distribution of resources in the country which in most cases has led unemployment and low living standards. To this effect, Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 852) point out that the Boko Haram sect results from the combination of other events among which are bad leadership, the hegemonic struggle for national power and the politics of identity, all of which encouraged members of the sect not to recognize a non-Islamic government whether at local,

state or federal levels (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 862). Similarly, some view the sect to be principally motivated by political reasons such as their desire to terminate the bad incumbent leadership and replace it with an uncorrupt Muslim leader.

However, scholars like Onuoha (2012) emphasize that the recent Boko Haram sectarian violence is the outcome of dogmatic embracing and strict application of the Sharia system of law, which on its own inspires Islamic jihads and the obliteration of western civilization. Contrary to this thinking, other scholars opined that the Boko Haram sectarian violence demonstrates an atmosphere of Identity politics and the struggle for political power and resources by the Muslim community in the North and the Middle Belt over the Christian south. From this perspective, it could be deduced that Nigerians are incapable of coexisting in a pluralistic state without combining religion and politics in the state and thus making the Islamic fundamentalists who are more or less revolutionary, favor the assimilation of political affairs in a state into a religious hierarchy, all which leads the country to a state of constant instability as a result of religious aspects.

Therefore, it could be observed that prominent scholars who previously wrote on the influence of religion in African states' politics as well as the role of religion in fuelling some conflicts in Africa (recently seen with the Boko Haram sectarian violence in Nigeria) did not see deeply the relevance of failure in a state government to constitute one of the reasons why citizens in some African states, due to a high rate of poverty and unemployment, find refuge behind religion which in the long run is skillfully used by politicians in order to enlighten believers in each of the religious groups on the necessity for change in the country. Consequently, by resorting to the use of religion in order to carry on their political activities African politicians eventually call for criticism or disparaging preachings about a rival religious group, and thus give scope for the occurrence of conflicts and demonstrations among them.

Despite the gap left by previous scholars on elucidating whether religion is simply used as a means to cover the bad governing system in Africa, or examining the extent to which religion influences African state politics as well as its role in fuelling some conflicts on the African continent (as recently experienced with the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence) in their previous works they have attempted to demonstrate the existence and persistence of religious politics in Africa, most especially in determining the question who shall rule, as

well as religion being a permeable African force in which all the domains of life and society, some of which include government offices, schools, health centers etc are passive with spiritual power and meaning. In effect, associating religion with public life and politics as the above scholars inform us, can lead to contradictory views and disparaging preaching between the various religious groups as each believes itself to be superior to the other and hence provides room for eventual conflicts among them.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the in-depth analysis of the various explanations that are closely related to the problem of the study. Theories according to the definition put forward by Burchill (2001) is defined as an explanation based on observation and reasoning, especially one that has been tested and confirmed as a general principle, explaining a large number of facts. According to Le Pere, Landsberg and Van Niekerk, there is no single or specific theory that is widely thought to provide the basis for understanding a phenomenon. It is therefore imperative for a better understanding of the study to provide religious fundamentalism and modernization theory. These theories are correct and relevant in explaining the researcher's questions on the influence of religion in Nigerian politics and state activities and the role of religion in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts of Nigeria.

2.3.1 Religious Fundamentalism

The term 'fundamentalism' emanates from the Latin word 'fundamentum', meaning base. Believers who are classified as fundamentalists reject the term as being backward and prefer instead to be described as traditionalist, conservatives, evangelicals, revivalists to name a few. The concept of fundamentalism which is controversial and difficult to explicitly explain is generally associated with inflexibility, dogmatism and authoritarianism. Jeff Haynes (1996: 199), attempts to define Muslim and Christian fundamentalists as those who have a strict view on the relevance of the holy scriptures for day-to-day life and which tend to regulate "all aspects of individual and social behavior" (Haynes, 1996: 199). Following this pattern, three factors in modern society were pointed out for contributing to religious fundamentalism; secularization, which led to a decline of traditional religion and a weakening of what is seen as the moral fabric of society; post colonialism; and globalization in sum all the aspects of modern civilization (Heywood, 2007).

Komonchak, Collins and Lane (1993: 411), perceive religious fundamentalism from three different thoughts among which are: from a specialized understanding wherein the word is connected with a closed personality type that shows exclusivity, particularity, literality and moral rigor; starting with a cultural theological perception, wherein the word shows vociferous contradiction to religious and cultural liberalism in protection of orthodoxy and religious traditions; and finally from a social movement thought, wherein it represents organizational and ideological uniqueness from other existing types of religious movements.

Definitely therefore, religious fundamentalism constitutes a religious movement that encourages the exact translation of, and strict obedience to religious doctrine, most especially as a return to orthodox scriptural rules and approving doctrinal principles. In effect, the concept seeks strict obedience to the orthodox basic ideas and rules of particular faiths. In the case of Nigeria whereby Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions, Muslims express hatred for modernism alongside its increasing growth to adulterating or the decreasing original doctrinal principles (Sampson, 2012: 115). In this light, religious fundamentalists therefore heavily insist 'on right doctrine and the necessity of organized warfare against the forces of modernism' (Komonchak, Collins and Lane 1996: 411).

Heywood (2007: 281) in his contribution to the debate helps characterize religious fundamentalism as that which rejects the distinction between religion and politics wherein its followers believe politics is in effect religion and thus religious principles according to fundamentalists are not to be restricted or separated from their private life, but are rather seen as an instrument for organizing principles of public existence, amongst which include law, social conduct, economy as well as politics all of which aspects of modernity such as Western education, adultery, fornication etc are strictly forbidden to the fundamentalists. On the other hand, Heywood has also noted in one of his studies that some forms of religious fundamentalism like the Christian fundamentalism in USA are capable of coexisting in a pluralistic state without necessarily combining religion and politics in the state and this is in contradiction to Islamic fundamentalism which is more or less revolutionary and hence favors the assimilation of political affairs into religion.

Heywood (2007: 283) in laying emphasis to his argument further points out that;

> "Religious fundamentalism has been attractive both because it offers the prospect of a non-western and often specifically anti-western political identity and because particularly since the decline of revolutionary socialism in the 1970s, it articulates the aspirations of the urban poor and the lower middle classes".

What is clear following these arguments is that fundamentalism emanates in extremely troubled societies, particularly societies affected by a concrete or alleged crisis of identity in which fundamentalists view religion as a concept made of unchallengeable principles which guide both the personal conduct of its believers and the organizations of social, economic and popular life with specificity to popular mobilization and social regeneration (Heywood, 2007: 283). This is true when we take into consideration the argument of Ruthven (2004) who emphasized that fundamentalism is instigated by a 'search for meaning' in a world where the percentage of uncertainty and doubt is at high.

Religious fundamentalism as explained above is best suited to the Nigerian conflict as the plurality of religion in the country has turned to affect the political, economic and social life of the people. Religion has been found to be a dominating factor in the organization of the Boko Haram sectarian movements which call for the conversion of Nigeria into an Islamic state as well as the rejection of Western education, which is perceived by them as being corrupt. Religion has further been found to be present in the organization of political parties in Nigeria which on its own has greatly influenced citizens in determining who shall be the next governor of a given region or who shall be the next president of the country. While Muslims strongly uphold that Islam is a good guide to political conduct and as such should be included in all aspects of political issues and public life, the Christians on the other hand call for the separation of politics and religion given the fact each phenomenon belongs to different dimension of existence, sacred and blasphemous (Abubakre, 1984).

The reality however remains that for several years religion has been found to influence the political affairs of Nigeria most especially as it has affected the issue of who should lead the governing political party all of which resulted in a gentlemen's agreement between the Northern Muslims and the Southern Christians which, when not implemented, contributed to

sparking the formation and uprising of the Boko Haram sect as recently seen in 2012. What therefore appears to be clear is that Nigeria, like many other African countries, experiences both political and social instability due to its inability to keep or consider religion as the personal or spiritual aspect of each and every individual as recognised by most liberal countries such as the USA.

2.3.2 Modernization Theory

Modernization theory is concerned with the transformation of the international system in countries. There is a need for citizens belong to a certain religious group in countries to get "civilized" in their ways of resolving issues and satisfying their desires. Resolution of problems or conflicts should not be through violence given that violence must only be used as the last resort because there are many other ways of resolving conflicts. Following past events, it appears that non-violent or diplomatic methods are the best ways of resolving disputes. During violence or protestations, numerous people are killed, properties destroyed and it becomes hard for people to reconcile. As a result, it becomes difficult to live side-by-side with one ethnic group or individual who is alleged to have killed all members of one's family or who is considered as having contrary ideologies. Modernization theory relevantly applies to the Nigerian religio-political conflicts given that the case study helps us demonstrate that contemporary conflicts are not only caused by the quest for protection against external aggressors or government inability to provide for its citizens, which is usually experienced, but rather conflicts are a result of religious backgrounds; these conflicts are rarely encountered in purely democratic countries.

Thus, Nigerians must learn to abstain from placing religion at the top of their public activities as well as avoid resorting to violence which leads to political and religious instability as a means of solving their political differences or satisfying their grievances in the conversion of the state into an Islamic one, but rather use diplomatic measures such as peace agreements or peace settlements. Consequently, it is important for Nigerian citizens like those in many other liberal countries in a bid to avoid future conflicts resulting from opposing religious ideologies, to learn to consider religion as a private and personal element of each and every one in their society.

The thesis having theoretically analysed the problem of the study, shall focus attention in the subsequent chapter to respond to the questions pertaining to the specific case study which is how religion influences Nigerian politics and electoral processes as well as the role of religion in fuelling some conflicts in Nigeria, as recently experienced with the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence.

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CHAPTER THREE

Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings

3.1 Introduction

Recent experiences in countries such as Tanzania, Sudan, Kenya and to date the Federal Republic of Nigeria have shown that some conflicts on the African continent could be as a result of religious aspects which, according to modern countries like USA, should be characterized as constituting part of the private life of citizens in each and every state, but nevertheless in Nigeria, religion is integrated into the political activities of the state. The resultant effect in the merger between religion and politics is a series of conflicts due to contradictory ideologies all which eventually lead to the unwanted displacement or death of some of the Nigerian population. In an attempt to analyse the merging of religion in politics and the occurrence of consecutive religio-political conflicts in Nigeria, the scheme of work shall present data answering the questions: what influence does religion have on Nigeria's politics and electoral processes and outcomes in Nigeria? And will later proceed to examine the question: what part does religion contribute in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts of Nigeria?

3.2 Data Presentation

3.2.1 Influence of Religion on Nigeria's Politics and electoral processes and outcomes.

Since the Brititsh colonial powers called traditional African religious gods and practices devil worship, both Islam and Christianity have remained the dominant religions in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Onapajo, 2012: 44). Islam became the most influential religion in the Northern part of Nigeria given that the spiritual and traditional cultures of the Yorubas living in that region appeared to be similar to those of the Islamic faith and hence made it easier for them to be assimilated (Sodiq, 2009: 650-651). Christianity, on the other hand, constitutes the dominant religion in the South and this was due to the constant trade with European powers along the coast. However, despite the divergence in the beliefs of both faiths, the Nigerian governments as Ibrahim (1991: 116-117) contends, have considered it relevant to make both religions official on the basis that it was a step towards bringing about national unity.

In the account by scholars like Onapajo (2012: 44), the official recognition of a religion could be relevant as it represented a powerful social force in Nigerian politics and state activities, most especially due to its capacity for effective political mobilization. Occasionally, religion, especially Islam, was demonstrated to be a powerful social force in situations; for example, in the Northern region of Nigeria, Islam was made a qualification for entry for any student in a Muslim school or worker in a Muslim dominated office as well as in the formation of political parties and participation in such political parties in the North.

Fox and Sander (2003: 567-568) complement this view by outlining six crucial reasons why religion is sometimes considered as a powerful social force in the politics of the state. They begin by noting that state regimes find it difficult to restrict the operation of religious activities; that most of the time religious organizations enjoy good coverage in the media; religious organizations are gifted with the ability to easily and freely unite different social associations as well as people from different social backgrounds; religious organizations possess a natural venue for political meetings; religious organizations generally exert a powerful influence in weak states; and finally that religious organizations are well connected at the international level and thus benefit from global solidarity (Fox and Sander, 2003: 567-568).

In respect of some of the points made by Fox and Sander such as religious organizations possessing the ability to regroup people belonging to a common religious group and association as well as a natural forum for political meetings, Muslims decided to merge Islam with politics and state associated activities in the North specifically following the conception that Islam was naturally gifted in enabling the Muslims to politically regroup themselves in their respective communities. To this effect and in line with the assertion of Sheikh Abubakar Gumi (a prominent Hausa-Fulani Muslim cleric who contended that Islam was endowed with many common cultural elements that united the populations of the northern region together) (Gumi and Tsiga, 1994: 118-119), the first political party created in the North, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), was openly and publicly characterized by aspects of Islam (Onapajo, 2012: 47).

During the existence of the NPC as Falola (1998: 2) notes, in order to express the symbol of the Unity of God of the Islamic monotheistic faith the party made use of the sign of one raised finger which passed a message to its people that the symbol of the two-fingered V-for-victory symbol of their opponents in the Christian South was a sign of polytheism, which Islam rejects as heresy. The non-Muslims living in the Northern region, in a bid to protest the ethno-Islamic political hegemony of the NPC, formed various political organizations such as the Tiv Progressive Union (TPU); Middle Zone League (MZL) which had as its principal objective to counter the Islamic expansionist moves in the North; Middle-Belt People's Party (MBPP); United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC); Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League; Birom progressive Union (BPU), benefiting from powerful support from the Christian missionaries, especially Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and Sudan Union Mission (SUM) (Dudley, 1968: 90-103).

Falola (1998: 15) to this effect pointed out that the political awareness of the Christians was instigated and quickly developed due to the threats and challenges set by Islam, and the Muslims desire to combine religion and politics as one entire body operating in parallel as well as the prerequisite need by the Christians to maintain the historical dominance of the educational-economic sphere, most especially in the Southern part of the country, given that employment of the gains of Christianity for political ends commenced with the northern Christians in the era of regional politics (Falola, 1998: 15).

This rivalry between the Muslim and Christian political parties resulted in a situation whereby religion was used as a tool for government delegitimation. Vividly demonstrated with the Nigerian first military coup of 1966 that overthrew the first republic in Nigeria, religion was said to have played a crucial role in its success. In the same vein, religion was also once more alleged to have been an important element in the organization of the Orka coup in 1990 when young military officers, led by Gideon Orka, attempted to replace the mandate of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, a Muslim of the Hausa-Fulani origin. The petitioners of the coup in one of their speeches stated that:

"We wish to emphasize that this is not just another coup but a well conceived, planned and executed revolution for the marginalized, oppressed and enslaved peoples of the Middle-Belt and the South (Christians) with a view to freeing ourselves and children yet unborn from eternal slavery and colonization by a clique (Hausa-Fulani Muslims) of this country". (Onapajo, 2012: 49)

Another interesting feature in the role of religion in politics and electoral processes was in 1999, shortly after the transition to democratic regime in Nigeria; Ahmed Yarima received massive support and acceptance from Islamic clerics for the post of governor in the state of Zamfara owing to his campaign promise of implementing Sharia as a prominent strategy to address widespread societal decadence among the people in the said region. As such, Yerima who succeeded in legitimizing his government on the basis of Sharia, thus satisfying the Muslims prerequisite desire to merge religion with politics, later integrated his supporters into strategic functions and duties of the state's public service (Journeyman Pictures, 2000).

Similarly, the 2007 elections conducted in Kano, as expressed in a study by Wakili (2009), established that the emergence of Ibrahim Shekarau as governor of Kano was thanks to the support given to him by the Muslim clerics as well as his ambition to introduce Sharia in the said region (Wakili, 2009).

Furthermore, the 2011 governorship elections also witnessed Sharia constituting a prominent factor for victory given that Aliyu Shinkafi, the successor of Shekarau, was completely rejected in the 2011 elections, mostly for his inability to implement Sharia during his campaign. Consequently, the new governor of the state, AbubakarYari Abdul-Aziz, easily ousted the ruling government in the governorship elections thanks to his strategy to associate with Yerima and his promise for the re-introduction of Sharia in the region and hence further portraying Muslims' desire for the union of religious aspects with politics (Nigerian Compass, 17 May 2011).

Alongside governmental elections, the 2011 presidential elections and outcomes in the Federal Republic of Nigeria were also found to be influenced by religious aspects. Although there existed a gentleman's agreement of power rotation between the North and South in the People Democratic Party (PDP) ruling party, religious aspects further came into question in the political process that resulted in the circumstantial presidency of Goodluck

Jonathan in 2010 and the general elections that followed in April 2011. Religion as constituting a factor influencing electoral processes and outcomes in Nigeria all began in 2006 when Olusegun Obasanjo failed to unconstitutionally prolong his mandate. As a result of his failure, Obasanjo quickly resorted to arrange for a successor who was best fit to protect Sharia principles and other legacies of his mandate. Even though he was conscious of the gentleman's agreement of power rotation, he nevertheless choose as successor one of his best agents, Umar Musa Yaradua, a northern Muslim who he deemed free of corruption, disciplined and who had successfully served two terms as governor in Katsina state. After going through an election classified as the most disputed in the political history of Nigeria, in April 2007, Yaradua succeeded to become president of Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2007).

Unfortunately for Yaradua, he could not rule for long because he suffered from a heart disease (pericarditis) and as a result was kept in a Saudi Arabian hospital for treatment. The Save Nigeria Group under the leadership of a Lagos-based Pentecostal pastor, Tunde Bakare, launched a protest to parliament, requesting them to put an end to the leadership of the dying Yaradua, who appeared to be unable to effectively rule the country due to his health conditions, and to consequentially declare Jonathan, his current vice-president, as the next Presiden to finish the term of Yaradua's mandate. Until the achievement of this suggestion in May 2010, when Yaradua finally died and Jonathan was later declared as the president of Nigeria, the country was shaped by political protesters aimed at making their voices heard on the political importance of nominating a healthy and efficient leader (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010).

In due preparation for the 2011 presidential elections, the incumbent president Jonathan Goodluck, as supported by Obasanjo and other influential southerners, declared he would run for the presidency under the banner of the PDP. The Northern Muslim clerics were dissatisfied by the parliamentary decision to nominate Jonathan as president in order to replace Yaradua, based on the reasoning that Yaradua had not finished his term of office and as such should have been replaced by a Muslim and not a Christian. These clerics worked together under the umbrella organisation of the Northern Elders Political Forum (NPLF) in order to produce a Northern Consensus Candidate aimed at limiting the chances of Jonathan in the primaries (Onapajo, 2012: 54).

However, notwithstanding such efforts by the Muslim community to destabilize Jonathan in the 2011 presidential race, their Northern Consensus Candidate, Atiku Abubakar, was unable to defeat Jonathan at the primaries. This pushed the Muslims to start searching for an alternative Northern candidate outside of the PDP. This is the reason why Muslims presented General Muhammad Buhari, a former Head of State and reputedly of political good conduct and opposed to any form of corrupt attitude in the state, as the new Northern Consensus Candidate (11 April 2011).

Boer (2010) inform us that Buhari was considered as a Muslim fanatic by many Christians given that he had openly and frequently favored the cause of Sharia in his previous mandates. Buhari knew that he had limited chances for victory in the presidential race following the general acknowledgment by the Christians that he was a Muslim fanatic. To dispel the fears of Christians, he strategically opted to gain the Christian votes during his campaigns by paying official visits to influential Nigerian pastors as well as appointing Pastor Bakare as his running mate. Despite such initiatives, Buhari found it difficult to forgo strong ties and popularity he enjoyed from the Islamic Institutions and Muslims in general, especially as it was another source of votes from the North. However, Buhari's hypocritical behavior of pretending to be a member of the Christian community and supportive of their activities in order to gain more votes, gave a chance for Kanti Bello, a prominent PDP member to point out that:

> "the CPC adopted a strategy that relied on religion as a weapon of campaign.....the CPC used the Council of Ulamas (Muslim clerics) in the North to campaign for Buhari, which portrayed him as a candidate of Muslims" (The News, May 2 2011).

Religion was further placed at stake prior to the 2011 presidential elections when the Chief Imam of a central mosque in Sokoto and his students defaced posters of Jonathan as a sign that the people of Sokoto were not supporting the president, and this action subsequently led to their arrests. After this, the Imam proudly expressed his mind by stating that:

> "I am not regretting my action at all. I think I have succeeded in passing my message because what I did was to make Nigerians and the world know that we the people of Sokoto are not with President Jonathan, we are not supporting his

candidature because he has violated the zoning arrangement that favors the Northern part of the country" (Sunday Trust, 6 March 2011).

The point should however be noted that it was not only Buhari who went to both Christians and Muslims in order to seek support; Jonathan also did the same since he felt threatened by Buhari's movements towards the Christians. Jonathan's quest for support and mobilization for the presidential race was made evident when he visited the Pentecostal's Redeemed Christian Church of God in December 2010 and knelt down before Pastor Enoch Adeboye in an open mass for prayers for him to be successful in the 2011 Presidential elections (PM News, 18 December 2010).

Falling within the same pattern, Onapajo (2012: 56) narrated that a reputable pastor, Paul Adefarasin of the House on the Rock Church in Lagos, was said to have created awareness in his audience about the need for all of them to go out and vote for a Christian presidential candidate in the 2011 elections because the Nigerian political system had for so long been dominated by the Muslims and hence needed to change. In this regard, the PM News of 15 November 2010 quoted from Onapajo 2012 clearly reported that:

> "Adefarasin said that the polity has been Islamized for so long and Christians must wake up and pray against it. (To him) 'Nigerians used to be the most educated people in the world until the likes of Abacha and Murtala Muhammed came and scattered our educational system to slow down the South so that the North can catch up, instead of speeding up the North".

By behaving in this two-faced manner, Jonathan and his collaborating pastors caused the rest of the world to ask themselves whether relying on religion to capture votes in a democratic electoral process could produce a fair outcome, or indeed whether any candidate could produce any other agenda for his political campaign. Indeed, considering the political battle between the Muslims under the leadership of Buhari against the Christian leader Jonathan, the outcome of the 2011 elections expressly portrayed an election characterized by a voting mode determined by religion and ethnicity. This was based on the statistical analysis that Jonathan experienced a dominant victory in most of the Christian-dominated areas of the South and also the Christian areas of the North known as the Middle-Belt region while he was categorically rejected in areas at the heart of the Muslim region such as Sokoto,

Zamfara, Niger, Kano, Kebbi, Katsina, Bauchi, Kaduna, Jigawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe where his rival Buahari captured all the votes (The News, May 2 2011).

The News of May 2 2011 expressly informs us that due to his Christian origin, Jonathan successfully acquired a landslide victory in more than 23 Christian dominated states by polling 22,495, 187 votes while in the Northern part of the country, Buhari conquered all the votes in its 12 states, given that Jonathan was categorically rejected by the Muslim community (The News of May 2 2011). Viewing such results, it was evident that violence was going to emerge from the Muslim clerics who believed the Christians were violating the zoning formula which was expected to be in favor of the North, most especially because due to his illness, Yaradua, the Muslim choice, was incapable of completing his two-term mandate while Obasanjo witnessed a completed two-term presidency between 1999 and 2007.

In this light, the 2012 Human Right Reports in Nigeria noted that Religio-political violence arose in Kaduna state after Jonathan had been declared the victor of the presidencial election. While Muslims under the leadership of Buhari accused Jonathan of vote-rigging in the south, Jonathan likewise also accused the Muslims of permitting under-aged citizens to vote for Buhari as well as vote-rigging in most voting points in the North. As a result, Kaduna state was transformed into a war camp leading to the death of several citizens, both from the Northern and Southern regions (Human Right Reports, 2013: 1).

3.2.2 The Role of Religion in Fuelling the Boko Haram Conflicts in Nigeria.

The federal Republic of Nigeria, like many other African countries, has experienced a series of conflicts based on religious background. Beginning with the Arab Israeli conflicts, the terrorists activities in Pakistan, then followed by the riots between Northern and Southern Sudan, all religions, be it traditional religion, Christianity or Islam are said to have played a role in fuelling the conflicts in those countries in a bid to achieve the goals of the protesting religious group. As such, the Muslims in the Northern part of Nigeria supported by some Islamic extremists in other African countries such as Benin, Republic of Chad, Somalia and Mauritania, resorted to copying from their predecessors and in 2002 launched the Boko Haram sectarian movement under the auspices of Yusuf (Francis, 2011; Chothia, 2012) in order to attain their objectives of converting the Nigerian state into a Muslim country and taking control of governmental activities in the state, to the detriment of the Christians.

According to the Hausa language, the word "boko" is an unclear and confusing term which means either "Western" or foreign; while the word "haram" is an Arabic acquired word meaning "forbidden". In essence, merging the two words together, Boko Haram means to forbid everything falling within the range of foreign or Western practices and Western education (Danjibo, 2012: 7). Other scholars such as Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 858) perceive the Boko Haram as a militant sect that is driven by the ideology of a fanatical Islamic practice that perceives Western education as being evil and thus must abolish it in the Nigerian state (Johnson, 2012). In the view of Chothia (2012), the sect is popularly referred to as 'Western Education is forbidden' or could as well be known under the name 'Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-jihad' of which is translated as 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad'.

The Boko Haram sect, being a strong opponent to Western education, most especially to the Darwinian theory of evolution, and its rejection of Western democratic principles, pursues the Islamization of Nigeria, despite the nation's secular nature (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 858). Based on the intention to eradicate Western civilization and its democratic principles, perceived as contradicting Islamic values, members of the sect are prepared to use force as well as to kill many souls who disapprove of their movement.

It has been stated by Chris (2011: 12-19) that statistically most members of the sect are Islamic clerics and students, professionals and students from the University of Maiduguri, Ramat Polytechnic etc. To this effect, Alhaji Ali Dandume, a less influential leader in the Nigerian House of Representatives argued that a large portion of the Boko Haram sect were a group of youths who either stopped school because of financial reasons, or university graduates who did not succeed in obtaining a job in the country and blame the government for their state of joblessness as well as for imposing western education while being unable to recruit people after obtaining a certificate, and government failure to manage state resources to the benefit of all (Danjibo, 2012: 7).

Chris (2011: 12-19) further states that some Nigerian political elites, among whom are two former military heads of state and an ex-civilian vice-president from the North, financially contribute to the effective functioning of the organization, as well as some members of the Nigerian state security agency who are reported to be active members of the sect, given that they help the organization with training facilities. In the same vein, Onuoha (2010: 54-57)

elaborated that in August 2011 the commander of the US Africa Command, General Carter Ham held that the Boko Haram sect had some strong links with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Somalia's al-Shabaab, both of which finance the organization for the purchase of better equipment and effective training.

Theoretically, it is a common belief by members of the sect that anyone who fought and died for the principle of attaining an Islamic or Sharia state by either demolishing government institutions, or the foreign style of living such as western education and electoral principles, would eventually achieve "Aljanna" (heaven) (Danjibo, 2012: 7). In this regard, Tell Magazine (August 10, 2009: 34) skillfully recapitulated the belief and philosophy of the sect thus:

> "The mission of the sect is to establish an Islamic state where 'orthodox Islam' is practiced. Orthodox Islam, according to him [Mohammed Yusuf, leader of the sect] frowns at Western education and working in the civil service because it is sinful. Hence, for their aim to be achieved, all institutions represented by government including security agencies like police, military and other uniformed personnel should be crushed".

Komonobi et al (2011: 1) states claims by Bauchi state Governor Mallam Isa Yuguda that a large portion of the sect change or divert the true teaching of Islam while the other portion is a group of criminals who are out to destroy the country for selfish and egoistical reasons. However, the reality remains that Muslims desire to convert the country into an Islamic state governed by Sharia Laws while prohibiting the western style of living and education, which consequently prompted the series of religious turbulences in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Other scholars such as Thomson (2012: 47), however, reject this view as he emphasizes the existence of several other reasons that could have motivated the launching of the Boko Haram by its followers. Among these reasons are; the presence of oil dominated by only a certain category of people in Nigeria, the corrupt character of government officials, a history of Islamic arrival and desire for dominance; a colonial legacy by the British administration, most especially in her activity of drawing national borders with limited attention to ethnic or religious groups in Nigeria, and finally the sect's rejection of Western education (Thomson, 2012: 47).

Onuoha (2012) in his contribution to the debate contends that the recent Boko Haram sectarian violence is the result of the eager acceptance and strict application of Sharia Law by the Muslim communities, which on its own inspires Islamic jihad and the wiping-out of western civilization. Contrary to this thinking, other scholars strongly believe that the Boko Haram sectarian violence demonstrates an atmosphere of Identity politics and the struggle for political power and resources by the Muslim community in the North and the Middle Belt against the Christian south. To this effect, Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 862) inform us that the activities of the Boko Haram sect results from the combination of other factors among which are bad leadership, the hegemonic struggle for national power and the politics of identity, all of which encouraged members of the sect not to recognize un-Islamic government whether it be at local, state or federal levels.

Despite the diversified views as enumerated by a number of scholars, the bottom line remains that religion be it traditional, Islam or Christianity are inevitably pointed out as factors that contribute in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This is made evident by paying attention to religious intolerance, religious fundamentalism and extremism, the use of religious symbols, and offensive preaching and stereotyping.

Religious intolerance has been defined in the work by Balogun (1988: 166) as; 'hostility towards other religions, as well as the inability of religious adherents to harmonize between the theories and the practical aspect of religion'. The concept is involved with a disapproving and intolerant attitude from a certain group to any one else's opinions or way of thinking not belonging to that group to the extent of offending such persons (Baird and Rosenbaum 1999).

In essence, Nigerians in the Muslim-dominated north have an attitude towards the Christian south which lies most especially in the domain of the Muslim rule of Law, based on Sharia, while Christians are governed by imported and divine systems of law, which are considered by the Muslim community as being corrupt, sinful and dominated by Western actors. Consequently, the Muslim community who feel their way of life is the best and irreproachable compared to that of the Christians, tend to be aggressive and extremely critical toward non-Muslims and Christians to the extent of causing prejudice as seen in the

series of Boko Haram conflicts which are mostly aimed at forcefully converting the Nigerian state into an Islamic one.

Closely linked to religious intolerance is religious fundamentalism. Jeff Haynes (1996: 199) defines Muslim and Christian fundamentalist religions as; 'those who have a strict view on the relevance of the holy scriptures for day-to-day life and which tend to regulate all aspects of individual and social behavior'. In the same vein, religious fundamentalism is also viewed by Danjibo (2012: 4) as a specialized and exact understanding of religious activities and teachings, most especially in the domain of the direct interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and its emphasis on the continuation of religious traditions. Similarly, fundamentalists lay huge insistence "on the right doctrine and the necessity of organized warfare against the forces of modernism" (Komonchak, Collins and Lane 1996: 212).

Given this perspective, the Muslim communities who founded the Boko Haram sect set out to ensure the strict observance of religious principles and traditions both in the private and public lives of citizens. To this end, they associate religion with the political activities of the state. This view is contrary to the opinion and practices of Christians who view religion as constituting part and parcel of the private life of citizens and as such enforce the observation of modern systems of life in order to attain the stage of developed countries as those in Europe. Indeed, Boko Haram members are very critical of modern practices such as Western education, abortion, fornication and adultery as allowed by the Christian south, and strictly conserve and recommend their traditional approach of living. They forcefully request the conversion of Nigeria into an Islamic state and which would be to the detriment of the traditional and Christian faiths. Consequently, the inability of the Muslim community to coexist with other Christian and traditional religious principles and practices encourage them to launch violent attacks, through the Boko Haram, on non-Muslims which leads to the unwanted displacement of people, the lost of human life and destruction of valuable properties.

Religious extremists on the other hand are considered as that group of religious fundamentalists who accept religious orthodoxy and intolerance to an unreasonable extent, by demonstrating violence towards those who uphold opposing religious views in society. By so doing, religious extremists maintain the position that if other religious groups do not pursue the extremist ways, they shall be punished (Religious extremism 2012). This indeed

makes them classified as that religious group which violently uses force in order to universally spread their faith and way of life while at the same time insisting that political, social and economic areas of management should be in line with their religious principles (Sampson, 2012: 115).

Viewing the Nigerian case in the role of religion in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts, members of the sect in their disregard and non recognition of Christian and traditional religious communities, which they consider as contrary to the Muslim systems of worshipping and way of living, resort to violence as was expressly demonstrated in the 2009 and 2012 Boko Haram conflicts in order to stop such practices from continuing.

By rejecting Christian principles and values simply because they abhor the preachings of other faiths, as well as classifying their faith as being superior to others, and their use of force in order to attain satisfaction in their forceful conversion of non-Muslims into Muslims makes members of the Boko Haram sect to be typically classified as religious extremists who do not tolerate the existence of other religious groups in the territory.

Sampson (2012: 120) further suggests that offensive preachings about other religions greatly contributed in promoting the Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria. This is based on the reasoning that both Christians and Muslims claim absolute monopoly of religious truths and that only members of their faith will spend eternity in heaven. In this manner each and every religion through their sermons frequently devalue or delegitimize other faiths and call into question the truthfulness and chance of salvation of the other religious groups present in Nigeria. This was eventually made evident through critical writings and publications of intellectuals from both religious groups (Sampson, 2012: 120).

To this effect, Omotosho (2003) pointed at some Christian and Muslim intellectuals, among whom were Mohammad (1990: 20) and Moshay (1994: 46), who all produced publications aimed at disgracing and mocking opposing religions. A pertinent example falling within this domain is that Muslims, particularly those from Northern Nigeria have the habit of describing all non-Muslims as 'Arna' or 'Kafir'; Arabic words which stand for 'heathen' or 'unbelievers'; while on the other hand Christians describe all Muslims as 'terrorists' and 'violence-mongers' (Sampson, 2012: 120).

The Boko Haram sect members, by negatively passing judgments and criticizing Christian religion and ways of life which they perceive as being corrupt and not the right way to eternity, while Christians see Islam as that religion which is mostly based on traditional principles that draws believers backward by their rejection of modernity as well as prone to violence, leaves both faiths in a situation of conflict and rivalry that consequently encouraged the launching of the Boko Haram as well as maintaining the cycle of religious conflicts in the territory.

In addition to critical preachings, the use of religious symbols has also been credited with fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Most Muslim women emphasize the strict use of the Hijab which stands for the act of covering everything on the body except the hands and the face, while in some extreme cases, Muslim women also request the use of Niqab and Burka as reflecting the act of covering the whole face and body while leaving a small hole for the eyes to see through (BBC Religions 2012). The disrespect of such values by the Christian and traditional religions in Christian schools and offices helped to encourage the launching of the sect which fights for strict respect of its values and norms.

A pertinent example mentioned by Madugba (2005: 4) and falling within the use of religious violence as a result of the use of symbols is the 2005 religious conflict between a Christian lecturer and the Muslim Student Society (MSS). Madugba recounted that the causes of the 2005 religious violence was the result of the act of Dr Andrew Akume, a Christian lecturer, who in respect of a law forbidding female students to use the head scarf in the faculty of law at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), in Zaria, prevented a female student who wore the Hijab from attending his lectures. Consequently, the MSS became extremely angry toward that lecturer, collectively mobilized, and proclaim a 'fatwa' also known as an Islamic death sentence, against the said lecturer. This Christian lecturer, in fear of the death sentence, placed on his head, had to flee in order to protect his life. By so doing, the act did not only cause religious instability on campus but also exposed difficulties in diplomatic relations over the lecturer's safety between the governments of Kaduna state and Benue state in which the university was located as well as the house of the lecturer (Madugba, 2005: 4).

Closely linked to the use of the head scarves, the graving of Arabic symbols on the Nigerian currency as well as the use of the Red cross as a symbol on public hospital receipts and sign boards and other hospital equipment have created an atmosphere of conflict and rivalry between the two dominant religious groups who feel each group is trying through the use of symbols to dominate the other. While the Christians view the marking of Arabic symbols on the Nigerian currency as a sign of public assets being associated with Islam and also as an initiative by Northern Muslims to Islamize the country, the Muslims on the other hand perceive the use of the Red Cross as a sign of domination by the Christians over the Muslims. Eventually, such attitudes and thoughts on the part of both religious groups have enhanced an environment of criticism, opposition and tension, all which have been transformed into the Boko Haram sectarian activities (Sampson, 2012: 124-125).

Therefore, viewing the Muslims or Christians religious fundamentalism, the Muslim's desire to forcefully convert the Nigerian state into an Islamic one as well as the persisting desire to eradicate Western education and all that accompanied it, and the use of symbols both in private and official situations has nursed an atmosphere of hatred between the two dominant religious groups that eventually led to the creation of the Boko Haram sect in order to fight for what the Muslims deemed was the best choice for the Nigerian state, which was Sharia Law and system of life in all aspects of political, economic and social activities in the country. The Christians, on the other hand, feeling insecure in the Muslim's desire to dominate in all the areas of the society, responded by violently reposting at the attacks of the Boko Haram sect members. Consequently, religious differences have been found through the religious fundamentalism of each religious group, and in the disparaging role of the Muslim community which rejects the truth of other religious groups and all these differences coupled together lead to the political, economical and social disunity of a flourishing oil producing African country like Nigeria.

Following the atmosphere of religious rivalry, it becomes vital for the Nigerian government and the ruling political party, in order for them to regain political, economic and social peace, to either respect the gentleman's agreement of power rotation between the North and the South in the ruling PDP political party, or to strictly enforce and implement that everyone's faith belongs only in his/ her private life. The essence of emphasizing religion to constitute part and parcel of the private life of individuals, as practiced in most democratic countries, will enable an aspect of social life not to be found conflicting with the public

aspects of the state and hence continue to cause religious rivalry and instability, which can lead to death and unwanted displacement of people as experienced during the Nigerian Boko Haram conflicts.

3.3 Data Analysis

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a state which, along with other African states, has experienced violence as a result of religious factors, more precisely, Muslims close association of religious aspects to state political activities, the forceful desire of Muslims (against the wish of the Christians), to convert the state into an Islamic state as well as their desire to abolish Western education and all that accompanied it; all of which eventually led to the launching of the Boko Haram sectarian violence which on its own promoted religio-political instability in Nigeria. The Boko Haram sectarian violence that all began as a minor strike in the Northern region was later transformed into a deadly manifestation that was more disastrous than that of the 2009 religio-political and Boko Haram sectarian violence.

In this line, in this section the thesis shall proceed to analyze data that was collected from Nigerian refugees in Kumba and Douala, and political science academics and individuals working in the township of Mahikeng. The primary data to be analyzed by the researcher in this chapter was collected through questionnaires, interviews and focus group study. The researcher in order to collect her primary data handed a considerable number of questionnaires to respondents in Kumba and Douala but at the end of the process, less than the total numbers of questionnaires handed out were returned. Similarly, the researcher also went to interview a few people as to the issue pertaining to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The last step the researcher used was the focus group study wherein the researcher was able to obtain information concerning what happened in Nigeria following the role of religion in influencing the political activities and electoral processes in Nigeria as well as the role of religion in fuelling the 2012 Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria. The respondents to the study were Nigerian refugees, Tanzanians, Kenyans, political science and international relations academics and some Cameroonians in Mahikeng and Cameroon. To further supplement the primary data, the researcher also collected secondary data via books, journals and Articles.

The researcher in a bid to analyze her primary data and secondary data used the triangulation method of data analysis which makes use of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. This method will enable the researcher to view the issues pertaining to Nigeria from more than one perspective and thus enrich knowledge and test the validity of the subject matter as well as allow the researcher to avoid any loopholes that might have occurred while using the single method of data analysis.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

In a bid to collect data from Nigerian refugees, Tanzanians, Kenyans, political science and international relations academics and some Cameroonians in Mahikeng and Cameroon, the researcher submitted a considerable number of questionnaires to the above respondents. From these questionnaires, the researcher succeeded in collecting 85% responses from the respondents. The age of the respondents were ranging between 24 and 48 years. The genders of these correspondents were both men and women; some of them are working while others were either students or business people. On the overall data collected from the respondents, the huge majority were women while men constituted a minute number. Each and every one had his or her own way of interpreting what happened in Nigeria as a result of religion being associated with Nigerian politics as well as its role in fuelling the 2012 Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria.

Regarding the view on whether religion constitutes a constant element present in Nigerian politics, a majority of 70% of the respondents reported that religion, which constitutes part and parcel of an individual's private life, in most cases finds itself associated with the political activities of the country. According to a number of females and males that responded to the questionnaires, they noted that the fact that the country possesses a volatile religious landscape in which there exist two dominant religious groups, that is Christianity and Islam, both of which contradict one another on their various ways of life and principles; this gives room for each opposing religious group in each of their respective areas of domination to blame any error or lack of efficiency in one's duty to be as a result of his religious background. This is true when looking at the situation whereby the Muslims in the North classify the Christians as being corrupt and practitioners of immoral principles such as fornication, adultery and abortion. The majority of respondents posited that it is a result of the inability of Nigerians to live in a country with a plurality of religion that eventually led

to criticism and degradation towards each religion, all of which contributed to extending religion, which should constitute the private life of an individual, to state politics and this to the extent of interfering with the religious background of any political elite in an election.

Similarly, looking at the role of religion in fuelling the Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria, all the respondents unanimously argued that it is true that religion constitutes one of the factors which contributed to the sectarian violence but that the principal and deep motive for the occurrence of violence in Nigeria is politics. Given the fact that religion is a good tool with which to gather massive support, the Nigerian politicians use religion in order to achieve their political objectives or changes. Accordingly, it is believed that the Northern politicians who perceive the Christian politicians as being corrupt and holding immoral principles, feel that for many years they have been unfit to rule the country, despite the gentlemen's agreement taken by both the political leaders in PDP of each of the two dominant religious groups. In a bid to achieve their desires, Nigerian politicians resorted to use religion either to prevent any leader from another religious group from coming to power or, through the Boko Haram conflict, to tarnish Jonathan, whom Northern Nigerians consider as an opportunist, with the effect of rendering his regime unstable; all which will give the opposing religious groups arguments to criticize his regime as being inefficient and hence call for the coming of a Muslim leader.

In this line, a minority 40% of the respondents, believe that Nigeria's religio-political instability is because of the Northern Muslim's selfish desire to always be the ruling religious group, as has been historically the case before the coming of the gentlemen's agreement of power rotation in the PDP ruling party. Consequently, in order to obtain satisfaction to acheive another presidential term, the Northern Muslim politicians secretly give information on how to process their activities, finance, as well as train the Boko Haram sect members in order to enable them to effectively carry out their protestations, all of which is aimed at making Nigeria under Jonathan's mandate ungovernable and hence pave the way to install a favoured Muslim leader. By so doing, the minority of 40% respondents claim that the Nigerian religio-political instability is not really rooted in religion, as religion is not actually a problem, but simply a means to gather massive support; rather, it is the Nigerian politicians themselves who hope through religious assistance to enhance instability due to their selfish desire for power.

This in effect raises a deep question on whether the Federal Republic of Nigeria is actually a democratic country, or a country governed by religious principles. In response to this question 30% of the respondents posited that due to misery, low living standards and inability of people to cope with the day-to-day activities, many Nigerians find refuge behind religion in the hope of better living conditions. In the same vein, many Nigerians also rally behind either a Muslim or Christian leader in a bid to benefit from certain opportunities provided to members of the same religious group as the president. This in other words means that Nigerians, like many other Africans, vote for a leader not because he is actually competent to serve and protect the country, but rather because the incoming president belongs to a certain religious group and can rally support through that faith, or simply because the said president is vested with divine principles as compared to other potential leaders. Consequently, to some extent, Nigeria cannot be said to be a purely democratic country given that in one way or the other either religion or economic factors indirectly influence the eligibility of a president.

Closely looking at the respondents view that the deep causes of the Boko Haram sectarian violence was politics, alongside religion used as an instrument to mobilize supporters, 65% of the respondents contend that Nigerians who participated in either of the religious camps did so in order to achieve certain political favors in case of eventual victory. However, the school drop-outs who assisted the Boko Haram sect leaders did so with the hope that if the incumbent regime was overthrown, the new regime could offer more opportunities for jobless youths that will help improve Nigerian's standard of living. In the same vein, some political leaders, by financing the sect, aimed at destabilizing the incumbent regime so that both national and international critics will nurse the desire for a regime change.

The Muslims on the other hand actively contributed to the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence principally because they hoped their desire to convert the country into an Islamic state with the introduction of Sharia laws and principles of life would be attained. Having in mind that the Muslims have always wanted to achieve supremacy and show Islam's divine truthfulness as compared to other religions in Nigeria, they resorted to use force through the Boko Haram sectarian violence in a bid to suppress Christian domination in the country.

Furthermore, considering the question on whether religion played a role in influencing the 2011 presidential election, 48% of the respondents, mostly males, opined that Jonathan's victory in the 2011 presidential elections after having finished Yaradua's mandate, was won strategically as a result of a gentlemen's agreement of power rotation between the North and South political elites in the PDP ruling party. This agreement provided for a rotation in the presidency between the North dominated by the Muslims and the South dominated by the Christians within the PDP ruling party. As such, if a Muslim leader ruled and finished his mandate, the next leader to be elected is expected to come from the Christian dominated South. Although the respondent argued that the agreement was made without nationwide consultation with Nigerians but rather in the personal interest of political leaders, they nevertheless acknowledge the fact that Nigerian politicians implement and practice the gentlemen's agreement of power rotation between the North and South political leaders in the PDP in a bid to establish a peaceful political atmosphere as well as satisfy the political grievances of both Muslim North and Christian South political elites.

Moreover, 70% of the respondents pointed out that the recent peace agreement between the Boko Haram sect leaders and the Nigerian government has not firmly established peace in the country but rather temporarily attenuated fighting within a certain period. The respondent supported this view by noting that violence temporarily ceased after the Boko Haram sect leaders sat with the Nigerian government for negotiations that enabled the sect to table their demands for the conversion of the state into an Islamic one, with Sharia laws and principles implemented; the incumbent government promised to make a concession to such demands. However, after the one week deadline which the Nigerian government gave to the sect leaders for the consideration of their demands elapsed with no satisfactory response to the sect followers, violence once more erupted on Monday 22nd April 2013 wherein the sect caused the death of 185 people in the Northern region of Nigeria. By so doing, the respondent believed that the government promise to examine the Boko Haram sect's demands was a bid to buy time while strategically looking for measures on how to finally suppress the sectarian violence.

A considerable number, 70% of the respondents, hold that the incumbent government does not wish to grant satisfaction to the sectarian movement in their demand to convert the state into an Islamic one with Sharia laws and principles, given that doing so would indirectly imply the end of Christianity in Nigeria and demonstrate the superiority of Islam over

Christianity, and hence would also imply the end of any possibility for the coming of a Christian president or leader in Nigeria. As such, the Nigerian government is strategising all possible efforts to suppress the Boko Haram sectarian violence as well as making sure that the gentlemen's agreement of power rotation is continuously implemented all through the political life of Nigeria in a bid to safeguard the interest of Nigerian Christian politicians to rule the country in the future.

Viewing the question on the best place for religion in our society, 55% of the respondents noted that the position and place which religion best fits is in each and every individual's private life. This is based on the reasoning that individuals in every liberal state are free to choose and practice any religion of their own choice given that religion falls within the categories of natural liberties and rights to worship in a certain religious faith. In this light, associating religion with public activities of a state in a society like Nigeria which has diversified religious groups that constantly criticize one another will indirectly encourage disputes and compromises in political, economic and social sectors and hence provide room for an unstable state.

On the other hand, 27% of the other respondents contradict the above view by pointing out that religion should be associated with the public life of Nigeria and this is based on the reasoning that religion is the best tool that helps shape and build the personality and mind of any individual in a country. By so doing, the religious citizen will naturally know what is morally right or wrong without necessarily reading a constitution or being instructed on what to do concerning certain issues. Similarly, the respondents argue that it is by associating religion to the public life that some natural or divine laws such as 'thou shall not kill', 'thou shall not steal' and 'thou shall not make false accusations', were implemented in the Nigerian constitution and elsewhere in the world. In this line, the respondent believes religion in one way or the other should be associated with the public life of the country given that it is through religion that some situations such as apartheid in South Africa were resolved as well as the use of religion as a tool to help abolish the inhumane slave trade practiced by Europeans.

The problem however lies in the situation where various religious groups found at present on Nigerian soil do not understand and respect the principles and theology of each and every religion in the country and thus create an atmosphere of criticism and superiority between them. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to discern if religion, when associated with the public life of the society, will not lead to disparaging preachings and superiority among the various religious groups, which in most cases destabilizes the effective functioning of all political, economic and social sectors of the country.

Therefore, it appears that if Nigerians do not learn to separate their personal feelings and practices on the issue of one's private religious faith, there is a high probability for the country to always experience religio-political conflicts, basically because politicians use religion as an instrument to gather people and enable them to express their call for change in the country.

3.3.2 Interviews

An interview was conducted on 80% of the respondents, with more men than women, in Kumba and Mahikeng. Some of these individuals are working while others are not. As a result the data collected will involve how both an intellectual and an ordinary individual see what actually happened in Nigeria. The researcher of the Institute for Security Study (ISS) Mr. David Zounmenou was amongst the men whom the researcher interviewed.

According to Zounmenou, religion actually plays a role in the politics of Nigerians. He points out that the volatility in the religious landscape of Nigeria as well as the difficulties experienced by people in ordinary society push many Nigerians to hide behind religion as a refuge for easing one's problems. Even though Nigerians associate religion with their political and state activities, as seen in the prohibition of Muslims from joining Christian political parties or schools until they are converted and vice versa, David Zounmenou does not actually see the association of religion with politics as a major problem enhancing religio-political instability in Nigeria, but rather Nigerian politicians who use religion in a bid to rally supporters and satisfy their political ambitions.

However, Zounmenou and another 65% of the participants do not categorically abide with the view that religious factors influenced the 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria. Even though they acknowledge that Jonathan was not welcomed by the Northerners to replace Yaradua based on the reasoning that the Northerners claimed that it was a Muslim who was

rightfully supposed to complete Yaradua's mandate, and which made the gentlemen's agreement to be violated, they nevertheless believe that Jonathan was following the Nigerian constitution which provides that in case of the president's inability to perform his duty or eventual death, the vice president shall take over until the coming of the presidential elections. Following this rule, Zounmenou and the other 65% of the participants partially believe religion played a role in the 2011 presidential elections basically because the Northerners who claimed Jonathan was not supposed to be the interim president, did not vote for him in the North and this to the extent of vote-rigging in some areas like the Middle Belt where a considerable number of Christians live.

On the other hand, the participants also posit that religion did not really play a role in the election given that Jonathan had respected both the conditions for succession of the PDP ruling party and the Nigerian constitution and thus had the right to stand for the 2011 presidential elections after Yaradua's death. Consequently, they consider Nigeria as a country which attempts to practice democracy as called for by developed countries.

Zounmenou, like another 71% of interviewed participants were of the opinion that not only religious factors helped in fuelling the 2012 Boko Haram conflicts but also political factors contributed to the wide spread of the conflict. The participants base their argument on the fact that religion was simply an instrument used by Nigerian politicians to grasp people's attention and support in the quest for political changes in Nigeria. The participants claim that even before the advent of democratic principles in Nigeria, the religious landscape of the country has always been diversified with different religious groups trying to co-habit as well as carry out day-to-day activities. Although it has been argued that there previously existed some minor religious conflicts in the country, they had never been as disastrous as the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence. As a result, the participants are of the opinion that the sectarian violence has persisted so long principally because Nigerian politicians in their quest for political changes use religion and donate finance as well as training the protesters all in a bid to destabilize the government so that there shall arise a general call for political changes in the country.

Furthermore, looking at the issue of government refusal to convert the Nigerian state into an Islamic one, the majority, 78%, of the participants contend that it is a difficult task for the Nigerian government to grant such a demand given that it shall automatically mean they are dominating or suppressing or eliminating other religions present in the country and hence making the country to lose its status as a liberal religious country in which people are naturally free to chose and practice the religion of their choice without any criticism or sanction on the part of anyone in the country. The Nigerian government in a bid to attenuate the sectarian violence, held peaceful talks with the Boko Haram leaders in which they laid out their grievances, and the Nigerian government on the other hand promised to grant a concession to such claims. This peaceful agreement temporarily maintained peace in the country until Monday 22 April 2013 when Boko Haram members began protesting in the North and killed 185 civilians.

Viewing such manifestations, it appears that until the grievances of the sectarian members are addressed Nigeria will not have both religious and socio-political stability. However, if the sectarian desires come to be satisfied, this could possibly give rise for other religious manifestations coming from other religious groups in the future, who feel ignored, dominated and even eradicated from practicing on Nigerian soil.

Following this perspective, 60% of the participants in response to the question about where they think religion rightfully belongs in our society, believe religion should and is supposed to belong to one's private life and enjoyment especially when considering a country with a multiplicity of religions like Nigeria. The participants posit that knowing that each and every religion has its own ways of living as well as its governing principles, allowing religion to be part and parcel of our day-to-day politics and activities in the society is a way of promoting or encouraging disparaging arguments between the followers of the various religious groups in all sectors of state politics or private functions. In this light, arguments between believers of the various religious groups at their job sites or different political organizations shall eventually develop an atmosphere of hatred between each opposing religious group in the society and hence in one way or the other promote inefficiency in the performance of effective democracy and state duties.

However, a minority of 20% of the participants maintain that religion should constitute part and parcel of any individual's public political life. These participants base their argument on the fact that religion teaches its followers some divine rules and principles, such as 'you shall be just in passing judgement' or 'you shall not kill' or 'you shall not steal or lie' in which all help in building the personality of the individual worshipping in that given religious group. In effect, by viewing such religious teachings as moulding the voting spirit of an individual as well as shaping the public life of individuals, religion could be said to be a useful element in promoting effective democracy and reducing the crime rate of a country, or to enable each and every one to respect his or her neighbour at her job site or any place where different people come together.

Despite such positive aspects, the reality however remains that religion in Nigeria, as in every liberal religious state, should belong to an individual's private life. However, given that in societies like Nigeria, where the Muslims always feel superior to other religious groups, in most cases this leads to an atmosphere where the other religious groups will also claim and enforce their own superiority to other religions and this will establish a state of constant religious rivalry. If this happens, the state will be affected in all political, economic and social sectors as was vividly experienced in Nigeria with the Boko Haram sectarian violence that helped in destabilizing the effective functioning of all public areas of the Nigerian society.

3.3.3 Focus Group Study

The last step which the researcher used to collect her primary data was the focus group study. This approach of collecting data was conducted on political science students present at the North West University, Mahikeng. The selected sample was 78% of the students in the department of Human and Social Sciences, 50% males and 28% females. They were organized into groups in order to ease the discussion and avoid conflict of ideas. Each participant had his or her own way of understanding and interpreting what eventually happened in Nigeria. While a majority believes religion has always been present in Nigerian society, be it in people's political or private life, it is not only religious factors that instigated the 2012 Boko Haram conflicts but political factors also helped in fuelling the sectarian violenc

The participants of the focus group study commented on the fact that it is failure in the government that resulted in the Boko Haram conflict and not only religious motives. The participants succinctly point out that Nigeria, like many other African countries such as Tanzania, Sudan and Kenya, has been previously involved in violence not only because of religious differences between Muslims, Christians and followers of other traditional religions, but also basically because of political reasons or failure in the incumbent government's ability to rule the country. In this manner as a result of the hardship encountered in society, which is either due to the corruptness of government or its inability to allocate public funds in areas of priority like education, health and the creation of jobs, people consequently find refuge behind religion in hope for future changes. Consequently, political leaders who seek political changes and knowing where to grasp support of people and touch their hearts do this through religion in a bid to persuade the impoverished people that if a leader come from a religious group other than that of the present government, the believers belonging to the same religious group as that of the new president will not experience such economic difficulties in the society.

In essence, according to some participants, failure of governance in Nigeria constitutes one of the reasons behind the launching and manifestations of the Boko Haram conflicts in Nigeria. The participants of the focus groups based their arguments on the fact that Nigeria is one of the largest oil producing countries in Africa but it also experiences a gross inequality between the rich and the poor. Such differences between the rich and the poor help in reducing the standard of living of the poor citizens and this is based on the reasoning that they are unable to provide for their daily needs such as food, education, health and accommodation. The resultant effect is high crime rate, illegal immigration to other countries as well high rate of illiteracy by Nigerians who perceive education as a waste of time, basically because after obtaining a certificate, there are limited chances of getting a job. Accordingly Nigerians find some sort of comfort in religion and this provides a suitable target for political elites to gather supporters for the struggle for political changes either through peaceful measures such as preaching or the use of force as seen with the Boko Haram sectarian violence.

The majority of participants however reject the use of violence and force as a means of changing the religious landscape and principles of Nigeria, and the quest by political elites for political changes in the country. Even though it is generally presumed that Muslims, as experienced in other countries in the Arab world, have a habit of using force in order to achieve their objectives or have grievances addressed, in their desire to Islamize the country violence that results in the for killing of large number of people has never been the best option to achieve a group's desires. Refusal to opt for violence as the best way to achieve objectives is based on the reasoning that in the process of carrying the violent act, it becomes easy for the security of the state to be threatened and interfered with by other countries, who want to achieve their own economic gains.

Applying such views to the Nigerian case, other countries who want to exploit the Nigerian oil and other mineral resources could use the opportunity provided by the violence and instability to extract as many resources as possible from the hungry Nigerians. Consequently, this will indirectly reduce the economy of the country whereas it ought to have been increased so as to equitably balance the standard of living of Nigerians. Indeed, it will be important for Muslims to learn to abstain from constantly using violence in their task of converting Nigerians to Islam, but rather, to use persuasion and dialogue to show such citizens that Islam is the best religion on the continent.

Furthermore in response to the question as to where should religion be best fitted in society, 70% of the respondents believe that in order to avoid the interference of religion in state political activities, it is preferable for Nigerians to consider and classify religion as part and parcel of their private life. The respondents base their stand on the fact that had it been that the Muslims and the Christians kept their belief in their different religions private and avoided disparaging preachings and mockery against each other, and not allowed their religion to affect qualification for entry into a political party or school, or where in the country they could work without raising the issue of religion, Nigeria would not have encountered disastrous religious conflicts like that of the recent Boko Haram sectarian violence which resulted in the killing of numerous people in Nigeria.

A minory 5% of the respondents believe that religion should be associated with Nigerian politics given that religion, through its principles, naturally helps shape the personality and behaviour of citizens, helps in the drafting of constitutional laws as well as helping in the settlement of some disputes as seen with apartheid in South Africa. Especially in a society like Nigeria where different religious groups exist having contrary opinions and principles it is preferable for religion to be considered as the private enjoyment of an individual and hence Nigeria should respect the concept of a liberal religious state as practiced in other democratic countries.

3.4 Research Findings

The findings are based on the researcher's observation as well as primary data collected from the conducted interviews and focus group discussions (through the use of content analysis) and documentation review as specified in Chapter One.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, like many other African countries, has been associating religion, which constitutes part and parcel of an individual's private life and enjoyment, with state politics such as political debates and electoral processes, and other official institutions such as government offices, schools, public health centres, all of which have eventually laid the foundation for new forms of religious conflicts as vividly experienced with the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence in Nigeria. The two dominant religious groups, Christianity and Islam, whose principles contradict each other as well as both claiming superiority over the other, have been pointed out as being used by some political elites in their desire for political changes, to gather supporters for a given political leader belonging to a particular religious group. The Muslim community, who request the conversion of Nigeria into an Islamic state with Sharia Laws and principles, uses forceful measures in order to attain its objectives. This accounts for the reason why the Muslims created the Boko Haram sect which claims to fight for religious rights while its real ambition is to evict the Christian government of Jonathan and replace it with a Muslim leader who will promote Islamic Laws and ways of life to all citizens in Nigeria.

Accordingly, it appears that religion is not the only factor behind the Boko Haram sectarian violence in Nigeria, but there are also political motives by individuals who feel the Christian government of Jonathan is a total failure. As such, the political elites who believe the present Nigerian government is a failure work through religion and its institutions given that it is a

good instrument which can gather many supporters belonging to a common religious group and enlighten the hungry believers who hide behind religion as comfort for their poor living conditions and unemployment so that they will stand up to the ruling government for political changes. Similarly, the political elites of Nigeria in their quest for political changes also use the religiously founded Boko Haram sect and carry out violent acts in a bid to criticise and destabilize the present regime so that it becomes unable to govern which will make Nigerians have longing for the coming of a different president. In this manner, the activities of the sect, in one way or the other, shall disfavour Jonathan to stand for another presidential term and hence, in strict application of the gentlemen's agreement of power rotation in the PDP ruling party, the next president shall automatically come from the Northern Muslim region.

Closely linked to failure in governance, religion has further been accounted to influence Nigerian politics and state activities in Nigeria when we look at the difficulty, not to say impossibility, for a Christian to make his voice heard in a Muslim dominated political party, and vice versa, or for a Christian student to be enrolled in a Muslim school in the North, and vice versa. In the same vein, radical Muslim employers in the North restrict or limit their jobs only to Muslims worshippers and would only allow a Christian to perform such political aspirations or job on the condition that he or she convert to Islam and practice the Muslim way of life. We find religion being a criterion for a Muslim worker to get a voting right in the North, and vice versa or a job in Nigerian society. Some will use the argument that religion, be it Christianity or Islam, shapes the good behaviour of a citizen in Nigerian society, which in the long run will enhance the effective carrying out of pure democracy based on moral principles. However, liberal religious states do not support religion to be a criterion for getting voting rights or a job, given that a Muslim employer might be faced with a situation where he has an illiterate Muslim candidate for a certain post in his company or business while on the other hand he also has a literate Christian, but would not employ the Christian but rather the Muslim job seeker, on the grounds of religion.

Consequently, most academics are of the opinion that the best place where religion fits is in an individual's private life, based on the reasoning that in societies like Nigeria, with several religious groups with differing opinions and opposing ideologies, associating religion with political activities and official state institutions is an indirect way of promoting the occurrence of future conflicts based on religious grounds as recently experienced with the

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2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence. Therefore, scholars opine that it is advisable for African countries, particularly Nigeria, to learn to avoid integrating religion into the political or state activities of the country and hence hinder any possibility for a political elite to use religion in order to render a regime unable to govern as a means to make Nigerians question the efficiency of the current ruler and desire a different leader.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, like many other African states recently, has once more involved itself in a religio-political conflict as a result of religion being associated with the political activities of the state, which consequently led to the formation of the Boko Haram sect that has contributed to promoting instability in the country.

Even though it was not the first time for religion to intrude into the politics of the country to the extent of causing violence and manifestations, it nevertheless appeared that the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence was more disastrous than previous protests from the organization as well as from other religious organizations.

Before the arrival of European powers in Nigeria, the country observed traditional religions, but later came across Islam through activities along the coast. Christianity, on the other hand, showed its face during the period of colonization by the British colonial powers. The departure of the British colonial powers after independence in 1960 left the country with a legacy of both Christianity and Islam as the two dominant religious groups in Nigeria, along with traditional religions. Although all religions aim at worshipping a God, they nevertheless differ in their view, ideologies and ways of life. These differences laid the foundation for a society like Nigeria, which constantly associates religion with politics and state activities. This situation encountered criticism and the quest for superiority among the various religious groups; all of which culminated in protest and violence through the various organizations.

In view of the Nigerian case, religion has been seen to be present in all aspects of society, such as being a criterion to either enter into a Muslim or Christian political party or school, or an element to get a job in the North, as dominated by Muslims, or the South, as dominated by Christians. Until now, the country has been living in that atmosphere with some difficulties. Recently, radical Muslims, who feel Islam is superior to other religions, began requesting for the total conversion of the country into an Islamic state. This was done through a number of established Muslim sects who use force in order to achieve their desires. However, it has been commented that the real reasons for the sectarian violence as

seen with the 2012 Boko Haram sect, was not only religious motives but rather political motives by the Muslims who had been ruling the country long before the implementation of the gentlemen's agreement of power rotation between the North and South political elites in the PDP ruling party. In the same vein, some have argued that the forces instigating the violence by the sect is a result of government failure to rule the country properly and thus the reason why members of the Boko Haram sect resort to violence in a bid to render the government unable to govern which will create an atmosphere where people will seek a different leader.

Consequently, religion, viewed in all its association with all aspects of Nigerian society is accounted in one way or another to promote instability in the country as well as indirectly determining the question of who shall rule the country. This leaves room to question the democraticness of Nigeria precisely because Nigerian political elites use religion which, according to the liberal religious states such as USA should constitute part and parcel of an individual's private life, in order to rally supporters based on their religious background and quest for political changes. In this manner, it is advisable for the Nigerian government, in order to avoid future conflicts based on religion and allowing religion to be merged with political activities, to educate its population on the importance of classifying religion as one's private enjoyment and way of worshipping, to restrict the formation of religiously based organizations and also to reduce the benefits which come to individuals through political power, which would help to ensure that those elected in political parties serve the nation, and do not do so for their own enrichment or power.

4.2 Recommendations

In order for the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to prevent religion from interfering in state political activities and public life, which in the long run leads to religious manifestations such as the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence, the following must be done:

- The incumbent government in Nigeria must disband all private religious and ethnic sects as well as all political militias and arrange for them to be given training to enable their members to adapt to civilian life.

- There is a pressing need to terminate all unauthorized public evangelism especially inside public buses and official places such as offices and schools. In essence, evangelism should be limited only to entitled places such as churches and mosques while on the other hand a restricted number of permits should be given annually to evangelists for their public space services.

- The Nigerian government should organize programmes aimed at rigorously and thoroughly re-orienting the population as well as educating its youth on anti-tribalism and in a bid to change the mindset of its growing population against rallying behind religious organizations, which helps in promoting instability in the country.

- The Nigerian government should remove Sharia law from their constitution and guarantee the right to everyone to practice any religion of his choice and without being forced into a specific life style.

- Nigerian politicians in their desire to achieve power should abstain from using religion as an instrument for the change of political regimes, oppression, disunity and war such as the 2012 Boko Haram sectarian violence.

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