

## **RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE ON NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*One of the greatest challenges to the peace, internal security and development in Nigeria, is religious intolerance, including of course, religious terrorism. This seems to be threatening Nigeria's unity, inter-faith harmony and national cohesion across the board. No one knows how widespread these feelings of religious intolerance exist in the country. It is not clear whether these are more prevalent among the illiterates and the less educated or even among the educated Nigerians as well. Among these categories of the most educated Nigerians are the University academic and administrative staff as well as University students. It is very important therefore, to examine the attitudes towards religious intolerance on the University campuses in Nigeria. The task for policy makers and analysts alike is to research the extent of the religious problem and determine ways in which to prevent the emergence of a total religious war in Nigeria that will engulf the whole country, beyond the current one with the Islamic militant sect, Boko Haram, that is already going on in the North Eastern parts of the country. This is the major task that has been undertaken in this study. We conducted a random survey on sampled Nigerian University campuses, analysed and discussed the data and used the findings to propose some concrete policy recommendations on how these religious problems in Nigeria could be tackled.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the greatest challenges to the peace, internal security and development in Nigeria is religious intolerance, including of course, religious terrorism. This seems to be threatening Nigeria's unity, inter-faith harmony and national cohesion across the board (Usman 1987; Joseph, 1991, 2010; Mou, 2016 and 2017). No one knows for sure, how widespread these

feelings of religious intolerance exist in the country. It is not clear whether these are more prevalent among the illiterates and the less educated or even among the educated Nigerians as well. Among these categories of the most educated Nigerians are the University academic and administrative staff as well as University students. It is very important therefore, to examine the attitudes towards religious intolerance on the University campuses in Nigeria. This should give a sense of the extent of the religious problem in the country.

In the 1960s, it used to be believed that the greatest challenge to nation-building and political co-existence in Nigeria was ethnicity. This was partially correct, given that ethnicity was at the heart of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-70 (Dudley, 1974, Nnoli, 1978; Ake, 1974). Today, it is difficult to talk of political stability in Nigeria without making reference to RELIGION.

Since the end of the civil war, religious conflicts appear to be the greatest threat to internal peace and harmony (Usman 1987; Mou, 2016 and 2017). Many well-meaning Nigerians now earnestly fear the threat of a religious war in Nigeria that will go beyond the current one in the North East with the Islamic militant Sect, Boko Haram and even engulf the whole country. The task for policy makers and analysts alike is to research the extent of the religious problem and determine ways in which to prevent the emergence of a total religious war in Nigeria. This is the major concern of this study. It is true that the genesis of religious conflicts is important in the discussion of strategies for resolving religious conflicts or even on-going war in parts of Nigeria. However, there are already excellent recent studies that have dealt copiously with the genesis of this religious problem in Nigeria (Usman 1987; Oyeniya, 2010; Mou, 2016; 2017 and Oduyela, 2017).

Consequently, there is no compelling reason to restate that historical background here. Moreover, the focus in this study is to conduct a random survey on sampled Nigerian university campuses, analyse the data and use the findings to propose some concrete policy recommendations on how these religious problems in Nigeria could be tackled. What has been done in this study, therefore, is to place the emphasis on the findings and conclusions that would aid policy recommendations.

### **PROBLEM BACKGROUND**

The world's greatest religions – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism have often constituted the basis for social tensions and religious wars in various times and places. There have been cases of religious violence in India, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Sudan and Iran – to mention only a few. In all these cases, serious social disorganisation has been occasioned and national development and political stability undermined (Usman 1987; Mou, 2016, 2017; Oduyela, 2017). Efforts must therefore, be made to ensure that the Nigerian case does not lead to a total religious war beyond the on-going one in the North East, with Boko Haram, which aims to impose **Sharia Law** on Northern Nigeria, and ultimately, the whole of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity, traditional religions existed. These religions were practiced by the various ethnic groups and communities. Unlike the foreign religions (Islam and Christianity), Traditional Religions never preached conversion by conquest. In fact, outsiders were not allowed to even know the details of the religions or its practices unless they took the pain to voluntarily undergo the rituals of initiation (Mou, 2016, 2017). Its spread was therefore accomplished mainly through peaceful means, except for the rampant ritual killings. Hence, religious peace and social harmony reigned supreme in the various pre-colonial Nigerian communities. The arrival of Islam and Christianity has changed the atmosphere. One of the greatest dramatization of this phenomenon was the Maitatsine uprising which started in Kano, and spread to Kaduna, Maiduguri, Yola and Gombe. In fact, with the exception of the civil war, Nigeria has not yet witnessed as bloody, the massacre and wanton destruction of lives and property that started with the Maitatsine uprising (Tribunal on Kano Disturbances, 1982) and became worse since the religious war in the North East with Boko Haram which started in 2001 (Mou, 2016, 2017; Adeyemi, 2010 and Oduyela, 2017).

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The focus of this study is on the religious intolerance that promoted the fertile conditions for the occurrence of religious violence and war (Boko Haram) in Nigeria. As this study shows, in any society where the elite promote values of religious intolerance, it soon becomes the norm in the general population. The reverse is also the case.

This study limits itself to a consideration of religious tolerance or in fact, intolerance, on Nigerian University campuses. However, we believe the findings could be extrapolated to the larger Nigerian society as well.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The study has far-reaching significance for national development, political stability and religious harmony. Since Nigeria is a multi-religious country, political stability cannot be achieved in an environment of pervasive religious intolerance, war or conflicts. The research design adopts a multi-method approach. Two research methods were used for the collection of data for this study. First, the Oral interviews. Second, a random survey was conducted on three selected University campuses, namely, the University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Jos, Jos. These three Universities are located in the Southern, Middle Belt and the Northern parts of Nigeria. In fact, they are the first to be established and the biggest Universities in the respective zones of the country.

They also cover different linguistic or ethnic groupings. They are all Federal Government established Universities. As a result, their admission by law does reflect and must reflect “Federal Character” also in the staff recruitments, both in the academic and administrative system of the Universities. Consequently, the whole country is reflected in the academic and administrative staff as well as the student population of these Universities.

The oral interviews were transcribed soon after they were conducted to avoid misinterpretation through memory loss. In some cases where the respondents conceded, the oral interviews were actually tape-recorded. The people interviewed included a selection of prominent Islamic, Christian and Traditional Religious leaders in Nigeria. The objective was to find out their feelings and perceptions concerning religious tolerance, violence and the on-going religious war in the North Eastern part of Nigeria.

A random survey was conducted on the campuses of the three selected universities mentioned above. A total of one thousand (1,000) questionnaires were administered in each university. Two thirds were on students; while the remaining one third in each university were on academic and administrative staff. The total number of questionnaires administered were three thousand (3,000). Among the three thousand (3,000) questionnaires distributed, two thousand six hundred and sixty five (2,665) were duly completed and returned. This gave about eleven (11%) per cent non-return rate or three hundred and thirty five (335) questionnaires not returned. The questionnaire had items that elicited information on respondent's background, attitudes and opinions as they relate to religious intolerance, conflicts, and even war. Put together, they gave fairly detailed responses that enabled us to make an assessment of religious tolerance or intolerance on Nigerian University campuses.

#### **OPERATIONALIZATION AND DEFINATION OF CONCEPTS**

It is necessary to briefly define and explain the key concepts that are used in this study. This is to ensure that we are all on the same page as we read this study. These are covered in the section that follows, however briefly. The key concepts are:

- (a) Religion;
- (b) The State;
- (c) Religious Tolerance/Intolerance/Terrorism;
- (d) Religious War (Jihad)/Violence;
- (e) Poverty; and
- (f) Socialization.

(a) Religion is defined differently by different scholars. According to Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1955), religion can be seen as an inherent human reaction to frustrated instincts. As he puts it:

“Man is doomed to have some frustrations. Religion is one reaction to frustrated instincts. The Gods may control the terrors of nature, reconcile one of the cruelties of fate and explain the evil in human community” (Freud, 1955, p.21)).

Freud's position does not tell us what religion is. It simply shows how religion is the product of frustrated instincts. Yet he recognises that “the believer

will not let his belief be torn from him either by arguments or by prohibitions ... and even if this did succeed with some, it will be cruelty ... the effect of religious consolations may be likened to that of narcotic”, (Demerath and Hammond, 1969:17). It arises from according to this view, he perceived personal deficiencies.

But for most religious followers and leaders, religion is seen simply as “a precipitation or conciliation of a power superior to man which is believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life”, (Alston, 1963:82). For the purpose of this study, religion is taken to mean any systematic belief that manifestly has some or all of the following characteristics:

- (i) A strong belief in a supernatural Being or Beings by whatever name(s) the followers call it/them (God, Oluwa, Olurun, Allah, Chukwu, Aondu, etc.);
- (ii) Ritual acts that are focused around sacred objects;
- (iii) A moral code of behaviour believed to have been sanctioned by the supreme being(s);
- (iv) Separation between the sacred and the profane;
- (v) Prayers and other forms of communication with God(s);
- (vi) A worldview more or less dictated by the aforementioned factors.

Based on this characterization, Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religion would qualify as religions in Nigeria.

(b) The State

The State is a very controversial subject and has attracted a lot of theoretical debates. Therefore, many definitions have existed for it. For those interested in those debates and the different ways by which it is defined from diverse perspectives, see Dan Mou (2014, 2015, 2016,2017); Martin Carnoy (1984) and Crawford Yong (2012).

For the purpose of this study, it is enough to know that

“the state, no doubt, is the repository of power which, by its policies, determines the material conditions, status and power of individuals, groups and classes in any modern society” (Mou, 2015, p.366).

However, when we talk of State policies, we are referring simply to

“what the State chooses to do or not to do. It refers to how society can be organised to the best advantage of all. It also refers to those goals and long-term ends which a government ought to commit itself to, as well as those means by which the State objectives are best to be achieved. In practice, State policies are evident in the execution or implementation of government programmes and projects” (Mou, 2015, p.336).

(c) Religious Tolerance/Intolerance/Terrorism

Several scholars have suggested that it is the lack of religious tolerance that leads to religious problems. Simply put, that religious intolerance inevitably leads to religious terrorism or even war (Onaiyekan, 2013; Oyeniyi, 2010; NS Oduyela, 2017). As Oduyela puts it, the progression is “from religious intolerance to religious terrorism in Nigeria” (Oduyela, 2017). According to Cardinal John Onaiyekan, by “terrorism, we mean violent actions that entail indiscriminate killing of innocent people with no clear logical reasons” (Onaiyekan, 2013, p.40).

Oludare Ogunlana (2012), on the other hand, defines religious terrorism as existing “where people kill in the name of God or in the name of religion” (Ogunlana, 2012, p.44). He argues that:

“religious terrorism is one of the most difficult forms of terrorism to curb because of the motivation which the practitioners always claimed to be divine duty or sacramental act. Today, there are many terrorist organizations that are motivated partly or in whole by religious authority. Of course, religious imperative for terrorism is the most important defining character of the terrorist activity of the present age. They all share the same ethos of self-sacrifice and suicidal martyrdoms” (Ogunlana, 2012, p.46).

In a similar manner, Michael Walzer (2002) has alleged that religious intolerance ultimately leads to religious terrorism. He defines terrorism as “the deliberate killing of innocent people, at random, in order to spread fear through a whole population and force the hand of its political leaders” (Walzer, 2002). It becomes religious terrorism when the motivation is religious. As the

Wikipedia Encyclopedia points out, religious terrorism “is terrorism carried out based on motivations and goals that have a predominantly religious character or influence” (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2017).

However, religious tolerance can simply be defined as the willingness to accept or accommodate the opinions and behaviours of people of different religions or religion that you may not agree with or which are different from your own religion. Where such accommodation or acceptance is lacking, it becomes religious intolerance.

(d) Religious War (Jihad)/Violence

A religious war is a brutal confrontation between followers and non-followers of certain religions or sects. It could also be targeted against the State or Government. Sometimes, the intention is to force other people to follow a particular religion or doctrine. At other times, it is simply to protect the integrity of a particular religion. Nowadays, however, most religious wars appear to have also non-religious causes, such as poverty, as well (Usman, 1981; Mou, 2016, 2017). Hence, the fear of political, social, economic and cultural subjugation could drive the followers of one particular religion to go to war. Religion, thus, becomes a potent rallying force for pursuing secular advantages and goals.

Religious violence need not be physical; it may be social, economic, political, cultural or even psychological. Thus, one can argue that religious violence is committed when people of a particular religion are treated in a particular way on account of their faith (Mou, 2016, 2017).

We can therefore, conclude that there are two types of religious violence: “passive” and “active”. Passive religious violence refers to unfair treatment of members of other faiths.

Active religious violence, on the other hand, refers to physical, verbal and psychological attacks by members of one religion or a particular religious sect against the others (Wilberg, 2006; Bajpay, 2003; and JohamGaltung, 2006).

(e) Poverty

All studies of religion have had to deal with the concept of material poverty and the fear arising from recognition of human deficiencies and man's inability to understand and deal with the various forces of nature. In most cases, poverty is said to be that phenomenon of some deficiencies that makes the followers susceptible to manipulation or even the basis for using religion as "opium" to try and maintain the status quo. Material poverty can be defined as the lack of income or other resources to satisfy human material needs and desires (Mou, 2016, 2017).

In Nigeria, studies have shown that most of the participants in religious disturbances have had material poverty as a common characteristic. Poor people are generally seen as vulnerable to religious manipulation because they tend to lack the basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing, (Usman, 1981; Mailafia, 1984 and Mou, 2016, 2017). At the level of society, material poverty leads to social problems. These problems include drug abuse, crime, delinquency and theft. Material poverty has serious implications for religious harmony, as a very poor person is overtly dependent on others and susceptible to mental and emotional indoctrination.

(f) Socialization

Socialization is a process by which members of a group indoctrinate and educate their members on group values, norms, belief systems and above all, behaviour (Merelman, 1975; Dennis, 1968 and Starcy, 1984). No one is a Muslim or a Christian or a traditional religious believer except through the process of socialization. Socialization is a more complete process than conversion. It is easier to convert a person to your religion than to socialize him.

Conversion simply means getting people to accept to follow your religion in preference to others. But once this is done, there is still the task of teaching the person to imbibe the values, norms, beliefs and even behaviour of the members of that religion. The latter is socialization. In effect, therefore, a violent religious leader or preacher tends to socialize the followers of his/her religion into violent acts against the followers of other religions (Mou and Nwabuzor, 1991).

The implication of the concept of socialization for State religious policy is that it draws attention to the need to caution religious institutions and leaders. In a society where religious leaders preach violence to their members, against other religions and even the state, there is very little likelihood that religious tolerance and harmony will prevail.

### **THEORETICAL ISSUES**

Recent review of studies on religion have identified five different variants, namely:

- (a) The theological or fanatical school;
- (b) The socio-anthropological school;
- (c) The psycho-attitudinal school;
- (d) The historical deductive school; and
- (e) The Marxian school.

The theological or fanatical school focuses on doctrinal principles of religion with a view to justifying individual religions. The socio-anthropological school, on the other hand, takes an academic posture that assumes religious equality and tries to postulate on the functional aspects of religion. The psycho-attitudinal school focuses on the character of religious leadership, while the historical deductive school adopts a historical approach in the interpretation of religious issues (Mou, 2016, 2017). The Marxian school sees religion as an ideological instrument used by the oppressor classes for their selfish ends (Usman, 1981). Each approach has its limitations, (Mailafia, 1984). None of them gives any attention to state involvement in religion.

### **THE STATE, RELIGION AND POLITICS**

The five theoretical perspectives to the study of religion considered so far have not focused on the question of state, religion and politics. The manner a particular state or even government behaves or treats the various religions in the society will determine the possibilities for a religious tolerance or even war. Similarly, the degree of politicization of religion in a multi-religious society is very critical to the realization of religious tolerance and peace. Politicization here is defined as the process through which religious membership has become a basis for sharing material advantages, power and status. This is particularly so if a given religion or sect is favoured in this process when compared with the others (Mou, 2016, 2017). Third, religion is an integral part of the social structure.

In his study of religious disturbances in Nigeria Mou, (2016, 2017), has concluded that two predominant relationships exist between religion and social structure in Nigeria. According to him, the influence of religion on the socio-political structure is stronger in Northern Nigeria than it is in Southern Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria, the social structure is largely predominated by Islam, with the possible exception of North Central States such as Benue, Plateau, Kogi, Kwara and Taraba. It is therefore fair to say that Islam and its Arabic culture determine the socio-political roles, mores, values and attitudes, both in private and public settings, for the majority of the Northern Nigerian population.

On the contrary, the impact of religion on the socio-political structure in Southern Nigeria has historically been very limited. It is true that Christianity has been the predominant religion in Southern Nigeria, but the process of modernization has been such that this religion tends to be seen even by its adherents as a personal matter (Mou, 2016; 2017). There is therefore very little sense in which Christian religion affects the social, political and economic relationships in Southern Nigeria (Mou, 2016, 2017). This also means that there has been far less religious politicization in Southern Nigeria when compared to Northern Nigeria.

#### THE STATE AND RELIGION: THREE OPTIONS

The relationship between the state and religion, however, is now fairly known. Given the comparative evidence, we now know from recent studies (Mou, 2016, 2017), that three possible methods exist for any state in dealing with the religious question, namely:

- (a) The atheistic option;
- (b) The totalitarian or assimilationist option; and
- (c) The state neutrality model.

The atheistic option, according to Mou (2016, 2017), requires that a secularly based ideology be adopted by the state. This is the practice in the socialist systems. Of recent, it is argued that secular ideologies such as Socialism and Zionism, are also some form of religion. The state does not recognise religion as a basic unit for sharing power, wealth or social amenities.

In the case of the totalitarian or assimilationist option (Mou, 2016, 2017), there is usually one particular religion taken and elevated over and above others. In the totalitarian case, other religions are then prevented by force. In the assimilationist case, however, followers of other religions are persuaded or co-opted through incentives.

The third option, the state neutrality model, Mou (2016, 2017) postulates exists where all religions are allowed to prosper and are considered as equals by the state. The state tries to stay out of religious matters, acting simply as a neutral agent. In this case, state secularity and impartiality to religious groups is the norm. This, Mou (2016, 2017) concludes, is best fitted for the multi-religious states or countries, such as Nigeria.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The outcome of this study is important in several ways: First, it undertakes a serious scrutiny into those factors that have produced religious intolerance, tensions, conflicts and recently Boko Haram wars in Nigeria. Second, it attempts to provide workable solutions that, if implemented, are likely to reduce some of these religious intolerance, conflicts and consequently prevent the extension of the on-going religious war in the North Eastern States of Nigeria, to the rest of the country. Third, the analyses and findings would prove useful for social scientists and policy makers interested in social conflicts generally, and religious ones in particular. In this way, it should prove useful to policy makers and researchers alike.

Finally, it will help to account for the basis of religious intolerance, disturbances, conflicts and the on-going religious war in North Eastern Nigeria at a time when these have become matters of concern for the Nigerian public, policy makers and researchers. For all these, it is believed that this study is a worthwhile research with far-reaching practical policy implications and theoretical significance.

### **DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the data analyses are presented in this section of the study and a discussion of the findings made. A total of two thousand and six hundred and sixty five (2,665) of the 3000

questionnaires distributed were duly completed and returned which were analysed. This shows that three hundred and thirty five (335) questionnaires were not returned, representing about eleven per cent (11%) non-return rate. Some of the people approached for personal interviews were reluctant to express their opinions. These problems notwithstanding, the results presented here are valid and representative of the cross—sections of the population sampled. This presentation covers the major concerns of the study, viz:

1. State & religious tolerance;
2. State religion, fanaticism & intolerance;
3. University Senior Staff;
4. Religious tension and war;
5. Religion and politics;
6. Religious fanaticism and politics;
7. Religion in world politics.

### **THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE**

The empirical analyses begins with an examination of the relationship between religious membership and belief in State Religion. Three religions of Christianity, Islam, and Traditional religion exhausted the religious membership categories adopted by the respondents. This also reflects the realistic classifications of religious kinds or faiths in Nigeria.

As indicated in Table 2.1 below, a very large majority of the Christians (95%) and Traditional Religionists (97%) said they do not believe in State Religion. As high as 75% of Muslims said they believe in state Religion.

TABLE 2.1: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND STATE RELIGION

Do you believe in State Religion?	Respondents			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christian	574	5%	95%	100%
Muslims	547	75%	25%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	3%	97%	100%
No opinion/No Response	-	-	-	-

The implication of this finding is that there is no consensus over the issue of state religion in Nigeria. Given the choice, an overwhelming percentage of Muslims would prefer state religion.

But on the whole, the larger majority of Nigerians, including about a quarter of Muslims, are not in favour of imposing a state religion on Nigeria.

Religious membership was also examined against religious freedom and choice. As Table 2.2 shows, an overwhelming majority of Nigerians prefer freedom of worship.

**TABLE 2.2: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP & FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

Do you think everybody should be allowed to adopt the religion of his or her choice?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	98%	2%	100%
Muslims	546	58%	42%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	95%	5%	100%
No opinion/No Responses	54	-	-	-

Specifically, 98%, 58% and 95% of Christians, Muslims and Traditional Religionists respectively indicated that they preferred freedom of choice in religion. In essence, therefore, most Nigerians are in favour of religious freedom and will likely resist attempts to impose a single religion on them. However, as high as 42% of the Muslims sampled would prefer to have **Sharia** religion imposed as state religion in Nigeria. This shows a rather very high percentage of religious intolerance in Nigeria (42%) of Muslims.

This research also made an attempt to establish the relationship between religious membership and belief in Government favouritism of certain religion(s). As shown clearly in Table 2.3, an overwhelming majority of Nigerian Christians and Traditional Religion practitioners believe that the Nigerian Federal Government supports one religion over others. Even for the Muslims, a slight majority feels that there is some element of religious favouritism in the behaviour of Nigerian Federal Government. In specific terms, 92%, 53% and 90% of the Christians, Muslims and Traditional Religionists respectively believe that there is religious favouritism by the Nigerian Federal Government. The religion indicated as being unfairly favoured by the Nigerian Federal Government is Islam.

**TABLE 2.3: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT FAVOURITISM OF CERTAIN RELIGION(S)**

Do you think the Nigerian Federal Government supports some religious groups more than others?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	92%	8%	100%
Muslims	547	53%	47%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	90%	10%	100%
No Opinion/No Responses	53	-	-	-

Respondents were asked to indicate which religion they felt has dominated political power in Nigeria. As Table 2.4 reveals, most of them felt that Muslims have dominated political power in this country. Of the Christian respondents, as high as 96% felt Muslims have dominated political power in Nigeria. Similarly, as high as 93% of Traditional Religionists felt the same. Even among Muslims, the majority (52%) felt Muslims have dominated political power in Nigeria. As for the explanation for this phenomenon, most people felt that it stems from the official favouritism Muslims receive from the various regimes in Nigeria.

**TABLE 2.4: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND THE PRECEPTION OF WHICH RELIGION HAS DOMINATED POLITICAL POWER IN NIGERIA**

Which particular religion has dominated political power in Nigeria?	Responses				
	No.	Islam	Christianity	Traditional Religion	Total
Christians	576	96%	4%	0%	100%
Muslims	542	52%	48%	0%	100%
Traditional Religionists	512	93%	7%	0%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	512	-	-	-	-

Furthermore, we posed the question regarding the secularity of the Nigerian state. Here, the intention was to decipher whether one’s religious membership systematically affects his or her

perception of the necessity for a secular Nigerian state. From the responses obtained (Table 2.5), an overwhelming majority strongly believes in the secularity of the Nigerian State. When this table is carefully examined, it can be noticed that only 44% of the Muslims express opposition to state secularity. The general perception is that state secularity should be retained in Nigeria. For the Christians, 95% support secularity, while as high as 90% of the Traditional Religionists also do favour state secularity. The implication is that Nigerian governments, over the years, seem justified in insisting on state secularity. This is clearly the opinion of the majority respondents from this survey.

**TABLE 2.5: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND STATE SECULARITY**

Do you believe that Nigeria should remain a Secular State	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	95%	5%	100%
Muslims	546	56%	44%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	90%	10%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	55	-	-	-

### **STATE AND RELIGIOUS FANATICISM OR INTOLERANCE**

Among members of the same religion, the fanatical or intolerance members and leaders behave differently when confronted with certain issues and problems. What this suggests is that one would expect also markedly different reactions or responses from fanatics or intolerant ones when compared to the other members, despite the fact that they may all belong to the same religion. This calls for a decomposing analysis of the fanatics or intolerant ones and non-fanatics or tolerant ones in the religions under discussion here. This is what is undertaken in this section.

A few preliminary explanations seem necessary in the categorization of “fanatics” and “non-fanatics”. The question seeking to elicit the information gave the following options: (a) A Religious fanatic? (b) A moderate religious believer? Or (c) a non-believer?” Some respondents decided to add certain categories. Instead of stating clearly that they were religious fanatics, they added categories like “a committed worshipper”, “a strong deeper life member”, “a true born

again”, etc. Muslims added categories such as “a strict follower of Mohammed”, “Allah’s loyal Servant” or “committed Muslim”, “strict adherent to what the Koran says”, etc.

On serious reflection, we decided that all these be coded as ‘fanatics’. Our justification is that if they were not “fanatics”, they would have had no problem in categorizing themselves as “moderate religious believers”.

It is clear that there is a systematic difference in degree and magnitude between the perception of religious intolerant or fanatics and non-fanatics or tolerant even when they belong to the same sect or religion. On the question of religious fanaticism or intolerant and state religion, such differences are clearly observable. As Table 2.6 shows, 72% of Christian fanatics indicated that they do not believe in state religion, while 28% said they believe in state religion. But when we consider Christian non-fanatics or tolerant believers, only 2% accepted that they believe in state religion. In other words, 98% of Christian non-fanatics or tolerant do not believe in state religion.

For the Muslims, 100% of the fanatics or intolerant believers believe in state religion. Yet, when it comes to Muslim non-fanatics, only 57% do believe in state religion while (43%) do not believe in state religion. For Traditional Religious believers, the fanatics or intolerant ones, 28% believed in state religion; while 74% did not. Of the non-fanatics, only 15% believed in state religion, while the rest did not.

**TABLE 2.6: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND STATE RELIGION**

Do you believe in State Religion?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christian Fanatics	165	28%	72%	100%
Christian non-Fanatics	1563	2%	98%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	100%	0%	100%
Muslim non-Fanatics	330	57%	43%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	26%	74%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	503	15%	85%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

These findings indicate that there are large differences among Christians and Muslims regarding the belief in state religion, especially when we juxtapose the two fanatical groups against themselves and the others. What this finding leads to is that given the chance, Muslim fanatics would try to impose their religion on Nigeria. This is exactly what the Boko Haram militants are fighting for! This implication stems from the fact that they strongly believe in state religion – **Sharia Law**.

The survey also sought to find out the relationship between religious fanaticism or intolerance and freedom of religion. The evidence on this issue suggests that Muslim fanatics are overwhelmingly opposed to allowing everybody to adopt the religion of his or her choice (93%); whereas only 20% of Christian fanatics do not support religious freedom of choice. A critical examination of the table (2.7) also shows that for non-fanatical Muslims, a simple majority is in favour of religious freedom (52%) while an overwhelming majority of the Christian non-fanatics (80%) clearly support religious freedom of choice.

Again, as in Table 2.7, it appears that, if given the chance, Muslim fanatics or intolerant believers would go for policies that would undermine religious freedom of choice in the country. This is what Boko Haram war is all about. This will be against the majority opinion of Muslim non-fanatics (who are in the majority). But more specifically, such an inhibition of religious freedom of choice will anger the non-fanatical Christians who are overwhelmingly in favour of the continuation of religious freedom in Nigeria.

**TABLE 2.7: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM OR INTOLERANT AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

Do you think everybody should be allowed to adopt the religion of his/her choice?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christian Fanatics	165	80%	20%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	98%	2%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	7%	93%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	330	52%	48%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	74%	26%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	503	85%	15%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

On the question of fanaticism and the perception of religious domination, most respondents felt that there is political domination by one religion, Islam; and also that the Government favours Islamic religion over others.

In short, a lot of Christian fanatics feel that there is political domination by Muslims (95%). Even 80% of the non-fanatical Christians agree that there is political domination by a particular religious group-Muslims. Similarly, 52% of Muslimfanatics feel that there is political dominationby the Christians. However, of the non-Muslim fanatics, 50% said there is no political domination by any religious group in Nigeria. If the perception of political domination is widespread, the ultimate implication is that religious groups would start to plan their strategies along religious lines. This could influence the manner of political activities, especially the formation of political associations, and ultimately the elections. If this happens, it will dangerously introduce a religious element in the electoral politics of Nigeria. When asked about which religion they feel has dominated political power, an overwhelming majority said it is Islamic religion. For traditional religion, 90% of the fanatics agree there is political domination and favouritism of Muslims; while 85% also agree there is political domination of Muslims in Nigeria.

**TABLE 2.8: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM/INTOLERANCE AND PERCEPTION OF POLITICAL DOMINATION BY ONE RELIGION**

Do you think there is political domination and government favouritism of one religion?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christian Fanatics	165	95%	5%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	88%	12%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	52%	48%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	330	44%	56%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	90%	10%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	502	85%	15%	100%

**STATE RELIGION AND UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF**

University Senior Staff at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the University of Ibadan, Ibadan and the University of Jos, Jos, constitute a body of highly educated placed Nigerians who can be reasonably taken as the Nigerian educated elite. They are also representatives of the Nigerian educated and privileged class. A survey of their views, therefore, gives us an insight into the perception of these issues at the highest and most educated levels of society. Because of this, we decided to investigate the attitudes of University Senior Staff against those of the other respondents.

As Table 2.9 reveals, when asked about state religion, only a small minority of University Senior Staff (32%) were in favour of state religion. The rest were against it. Even though 45% of other respondents when grouped together were in favour of state religion, the larger majority (65%) were clearly against state religion.

**TABLE 2.9: UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF AND STATE RELIGION**

Do you believe in State Religion?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	32%	68%	100%
Others	2111	45%	55%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	53	-	-	-

Fundamentally, then, one can conclude that even among the Nigerian educated elite, there is clearly a preference against state religion.

This study also shows that University Senior Staff are highly in favour of freedom of religion. Here too, as Table 2.10 illustrates, most of University Senior Staff (78%) expressed preference for freedom of religious choice. As experienced and highly educated Nigerians, University Senior Staff seem clearly aware of the dangers inherent in imposing one religion on a multi-religious society. For the others, 60% agreed that there should be freedom of choice with respect to religion.

**TABLE 2.10 UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

Do you think everybody should be allowed to adopt the religion of his or her choice?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	78%	22%	100%
Others	2110	60%	40%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

On the question of government favouritism of certain religions, there appears not to be much difference between University Senior Staff and the others on this subject. Up to 75% of University Senior Staff felt that there is government favouritism of Islam as against 78%, of the other respondents, (Table 2.11). It may mean that as members of the ruling class, University Senior Staff feel and see more of the cases which appear as government favouritism of certain religions just like the rest of the Nigerian public. This is a serious cause for concern in that it appears to suggest that even in the highest echelon of Nigerian educated society, there is the perception of the Nigerian Federal Government as appearing to favour one religion - Islam.

**TABLE 2.11: UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF AND BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT FAVOURITISM OF CERTAIN RELIGION(S)**

Do you think the Nigerian Federal Government supports some religions more than others?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	75%	25%	100%
Others	2111	78%	22%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	53	-	-	-

This survey further sought to find out University Senior Staff’s attitude towards the question of religious domination of political power. Here too, University Senior Staff, just like the rest of the other respondents, believe strongly that there is domination of political power based on religion. When confronted with the question “which particular religion has dominated political power in Nigeria”, 79%.University Senior Staff, and 81% of the rest of the other respondents, think that the Islamic religion has dominated political power in Nigeria. This is clearly revealed by Table 2.12. The implication here is that there is a pervasive feeling in Nigeria, even among the members of the educated class, that people with Islamic religious backgrounds have dominated

political power in Nigeria. Whether wrongly or rightly, such a perception appears inimical to political stability and religious tolerance and harmony in Nigeria.

**TABLE 2.12: UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF AND THE PERCEPTION OF WHICH RELIGION HAS DOMINATED POLITICAL POWER IN NIGERIA**

Which particular religion has dominated political power in Nigeria	Responses				
	No.	Christianity	Islam	Traditional Religion	Total
University Senior Staff	533	11%	79%	10%	100%
Others	2103	17%	81%	2%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	512	-	-	-	-

However, when one examines the attitudes towards state secularity, 77% of University Senior Staff *are* overwhelmingly in favour of state secularity. This is consistent with their abhorrence of the possibility of any religious favouritism and political domination along any religious lines.

#### **RELIGIOUS TERRORISM/WAR**

The possibility of a high religious terrorism and war can be indexed by a believer’s readiness to kill non-believers for his faith. When asked whether they could go to war over their religious belief if it appears threatened, most non-Muslim respondents expressed a high reluctance of going to war over matters of faith. For the Muslim respondents, 88% indicated that they would (Table 2.13). It may be because of this strong belief that Muslims have been at the forefront of religious violence and terrorism in Nigeria. This means that if the perception of political domination by religion or state favouritism along religious lines had been predominantly in favour of Christians, Muslims could have probably reacted more violently than has hitherto happened.

**TABLE 2.13: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND GOING TO WAR OVER RELIGION**

Can you go to war over your religious belief if it seems threatened?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	31%	66%	100%
Muslims	546	88%	12%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	53%	47%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	55	-	-	-

By far, the most threatening revelation from this survey is the willingness of certain people to kill for the sake of their religion. Here too, as Table 2.14 makes it abundantly clear, Muslims are clearly ahead of the other religions in Nigeria in their desire or preparedness to kill for the sake of their religion. One expects that when such preparedness to kill extends to other religions, especially Christianity, Nigeria will be on a threshold of a religious war. The task for policy makers is to devise strategies that can prevent these unfortunate outcomes.

**TABLE 2. 14: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND THE WILLINGNESS TO KILL FOR THE SAKE OF RELIGION**

Are you willing to kill others for the sake of religion?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	30%	70%	100%
Muslims	546	88%	22%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	53%	47%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

The willingness to go to war for the sake of one’s religion is much higher among the fanatics of the Islamic and Christian religions when compared with the rest. As Table 2.15 illustrates, 85% of the Christian fanatics and 100% of the Muslim fanatics, express their readiness to go to war if their religions are threatened. This further confirms the position that religious fanatics and extremists are most likely going to be responsible for initiating a religious war in Nigeria. The Boko Haram members certainly belong to the fanatical or intolerant Muslim members. But once initiated, it involves all of the citizens and others living in Nigeria, as the Boko Haram war in the North East has shown. Public policy has to be designed in a manner that will prevent more radicalization of other religions too in Nigeria to the level the Muslims are at the moment.

**TABLE 2.15: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND WAR MONGERING**

Can you go to war over your religious belief if it seems threatened:	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians Fanatics	165	85%	15%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	26%	74%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	100%	0%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	530	78%	22%	100%

No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-
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How do University Senior Staff feel about going to war for their faith? Interestingly, 65% were overwhelmingly against going to war over matters of faith. As Table 2.16 shows, only 35% of University Senior Staff indicated that they would go to war for their faith. It means, therefore, that for members of the educated elite, religion is less emotional. This goes to reveal that when they claim to be religious zealots, it may well be that they are trying to manipulate religion and use the lower classes and masses to attain their selfish material, political and status goals.

**TABLE 2.16: UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF AND THE WILLINGNESS TO GO TO WAR**

Can you go to war over your religious belief if it seems threatened?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	35%	65%	100%
Others	2110	64%	36%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

Similarly, University Senior Staff were reluctant to kill for the sake of religion. Only 35% of University Senior Staff are willing to kill for the sake of religion compared with 64% of the rest of the respondents who indicated that they would kill for the sake of their religion. The ultimate implication is that if the number of Nigerians willing to kill for the sake of their religion becomes higher, for whatever reason, religious violence and war will increase drastically and so will the possibility for the emergence of a total religious war in Nigeria beyond the religious war going on now in the North Eastern part of Nigeria (the Boko Haram War).

### **RELIGION AND POLITICS**

In the Northern parts of Nigeria, the relationship between religion and the social structure is so close that one is incomplete without the other. Political issues, such as voting and appointments, have clearly religious overtones.

When the respondents were asked whether or not they would vote for a politician of a different religion from their own if they agree with his or her ideology or programmes, 65%, 38% and

48% of the Christians, Muslims and Traditional Religionists respectively said that they would. Yet, a majority of the Muslim respondents (62%) said they would not do so, (Table 2.17).

**TABLE 2.17: RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

Can you vote for a politician of a different religion from you if you agree with his/her programmes/ideology?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	577	65%	35%	100%
Muslims	546	38%	62%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	48%	52%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	55	-	-	-

On the question of whether political appointments should be made on the basis of religious equality, Christians (75%) readily accepted the use of religious equality as the basis for making political appointments. For the Muslims, the majority (65%) rejected the idea of religious equality in political appointments.

**TABLE 2.18: THE RELIGIOUS MEMBERSHIP AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS ON THE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL NIGERIANS**

Do you agree that political appointments should be made on the basis of religious equality and equal opportunity?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christian Fanatics	165	68%	32%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	75%	25%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	44%	56%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	330	55%	45%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	60%	40%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	302	65%	35%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

When it comes to admission to educational institutions, the majority of Muslims (68%) are in favour of religious equality. While the Christians (60%) are against it. This is a case where Christians feel that the lack of religious equality in admission to educational institutions favours

them and does not favour Muslims. They are therefore, not willing to concede to religious equality. Instead, they insist on qualifications and merit.

The obvious implication here is that some of the so-called religious people, both Muslims and Christians, are hypocrites who use religion as a tool for promoting their interests as well.

The only issue on which there seems to be unanimity of opinions, across religions in this section, is the question of the separation of schools along religious lines. The majority of the Christians (85%), Muslims (52%) and Traditional Religionists (65%) are against separation of schools on the basis of religion.

TABLE 2.19: SEPARATION OF SCHOOLS ALONG RELIGIOUS LINES

Would you suggest that people of different religions attend separate schools?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	15%	85%	100%
Muslims	547	48%	52%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	35%	65%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	53	-	-	-

The implication here is that most Nigerians believe that it is better for children of different religions to attend the same school right from nursery through adolescence to adulthood, even though the approval rate is the lowest among the Muslim respondents.

#### RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND POLITICS

It is believed in many quarters – and the results of our analysis so far support this view – that religious fanatics are the greatest danger in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. This section reports the views of the fanatics among the respondents.

The results show that religious fanatics are the most “irrational” when it comes to voting and probably other forms of political behaviour. As high as 65% , 100% and 68% of the Christian, Muslim and Traditional Religion fanatics, respectively said that they would vote for candidates purely on the basis of religion. For them, ideology and programmes are irrelevant. This, again,

confirms the view that fanatical and extreme religious believers are highly “emotional” and “irrational” (Table 2.20).

**TABLE 2.20: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

Can you vote for a politician of a different religion from your if you agree with his or her ideology/programmes?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians Fanatics	515	35%	65%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	76%	24%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	0%	100%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	530	20%	80%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	32%	68%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	302	65%	35%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

On the question of religious equality in political appointments, 85% of Christian fanatics accept it, while as high as 80% of the Muslim fanatics reject it, (Table 2.21). Again, as stated before, a high level of concern for their selfish interests seems to be at play. Fanatical Christians feel that religious equality in political appointments will favour them, hence their overwhelming acceptance of using religious equality in political appointments. Yet, for the fanatical Muslims, they are aware that Muslims now dominate in the Northern region especially, but also in national appointments. Thus, they fear that such dominance will be undermined by the call for religious equality in making political appointments.

Such reckless and tactful manipulation of religion for selfish group and personal worldly goals is obvious when one turns to an examination of the principle of religious equality against admission to institutions of learning. Christian fanatics now abandon the principles of religious equality. They evoke standards and qualification. Thus, 80% of them reject religious equality as the basis for admission to educational institutions, (Table 2.19). At the same time, Muslim fanatics who were against the principle of religious equality in political appointments, turn round to support this same principle for admission to educational institutions.

**TABLE 2.22: RELIGIOUS FANATICS’ VIEWS ON APPOINTMENT, ADMISSION AND SCHOOLS’ SEGREGATION**

(a) Political Appointments

Do you think political appointment should be made on the basis of religious equality?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians Fanatics	515	85%	15%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	60%	40%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	20%	80%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	530	45%	55%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	80%	20%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	302	65%	35%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

(b) Admission to Schools

Do you think admission to educational institutions should be based on religion?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians Fanatics	515	20%	80%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	30%	70%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	85%	15%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	530	65%	35%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	30%	70%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	302	38%	62%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

(c) Schools Segregation

Do you suggest that people of different religions attend separate schools?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians Fanatics	515	35%	65%	100%
Christian Non-Fanatics	562	10%	90%	100%
Muslim Fanatics	517	95%	5%	100%
Muslim Non-Fanatics	530	70%	30%	100%
Traditional Religion Fanatics	158	30%	70%	100%
Traditional Religion Non-Fanatics	302	38%	62%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

When it comes to the separation of schools along religious lines, only the Muslim fanatics are heavily in favour of it (95%). Most Nigerians are in favour of peoples of different religions attending the same schools.

How do University Senior Staff feel about the use of religion as a consideration in politics? The participants expressed a remarkable willingness to vote for a politician outside their religion provided they agree with his or her programmes or ideology (78%). This means that exposure to educational experience and enlightenment does influence people’s perceptions and voting behaviour greatly. Compared to the rest of the respondents where only a slight majority (52%) indicated that they would vote outside their religions, This is quite encouraging (Table 2.22).

Additionally, 62%believe that political appointments should be on the basis of religious representation, while 48% rejected the idea. The implication here is that even among University Senior Staff religion seems to be considered by the majority to be serious enough to be reflected in political appointments.

On the question of admission based on religious equality, 58% of University Senior Staff were against it while 42% were in favour. This is a vote for qualification and merit.

What University Senior Staff seem almost totally unanimous in rejecting is the question of separation of schools on the basis of religious membership. Many non-University Senior Staff respondents were opposed to this as well (15%). It means therefore, that schools in Nigeria should continue to be multi-religious. This will allow for the necessary socialization that is critical for subsequent religious tolerance and harmony when students leave school, (Table 2.20).

**TABLE 2.22: UNIVERSITY SENIOR STAFF VIEWS ON VOTING, APPOINTMENTS, ADMISSION AND SCHOOLS SEGREGATION**

(a) Voting

Can you vote for a politician of different religion from you if you agree with his/her programme or ideology?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	78%	22%	100%
Others	5100	52%	48%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

(b) Appointments

Do you think political appointment should be made on the basis of religious equality?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	60%	40%	100%
Others	5110	60%	40%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

(c) Admission

Do you think admission to educational institution should be based on religious equality?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	42%	58%	100%
Others	5110	50%	50%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

(d) Schools Segregation

Do you suggest that people of different religion should attend separate schools?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
University Senior Staff	533	6%	94%	100%
Others	5110	25%	75%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	54	-	-	-

RELIGION AND WORLD POLITICS

Studies of Nigerian foreign policy have suggested that our domestic religious situation affects our diplomatic relations with other countries (Mazrui, 1979; Ajibola, 1978). Given this proposition, we felt it necessary to examine our religious politics in the context of world affairs as well. Two thorny issues were selected for this purpose – namely, recognition and diplomatic relations with Israel and Organization of Islamic Congress (OIC).

When asked whether Nigeria should re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel, 88%, 15% and 70% of the Christians, Muslims and Traditional Religionists respectively were in favour. More than four-fifths of Muslim respondents (85%) were opposed to it. This means that the question of re-establishing relations with Israel is one that polarizes Nigerians along religious lines, (Table 2.21).

**TABLE 2.23: RESPONDENTS’ VIEWS ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND O.I.C. MEMBERSHIP**

(a) Diplomatic Relations with Israel

Do you want Nigeria to re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	88%	12%	100%
Muslims	547	15%	85%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	70%	30%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	53	-	-	-

(b) O.I.C. Membership

Do you object to Nigeria being a member of O.I.C.?	Responses			
	No.	Yes	No	Total
Christians	578	98%	2%	100%
Muslims	546	0%	100%	100%
Traditional Religionists	514	92%	8%	100%
No Opinion/No Response	53	-	-	-

Similarly, the question of the membership of Organization of Islamic Countries (O.I.C.) polarizes the Nigerian public along religious lines. As Table 2.23 shows, while Muslims are overwhelmingly in support of it (100%), Christians are strongly against it (98%), while Traditional religious adherents are also against it (92%). Once again, it means that the question of Nigeria’s membership in O.I.C. is a very sensitive one that Government has to handle with great *care* to avoid undue religious conflicts, violence, or even war stemming from it.

How do fanatical Nigerians feel about these two Issues? On the question of re-establishing relations with Israel, 100% of Christian fanatics are in favour, while no Muslim fanatic (0%) is in support.

The trend is reversed when one turns to the question of membership in O.I.C. On this, 100% of Christian fanatics are against it, while 100% of Muslim fanatics are in favour. Once again, one is presented with a situation on which the two extremist groups are totally opposed to each other. What is the view of University Senior Staff on this Issue? University Senior Staff approve Nigeria's re-establishment of relations with Israel (74%), while the others approve it marginally (51%).

Finally, on the issue of Nigeria's membership of the O.I.C., University Senior Staff express their disapproval. As high as 62% of them said they object to Nigeria being a member of the O.I.C.

### CONCLUSION

Most studies of religious intolerance and violence had wrongly given the impression that only "Muslims" are capable of religious intolerance, violence and even war. "Muslims" are of course, at the moment at least, perpetrators of religious violence and terrorism in Nigeria. But this study has found that even Christians can do the same if these things continue to be done by Muslims in Nigeria. As the analyses presented above clearly show, the problem of religious intolerance and violence in Nigeria cannot be said to be purely a Muslim affair, just as it cannot be said to be a purely "Christian affair". We repeat, at the moment, it is only Muslims who are actively engaged in religious terrorism, especially the Boko Haram war. But the potential exists even for Christians, especially their fanatics, to do the same if Muslims continue to provoke them.

The results suggest strongly, that among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, there is a minority of fanatics even among the Christians who have the potential for

religious intolerance, violence and terrorism. But a larger percentage of Muslims fanatics are currently engage in religious intolerance, violence and terrorism. It is these fanatics in the two religions, but more especially in Islamic religion, that pose the greatest threat to the peaceful co-existence of religions in Nigeria. They also promote religious violence, intolerance and bigotry. In fact, the Muslim fanatics are now displaying religious terrorism and war (Boko Haram) in the Northern part of Nigeria, especially the North East. It is also one hundred percent Muslim herdsmen that are killing wantonly farmers, again especially in Northern Nigeria, over their need for grazing lands. These have prompted state Governments, such as Benue and Taraba, to pass laws against open grazing in their States. It is obvious that others will follow suit all over the country. These laws now allow only for ranching of cattle and other animals.

This conclusion is evident from Muslims extreme stand on issues, especially their readiness to kill and go to war over matters of religion. In the next section, the overall implications of these findings are highlighted and recommendations made.

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A careful reading of the analyses presented here, can easily lead logically to certain concrete policy formulations. The following policy recommendations are arrived at from the interpretation of the research findings, discussions and results presented in this study.

- (i) On the question of state and religion, it is clear that the majority of the respondents are not in favour of state religion. Even though States in the North West and North East have already implemented State Religion (Sharia), mainly because they have predominantly Muslim population, it is against the wishes of other majority of Nigerians and even the present **1999 Constitution of Nigeria** that is in operation. Instead, respondents have overwhelmingly expressed support for freedom of choice in religious matters again with the exception of the fanatics amongst them. This means that the Nigerian Federal Government should continue with the policy of freedom of religious worship. Every Nigerian should continue to worship in any form he or she deems fit provided that this does not go against the laws of the land. States in the North West and North East who have illegally imposed Sharia should be told to cancel it.
- (ii) Similarly, there is widespread view that Muslims have dominated political power. Here, it is recommended that the Federal Government must not give the impression that Islamism

increases one's chances for attaining political office in Nigeria. Personal qualities and merit should be the over-riding considerations with the context of the "Federal Character" representation as enshrined in the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, which is now in operation.

(iii) The heart of religious violence and terrorism in this country can be found in religious fanatics, especially among the (Muslims), who are therefore the clear enemies of the people, government and national development.

The major strategy in this regard is to prevent religious fanatics from assuming strategic, political and national security positions at the Federal, State and Local Government levels. The immediate task for the Nigerian Federal Government, therefore, is to design public policies in the manner that hinders or precludes religious fanatics from assuming central roles in the government of Nigeria. The States and Local Governments should do the same. This involves identifying and keeping their leaders and other fanatical followers, under intelligence agency surveillance by posting security personnel as secret agents to attend their meetings - be they in the Mosques or Churches and also on University campuses as well. Care should be taken to ensure that the secret security agents sent are not themselves fanatics!

(iv) Preventing religious fanatics from holding strategic political offices or other strategic positions can be done at the screening stage. This means that screening for political appointments should view religious fanaticism, intolerance, terrorism and extremism as negative factors, and people so identified should be disqualified quietly at the screening stage. Otherwise, such people, if given sensitive political appointments can push Nigeria into a religious war far beyond the Boko Haram one going on at the moment in the North East.

(v) Dogmatic and fanatical adherence to religion, this research has found out, does not lead to "rational" reasoning on political matters, particularly where other religions are involved. Government has to realise that fanatical religious believers, especially Muslims, but even among Christians, are irrational, and jump to subjective conclusions to defend their religions. They are also intolerant in their religious views.

(vi) Religion is less emotional for members of the elites than the rest of the society. This goes to reveal that when they claim to be religious zealots, it may well be that they want to achieve

selfish ends. Public policy, especially where religious matters are concerned, should be sensitive to these kinds of possibilities.

(vii) There is evidence, even among non-fanatics, that voting behaviour and other political activities are greatly being influenced by religion in Nigeria. This is a real cause for worry about the future of Nigeria's democracy. All efforts should be made to ensure that the political parties that are registered, do not adopt religious lines - Muslims versus Christians. Any political movement perceived to be heading in that direction, should be denied registration as a political party and if already registered, the certificate should be revoked. In addition, there should be stringent guidelines against using religious symbols to canvas for votes.

(viii) Comparative Religion courses should be introduced in all Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in Civic Education Classes. This is in addition to the teaching of Christian Religious Knowledge and Islamic Religion as subjects. This implies that Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religion should be taught and made compulsory subjects to all Primary and Secondary school students. The religious bigotry, violence, terrorism and intolerance and even war, such as currently going on in North Eastern Nigeria by Boko Haram will be explained and discouraged in such courses. Separating students to schools by sex and religion should be legislated against by the National and State Assemblies.

(ix) There is also need to be building both Mosques and Churches in Government Houses or Ministries in Nigeria. State functionaries, such as Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Governors, Ministers, etc. should be free and even advised regularly, to attend different religious services on a rotational basis when the need arises, so as not to reflect any religious bias. For Traditional Religions, they are usually best left to the various cultural and ethnic groups in Nigeria to handle because of their apparent tedious and discriminatory initiation or recruitment process. The Government should not use public funds to build churches or mosques or even shrines. This should be the responsibility of the various religious organisations or bodies. Hence, Government sponsorship of religion, in any form, should be stopped. Even in personal attires, such as modes of dress, Nigerians should be free to wear what they want once outside the mosque or church, and eat and drink what they want as well.

(x) Merit and qualifications should be the main consideration as the basis for political appointments and admission to educational institutions. Once the "Federal Character" Clauses

have been met, Federal Character is not opposed to merit as others wrongly think. However, there is the dire need to be sensitive to the religious plurality of the country in making political appointments and admission into educational institutions. This will reduce the general perception of Islamic religious favouritism and domination in Nigerian politics and society.

(xi) It is better, for the sake of proper socialization, that children of different religions and sexes attend the same schools right from nursery through secondary schools to universities. Otherwise, they will later have problems living among themselves in the larger society and being tolerant to one another.

(xii) The present administration's policies of poverty eradication and political conscientization of the "masses", must be made to succeed. These policies are likely to reduce economic hardships and deprivations that make the "masses" easily amenable to manipulation for the sake of religion. They will also promote social justice and political awareness.

(xiii) Furthermore, drastic efforts must be made to reduce or even eliminate high levels of unemployment in Nigeria. A large pool of the unemployed in urban and rural areas of Nigeria, is very risky for political stability and socio-economic progress. Moreover, efforts should be made to pay unemployment allowances as social security, to all Nigerians who are not employed or employable. The allowances should guarantee a minimum income below which no Nigerian should fall. Seventy one per cent (71%) of Nigerians living below poverty line as is the case now (2017), is a big risk and threat to internal security. This will ensure that there is a minimum decent standard of living for all Nigerians.

(xiv) A National Poverty Eradication Commission, should be created to administer this social security, such as the Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) and the Unemployment Allowances Scheme. This will reduce extreme poverty that makes people easily amenable to religious manipulation by religious fanatics or hypocritical religious zealots or even joining religious terrorists groups such as Boko Haram and becoming involved in religious wars (**Jihad**).

(xv) The new policy of ensuring that proper educational curricula is developed so that graduates are able to be self-reliant, where they fail to get jobs, should be encouraged and made to work. This way, the pool of unemployed graduates will be greatly reduced in Nigeria. In particular, government should discourage and even prevent Islamic schools aimed at teaching

Islamic religion and Koranic education only, without Western Education and any other serious practical skills. These are breeding grounds for Boko Haram recruits and future **Jihadists**.

(xvi) The government should set up, in a permanent fashion, intensive labour farms and public works programmes of the kind that had come into being after the **Anti-SAP** crisis. It should not be merely transitory as it was at that time. These should be sited in the rural and semi—rural areas throughout the Federation. It should be obvious that by so doing, the government will reduce rural—urban migration and increase food production and proper sanitation. The sanitation of Nigerian cities and towns should be the job of these categories of people who would otherwise be unemployed. These include, cleaning, sewage system building, tree planting, flower planting, naming of streets and proper identification of houses.

(xvii) A Security Agency or Religious Intelligence Task Force, should be established to operate in the manner of the State Security Service (SSS), the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) and the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB). This special squad could be called a Directorate of Religious Intelligence (DRI). It shall be composed of people drawn from the Armed Forces, the Police and the existing Intelligence agencies or preferably, recruited and trained afresh. The, objectives of DRI would include the following:-

- a. To monitor the activities of all religious groups and organisations in Nigeria;
- b. To evaluate and approve or reject new applications for starting new churches and mosques;
- c. To stabilize, by means of routine regulation and control, the behaviour and activities of every religion, individual and group or community;
- d. To keep a permanent check on old and new fanatical leaders and take whatever legal action if necessary, to keep them under control and within the laws of the land;
- e. It could provide an additional framework through which all religious intolerance, violence, terrorism, and other social political challenges could be met promptly, and also advise the Government on public policies regarding religion and religious groups;
- f. The Directorate of Religious Intelligence or Task Force, should regulate the external (bi-lateral and uni-lateral) alliances by Nigerian religious bodies with others abroad; and
- g. It should undertake all tasks relating to religion as may be assigned to it from time to time by the President or Governor, as the case may be.

The structure of the Directorate of Religious Intelligence or Task Force could resemble those of the other security related agencies in hierarchy but be parallel to them in its operations. It should not be submerged under the existing ones. Its officials should be carefully selected so that fanatics (Muslims, Christians and Traditional Religion Members) are not recruited into it.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has proposed concrete recommendations to the problem of religious terrorism, violence, intolerance, fanaticism and war in Nigeria and the need to stop the Boko Haram one. Implementing these recommendations should make it relatively easy for the various religions in Nigeria to become increasingly more tolerant and live harmoniously with one another.

This study has further demonstrated that religious terrorism, fanaticism, intolerance and bigotry are now the most critical challenges to peaceful co-existence and political stability in Nigeria. It is clear that many Nigerians now fear religious violence and war more than ethnic violence, as was the case in the 1960s.

This study has primarily been motivated not just by academic interest, but also by a concern for appropriate policies to address the unity and progress of the Nigerian nation. Nigerians owe each other and future generations a duty to prevent Nigeria from being turned into a religious theatre of conflicts and wars, as it occurred in Lebanon, Sudan, Northern Ireland or even Iran. In all these societies, social disorganisation has been caused, national development and political stability undermined, simply because of religious wars, bigotry and intolerance.

One of the central findings of this study is that, contrary to the widespread, view, it is now not only Muslims that can cause religious intolerance, violence or even war in Nigeria; even though the Muslims are the ones doing so at the moment, especially through Boko Haram. But Christians too, have the potential to do so if pushed to the wall for too long! Studies that still report and portray it as if only Muslims are capable of causing religious violence or even war in Nigeria are therefore, grossly mistaken and can invariably mislead policy makers, analysts and the general public at large. So far, Islamism has formally been associated solely with religious intolerance, terrorism, violence and wars in Nigeria. But the emerging trend shows, however,

that Christians (especially the fanatical ones) can also adopt the belligerent intolerance and violent attitude that has so far been the typical Muslim characteristic in Nigeria, especially the fanatical ones.

As the analyses presented and discussed in this study have clearly revealed, the problem of religious terrorism, violence, intolerance, fanaticism and even wars in Nigeria, cannot anymore be said to be a Muslims-only affair. It can easily be extended to be a Christians - affair too, if it is not carefully handled. What this study has shown is that, among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, there are fanatics, especially in Islam. These fanatics, in Islam, have killed, maimed and destroyed property and slowed down peace, security and development in Nigeria for many years now. The greatest threat at the moment, to the peaceful co-existence and religious freedom in Nigeria is therefore, Islamic militants. Islamic religious terrorism, violence, intolerance, bigotry and wars, especially the Boko Haram ones, would lead to the eventual emergence of a total and complete religious war all over Nigeria, if not carefully handled. This would spell doom for Nigeria and must be stopped now!

This conclusion is evident from the extreme stand on issues by fanatical Muslims, especially their readiness to kill, destroy and go to war over matters of religion. Because of this, it is recommended that a new Intelligence Agency or Task Force to be called the Directorate of Religious Intelligence (DRI) or a Task Force on Religion, be set up to keep close watch on these fanatics, among other measures, already suggested above.

This study has also shown that religious manipulation by fanatical leaders and other elites cannot easily occur unless the social conditions are ripe for it. In this way, we have tried to conceptualize the religious problem in Nigeria, in broad and holistic terms.

The success of the policies of government, especially those designed for the welfare of the citizens, inclusive development and peaceful co-existence, are clearly necessary, both in the short and long term, for religious peace, tolerance and harmony in Nigeria. In this context, implementing the recommendations we have made here, is necessary to the realization of religious peace, tolerance and harmony in Nigeria. In this regard, the present administration

deserves strong commendations for tackling the Boko Haram terrorism issue. But it must be finally stamped out completely. Other terrorist groups, though not covered in this study, such as the Niger Delta Militants; the Indigenous People of Biafra; the Odua Peoples Congress (Oduwa Republic Agitators); the Arewa Youth Movement agitating for the expulsion of the Igbos from Northern Nigeria, etc., must all be tackled and resolved by the Government. It is not the intention of this study to create the wrong impression that the only major threats to peace, security and development in Nigeria, are the religious fanaticism, intolerance and on-going religious (Boko Haram war) in the North Eastern part of the country. These other militant groups or separatist movements, must also be tackled accordingly.

In the final analysis, all governments at Federal, State and Local levels, must address extremists in Nigeria. By extremists, to quote former President, Ibrahim B. Babangida, is meant those groups and individuals who are “uncompromising, fanatical or immoderate in their views; who go beyond the limits of reason, necessity or propriety to advance their cause, or who exceed the ordinary, usual or expected limits of decency in doing that. The extremists do not bother to delineate where their own rights end and those of others begin. They are not believers in the politics of equality; they are not democratic” (Babangida, 1988).

Two categories of extremists were identified by the former President Ibrahim B. Babangida, the “ideological and religious extremists”. This investigation into religious tolerance, on University campuses terrorism and even war in Nigeria, confirms the former President Babangida’s views on the question of religious extremists. The case for ideological extremists is outside the focus of this present study.

The findings from this study, we believe, have far reaching implications for public policy formulation and implementation on these matters of religious intolerance, terrorism and even the ongoing Islamic militants (Boko Haram) war in the North East, many of which we have suggested already how they could be addressed above in our recommendations. Even though the results and conclusions stated here, were derived through a thorough analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from three major Nigerian University campuses, namely, the

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Jos, Jos, there is need for further research, especially to determine specifically in details, the nature and causes of religious terrorism, violence, intolerance, fanaticism, and even wars in Nigeria.

It is only by additional comprehensive and holistic investigations and a clear understanding of the issues involved in these rather complicated national security policy issues, that solutions could be permanently found to the religious problems in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, where they do also exist.

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