



IN GOD WE TRUST

OPERATION SAFETY 91

GLOBAL HUMANITIES

Year 6, Vol. 9, 2021 – ISSN 2199-3939

Editors Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Religion and Politics

Editorial by

Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Texts by

Arvi Sepp and Anneleen Van Hertbruggen

Michael Holm

Francesco Galofaro and Chiara Petrini

James Okolie-Osemene



edizioni
**Museo
Pasqualino**



direttore Rosario Perricone

GLOBAL HUMANITIES

9

Biannual Journal

ISSN 2199-3939

Editors

Frank Jacob

Nord Universitet, Norway

Francesco Mangiapane

University of Palermo, Italy

Scientific Board

Jessica Achberger

University of Lusaka, Zambia

Giuditta Bassano

IULM University, Milano, Italy

Saheed Aderinto

Western Carolina University, USA

Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr.

Angelo State University, USA

Stephan Köhn

Cologne University, Germany

Dario Mangano

University of Palermo, Italy

Gianfranco Marrone

University of Palermo, Italy

Tiziana Migliore

University of Urbino, Italy

Sabine Müller

Marburg University, Germany

Rosario Perricone

University of Palermo, Italy



GLOBAL HUMANITIES

Year 6, Vol. 9, 2021 – ISSN 2199-3939

Editors Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Religion and Politics

Editorial by **Texts by**

Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Arvi Sepp and Anneleen Van Hertbruggen

Michael Holm

Francesco Galofaro and Chiara Petrini

James Okolie-Osemene

© 2022 Associazione per la conservazione delle tradizioni popolari
Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino
Piazza Antonio Pasqualino, 5 – 90133 Palermo PA, Italy
www.edizionimuseopasqualino.it – info@edizionimuseopasqualino.it



REGIONE SICILIANA
Assessorato dei beni culturali
e dell'identità siciliana
*Dipartimento dei beni culturali
e dell'identità siciliana*

ISBN 979-12-80664-16-7

EAN 9772199393003 60009

DOI 10.53123/GH_9

Design and Typesetting

Francesco Mangiapane

Printing House

Fotograph S.r.l., Palermo, Italy

Cover

© Jon Tyson, *In God We Trust*, @ *Unsplash*

The articles in this volume were peer reviewed.

The publisher is available for any claimants who could not be contacted.

This volume is covered by copyright and no part of it can be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means without the written authorization of the owners of the copyright.

The paper used for printing is made with a fibrous mixture made of 100% recycled fibers and is guaranteed by Blauer Engel certification. Its fibers are bleached with Chlorine Free processes. It is therefore 100% ecological.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial.....	7
FRANK JACOB AND FRANCESCO MANGIAPANE	
The Language of Political Messianism. Religion in National Socialist Propaganda Poetry.....	9
ARVI SEPP AND ANNELEEN VAN HERTBRUGGEN	
The Fifth Horseman. Religion and the Bomb in the Early Atomic Age	27
MICHAEL HOLM	
The Day after the Pandemic. A Semiotic Analysis of Four Homilies.....	41
FRANCESCO GALOFARO AND CHIARA PETRINI	
Political Abuse of Religion. Groupism, Elite Rascality, and Religious Tensions in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.....	57
JAMES OKOLIE-OSEMENE	
CONTRIBUTORS	75



https://doi.org/10.53123/GH_9_5

POLITICAL ABUSE OF RELIGION GROUPISM, ELITE RASCALITY, AND RELIGIOUS TENSIONS IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

James Okolie-Osemene

Wellspring University, Benin City, Nigeria
okolieosemenej@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. The politics of religion permeates Nigeria's political landscape to the detriment of social relations. Since the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999, religion has remained an integral part of political actions, with political parties/leaders and their supporters engaging in political abuse of religion (PAR). This paper examined the pattern of PAR by politicians and adherents of religious movements who often use religious platforms to achieve their political ambitions, thereby promoting groupism. Combining power, resource mobilization and manipulation of religion theories, the study utilized primary and secondary sources. Elite rascality and PAR generate religious conflicts which undermine intergroup relations.

KEYWORDS: Elite rascality, Groupism, Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Political abuse of religion.

1. INTRODUCTION

"A great man can come forth to unify and
weld Nigeria into a strong and solid whole."
H. H. Smythe, 1958

"We must challenge people that use religion
to oppress women."
Femi Falana (SAN) at the International Law
Conference, Lagos, 2012

"Of all causes of war in the world, religion
remains unresolved."
Anonymous

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic West African nation state that has more than 374 ethnic groups, dominated by only three major ethnic groups, namely Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba (Olusakin 2006). As a multi-ethnic nation, this means the nation state also has numerous languages and cultures manifesting in greetings, foods,

clothes, and arts. One unique attribute of the Nigerian ethnic groups is that they have different traditions of origin.

Religious practices are a significant aspect of human endeavor, and this explains why people from all walks of life usually devote time to honor and worship the deities they recognize as supernatural and determiners of their existence. On the other hand, politics has become a major issue that determines various aspects of daily life in Nigeria. In the history of politics in Nigeria, the country has witnessed the reprehensible use of religious movements by politicians to achieve their personal objectives. Consequently, this has led to the political abuse of religion, dragging its adherents into political issues they are not supposed to be involved in.

Nigeria was believed to lack a national party and national leadership during preparations for independence due to the division of the country along ethnic lines (Smythe 1958; Kastfelt 1994). And these problems have extended to the post-colonial Nigerian state. It was after independence that the religious division of the nation state became more obvious to the extent that religion gradually became a tool in the political landscape of Nigerian society, especially amongst the adherents of the foreign religions of Christianity and Islam. Since independence in 1960, politics in Nigeria has been characterized by conflicts arising from the electoral process and the struggle for power. According to Thom-Otuya (2016: 62), "our election into leadership or political offices is beclouded by cheating, fraud and violence. Any contestant who is rigged out of election is always frustrated and can easily rebel against the society due to injustice." This situation or upsurge could be worsened if both rivals belong to different religious movements, as observed in the northern part of the country in 2011 when a Christian defeated a Muslim opponent. Most of the problems arising from such developments can be attributed to the failure of individuals to manage their differences and adhere to the rule of law, including electoral acts,

poor orientation, and the perception of winner-takes-all. Examples of religious movements in Nigeria are Mataisine, the Tijaniyya Aetherius Society, the Hare Krishna Movement (ISKCON), Raelism, Baha'ism, Christian Science, Brahma Kumaris, Eckankar, AMORC, the Sa'i Baba Mission, the Higher Consciousness Society, Shia Islam, Sufism, Ahmadiyya, Quraniyoon, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism, among others, each with different approaches to the achievement of their goals and daily life.

As a result of the dominant perception of politics and governance in Nigeria, the processes of socialization have been seen as means of self-settlement rather than calls to national service (Oladipo 2000). This explains why people could go to the extent of unnecessarily using religious groups to achieve their political agenda.

Before, during, and after campaigns and electioneering, the elite are given adequate security provisions with police and military escorts, even when many communities are not well policed and some lack any presence of security agencies. Security agencies in Nigeria are elite-driven and provide security for the elite class. This is one of the features of security governance dilemmas in Nigeria (Okolie-Osemene 2021).

Nigeria's Fourth Republic refers to the period in which the nation state witnessed a peaceful transition from a military regime to a civilian administration. The emergence of a democratically elected president in 1999 paved the way for more elections from 2003 to 2019, and this republic exists to date. It is characterized by democratization without any form of interference by the Armed Forces.

Nigeria is a secular nation state where citizens are not discriminated against in any manner on the basis of their religion, and individuals are seen as citizens and not as members of a particular religious group, as contained in Chapter 1 and Article 10 of the 1999 Constitution, which states that the Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as a state religion (Ogoloma

2012; Kitause and Achunike 2013). Unfortunately, religion is a source of identity in the polity. This is because religious identity plays a more significant role than national identity in the country (Opeyemi 2016), and many politicians are quick to consider religious movements whenever it is time for electioneering and during national events to the extent that members of two recognized religions, Christianity and Islam, always have an opportunity to start events with prayers and sometimes to end them with prayers. It is also significant to note that political office holders at the national and state levels also go as far as funding pilgrimages by sponsoring those shortlisted to visit the holy sites of Mecca for Muslims and Jerusalem for Christians. This exercise is implemented through government ministries and pilgrim boards recognized in various Nigerian states.

With the complicated nature of politics in Nigeria, it is difficult for political parties to nominate presidential candidates and their running mates for an election if they are adherents of one religious movement. They always have to find a way of striking a balance in different geopolitical zones. Also, the customary nature of organizing public events shows how leaders begin and end programs with prayer. This reveals the significance of religion in the country.

This paper examines the pattern of the political abuse of religion by politicians and adherents of religious movements who often use religious platforms in the state to achieve their political ambitions, thereby promoting groupism, which motivates elite rascality, and religious tensions, which undermine nation-building. It also explores how the political abuse of religion creates a negative perception and generates tensions in the polity. The objectives of this exploratory study include examining how the political abuse of religion creates a negative perception that generates tensions in the polity; investigating the Nigerian elite and their relationship with religious movements for political reasons; explor-

ing why politicians prefer to involve religious movements (both leaders and adherents) in political matters/their ambitions; and determining whether religion should be separated from politics in Nigeria or not. This study is divided into six sections. The first section is the introduction, the second provides conceptual clarifications, the third is an overview of the literature, the fourth is the theoretical framework, the fifth examines the elite and their relationship with religious movements for political reasons, while the sixth provides a conclusion.

The paper utilizes qualitative data, including 200 interviews with scholars and students of politics, religion, and conflict studies, speeches by political and religious leaders, and a review of political party activities. Trend analysis was adopted as the method of data analysis with thematic and tabular presentations of data.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

There are definitions of politics and religion that need to be considered in this study. Politics is about how individuals are involved in the leadership of a state, from the electoral process to the activities of government. Kukah (2001) sees politics as the capture of power, particularly in Africa. Politics “refer to the collective decision making process to the benefit of a large group of people (mostly a nation) that reside in a particular environment” (Moyser 1991: 4, cited in Beyers 2015: 145). Politics, according to Ndubisi (1991: 146), is “the management of the affairs of the people by the people through some form of leadership in order to maximize their welfare and well-being.” From this definition, it is obvious that problems emanating from politics stem from the struggle for leadership positions by individuals or groups whose supporters usually take different strategies to undermine their opponents.

Just like conflict, religion is a universal human experience that brings different groups together. According to Ejituwu (1995: 97), “Religion is the worship of the supernatural; and it derives its force

from man's observation that nature, or the unseen, appears so powerful, harsh and unfriendly. He therefore seeks harmony with it through prayers, worship and adulation." According to Dzurgba (2008: 10), religion is a "spiritual and social phenomenon which consists of sovereign power, with a spiritual component consisting of non-physical, immaterial, incorporeal, intangible or invisible entities such as God, Satan, angels, demons, heaven and hell." This, as Durkheim puts it, shows the role of the sacred in all societies where "elementary forms of religious life pervade collective life to the extent that there is basic division of the world into the sacred and the profane, the former being the shared sacrosanct ideals that unite a group, the symbols that represent it, and the collective rites that strengthen group allegiance, and generate the capacity to act in unison" (Jacobsson and Lindblom 2016: 78).

Man is "seeking to reach God by supplication, submission, offerings and faith, all in the attempt to respond effectively to his physical environment" (Horton 1984: 2, cited in Ejituwu 1995). The fact that religion is humanity explains why Islam and Christianity teach humility (Noibi 2001). Spirituality in religion explains why there are different classifications of people in society, such as believers, sinners, infidels, and those born again, among others (Kitause and Achunike 2013; Danjibo and Okolie-Osemene 2018). With such classifications, adherents and new converts are told to embrace deliverance, evangelism, and salvation for spiritual fulfillment with assurances of a better life and a life after death. This explains why Lenshie and Inalegwu (2014: 49) maintain that "the religious elites keep harping on certain areas within the 'holy book' that speaks much about the unbeliever and the treatment to be meted on them if they refused to accept the new faith." A notable difference between religion and politics is the superiority of religion that is associated with the belief in the existence of a deity.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The issues related to religious movements, the state, and politics can be approached from many perspectives. This shows why there is a corpus of literature on the subject. While religions are classified as spiritual activities, the earthly and material existences of humanity are found within the domain of politics (Beyers 2015). This means that religion is supernatural but politics is relegated to carnality and ends within the human environment. Just like culture, religion gives meaning to life, based on the relationship between the human being and his creator (Kukah 2007). It is noteworthy that such a relationship permeates every aspect of life, establishing a common bond between the believer (worshipper) and his creator throughout his lifetime.

Oshewolo and Borok (2015) argue that a lack of religion in any nation could make its society lack conscience, compassion, and progress. Nevertheless, it is instructive that this view is based on the spiritual value of religion, which Nwolise (2012) sees as the superiority and relevance of spiritual security. According to him, "when national political leaders belong to antagonistic and belligerent secret cult groups, the foundation of the nation is not Godly, and there will be fighting against powers and principalities in high places" (Nwolise 2012: 40). Given the emotional nature of religion, it is easily transformed from an instrument of peacebuilding to one of violence, especially when people are provoked (Ejituwu 1995; Kitause and Achunike 2013; Lenshie and Inalegwu 2014). Despite the ambivalent relationship between religion and politics across the world, different people often use religion as a political instrument, especially whenever they are desperate to achieve individual or group interests (Beyers 2015). In spite of the millions of adherents who belong to varieties of Indigenous African religion that have a pervasive force (Chidester 2018), most physical manifestations of religious conflicts involve more of the worshippers of foreign religions.

In dissecting the relationship between religion and politics, Beyers (2015: 159) highlights the reasons for utilizing religion as a political instrument, namely: religion and politics are emotional in nature and identity markers of human existence; politicians use it to prove their active religious engagement through religious gatherings and utilize religious platforms for political meetings; there are different contexts of histories of religious tolerance to the influence of political decisions; religious communities are effective partners in the implementation of political policies; and religious considerations could be part of political decisions. Martin (2019) also notes that politicians are fond of desperately offering electorates benefits of government, especially material gifts such as cash and alcohol, with the aim of influencing their choice of candidates to vote for as such patronage could motivate their cooperation. What this means is that one of the perceptions of politicians is that displaying generosity through gifts determines voting behavior on polling day and opens doors of understanding and cooperation with the populace. But this could be counterproductive and disappointing as some voters reserve the right to vote for whomever they wish, not considering the resources they may have received from a candidate they do not like. In addition, on getting into office after elections, the elite may only pretend to rule when the essence of their governance is focused on the embezzlement of state resources (Kukah 2001).

The fact that Nigeria is very religious is not disputable. Campbell (2011: xv) offers an illuminating analysis of the place of religion in Nigeria with the assertion that “popular alienation and a fragmented establishment has contributed to Nigeria becoming one of the most religious and, at the same time, one of the most violent countries in the world.” Recent reports of the Terrorism Index and Global Peace Index indicate that Nigeria is one of the ten most troubled states in the world as a result of religious-related violence. This ugly trend causes religion to

lose its relevance in the area of sustaining religious and social ideals if it is not reconciling peoples and communities as desired (Ogwu 2001; Bariledum and Vurasi 2013; Kitause and Achunike 2013).

It is believed that government undertakes religious instruction and blends secular and sectarian education without considering sanctioning religious ceremonies and observances in public schools across the country (Osetien and Gamaliel 2002). The violence that is often associated with religious issues has to do with attacks and reprisals by the adherents of the major religious groups – Christians and Muslims. In the words of Danjibo (2012: 236), “interreligious competition shows how Christians and Muslims act fundamentally as if the religions originated from the country rather than from an alien land.” Because of this fundamentalism, religious movements are now perceived with hostility in intergroup relations (Danjibo and Okolie-Osemene 2018; Suleiman 2019).

Despite the provisions of Section 10 of the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions and Section 11 of the 1989 Draft Constitution on the secularity of the country, which restrict the Federal Government or states from adopting any religion as a state religion, there were controversies over whether some northern states violated Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution by implementing sharia law (Goshit 2002; Osetien and Gamaliel 2002). The religionization of politics since Nigeria's independence is well documented with the entrenchment of religion as a potent force in political party mobilization, regime legitimacy, and the formation of identity (Kastfelt 1994; Fox and Sandler 2003; Onapajo 2012, 2016; Vaughan 2016). Thus, the regime's legitimacy is gained through members of religious movements being elected into leadership positions. Such a result is based on the majority of voters being drawn from religious groups.

Nigeria is a product of the theory of strange bedfellows, meaning fundamental diversity, which explains the coming together of several ethnic groups that did

not have things in common like religious belief, ideological orientation, language(s), and culture under one umbrella called the Nigerian state for political and administrative purposes; this was perfected by the British principle of indirect rule that ended up estranging the groups (Achebe 2012; Ajayi 2017; Adesina 2020; Odunlami and Oyeranmi 2020). These were independent states in the pre-colonial era until the colonial administrators brought them together through amalgamation in 1914. The explanation of Achebe (2012) reveals that in a country that has Animists, Muslims, and Christians, northern Nigeria was the seat of several ancient kingdoms, such as the Kanem-Bornu, which Shehu Usman dan Fodio and his jihadists absorbed into the Muslim Fulani Empire. The fact that these ethnic groups were different in the area of their religious practices shows their fundamental diversity, which has remained a source of difference and contestations in the polity to date. This is because, since they recognize different deities, practicing politics with religious mindsets further divides the different groups.

The role of religion in Nigeria's political landscape has raised a question of whether it is a resource for peace or a source of conflict (Rotimi and Olatomide 2018). According to Falola and Heaton (2008: 8),

[r]egional, ethnic, and religious identities have become heavily politicized. Christians from the south fear domination by the slightly more populous northern Muslims at the federal level. At the state level, ethnic minorities fear domination by larger ethnic groups: the Hausa–Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast. These ethnic and religious tensions have resulted in one civil war in Nigeria, from 1967 to 1970, as well as countless episodes of both organized attacks and spontaneous riots in which ethnic and religious minorities have been targeted. Religious and ethnic violence continues to be a regular occurrence today and shows no signs of abating.

The fear by both Christians and Muslims is based on a perceived agenda by both of the religious movements that the other will take advantage of political

offices to implement policies that could dominate the other and undermine the religious freedom stipulated in the country's constitution.

Writing on the role and politicization of religion, Vaughan (2016) offers insightful views with the assertion that the divisiveness of religion manifests in its politicization, becoming a tool of struggle for the control of the Nigerian state across religious boundaries, and this is rooted in the people's stronger allegiance to religious affiliations than political parties. This is why Opeyemi (2016) argues that the marriage between politicians and religious leaders is intact in Nigeria. That is why it is becoming easier for politicians to use religion for political purposes.

Some studies have identified the role of political parties in giving room to the influence of religion in party politics. Despite Nigeria having both religious and non-religious parties, Singh (2011: 18) notes that "political parties have been the main institutions that have transmitted and processed religious demands into political systems," and achieving success means investing in relationships outside their fold and seeking the cooperation of other religious movements. With the studies reviewed here, it is conspicuous that there are linkages between politics, religion, and the state in Nigeria despite it being a secular state. This is the origin of the political abuse of religion that generates tensions and religious conflicts in the country.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the power theory, resource mobilization theory, and the manipulation of religion theory. The power theory covers the blind spot of pluralism by insisting on and supplying the element of compulsion and coercion for an environment of order in which all groups are able to thrive and pursue their different interests without (human) society being returned to the state of nature, where life was solitary, poor, and brutish (Ekwonna 2015). According to Oladipo (2000: 126), "In the absence of democracy and social justice which are the ingredients of genuine human community, people are bound

to resort to whatever weapons are available to them, including those of ethnicity, religion, etc., to fight for power and influence, or even to secure their survival as individuals or [a] group.”

Nigerian elites are individuals who are stakeholders in government or close to the corridors of power and have significant influence in the polity, particularly in the areas of policy formulation, appointments, and the award of contracts, to the extent that they tend to dominate society (Albert 2012). They are Nigeria’s upper and ruling class who focus their interest on political governance and seek to influence governance processes as they position themselves to determine the destinies of the less privileged masses (Odubajo and Alabi 2014). As political elites, they have a decision-making capability due to their status in government at various levels of leadership (Bariledum and Vurasi 2013). They are capable of using all the resources within their reach to struggle for power or influence the decisions of those in power. Graf (1983: 119) reveals that

The Nigerian dominant classes have evolved from a fractious, ethno-centred and self-seeking series of groupings into a relatively cohesive, autonomous and self-confident stratum capable of regulating its internecine conflicts while pursuing its collective interests as against the interests of other social strata.

The manipulation of religion theory explains how elites use religion in a bid to influence state matters. Usman Bala sees it as an act of controlling the action of a person or group of people without their knowledge of the goals, method of such control, and without a form of control that is being exercised on them at all (Bala 1987, cited in Ayantayo 2009: 103). The power theory and manipulation of religion theory also have a relationship with the resource mobilization phenomenon, which explains “the activities of control agents to resist the demands for change, even when there are conflicts, differences and protests in a modern plural setting,” manifesting in the fear of the domination and marginalization of one group by another. This fear manifests in the rela-

tionship between Christians, Muslims, and indigenous religions, which are categorized as African Traditional Religions. The fear of domination and struggle for control hinder interreligious harmony and encourage desperation, particularly the abuse of religion to gain power, mobilize groups/sympathizers, and adopt the platform of religion to shape public perception for personal gains.

Nigeria has suffered from group-oriented threats to intergroup relations. Groupism is also the factor that motivates the manipulation of religion in Nigeria, especially due to the religious division of the country. With the lopsided clamor for presidential power, groupism has become more pronounced in the Fourth Republic. According to Stewart, Brown, and Mancini, “group inequality provides powerful grievances which leaders can use to mobilize people for political action, by calling on cultural markers (a common history, language or religion) and pointing to group exploitation” (2010: 8, cited in Ibaba 2011: 201). This also links to the position of Brubaker (2002) that groupism motivates social conflicts that are traceable to ethnicity, nationalism, and race, to the extent that such a perception of the “other” makes it difficult for stakeholders to achieve the goal of peacebuilding.

The foregoing is consonant with the statement by Ekekwe that there are problems with the fractionalization of the ruling elites in the country based on ethnic lines and the use of state power to promote the interests of one group at the expense of others (1966, cited in Ibaba 2011: 201). In other words, high levels of ethno-religious tensions and elite fractionalization combine with high levels of group grievance that promote violent contestations for power aimed at facilitating sectional interests in Nigeria (Kastfelt 1994; Bariledum and Vurasi 2013; Vaughan 2016; Oyefusi 2018; Odunlami and Oyeranmi 2020). It is remarkable that inter-elite conflict brought down Nigeria’s First Republic, and this paved the way for intra-elite collaboration that has charac-

terized subsequent democratic administrations in Nigeria (Graf 1983). Oraegbunam (2011) maintains that some setbacks associated with religious activities are due to the unhealthy mixture of religion with politics, which is characterized by acrimonious relationships and agitations by victimized and excluded groups.

Consequently, power mongers and exploiters have emerged to the extent that they usually misrepresent their motives and easily take undue advantage of the oppressed class of citizens found across all geopolitical zones, with some individuals/groups having more power/influence than they deserve (Oladipo 2000). As far as the issue of group exploitation is concerned, Nigeria is at risk considering how religion is used as a platform to exploit people for political purposes and not for the advancement of religious objectives. This problem is more pronounced in states that have a history of religious-related conflicts and competition between minorities and their counterparts who have dominated leadership positions for decades. Unlike Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, Plateau, Kogi, Bauchi, and other states, southeastern and southsouthern states may not have recorded many inter-religious conflicts arising from the political abuse of religion, but politicians in these two regions usually identify with worshippers in many churches to enhance their political success.

5. THE ELITE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS FOR POLITICAL REASONS

The social control value of religion has been established. This is based on how religious practices discourage crimes and victimization and promote peaceful living and good neighborliness. As Kinanee (2018) puts it, religious involvement results in fewer life stressors because engaging in spiritual activities is associated with forgiveness, less substance abuse, crime reduction, social support, generosity, marital fidelity, and other lifestyle practices, thereby enhancing well-being, hope, and satisfaction, which reduce the possibility of depression. Despite these

qualities and social control values of religion, individuals sometimes abuse religion with impunity. This is more common in politics, where materialism is given more preference than spirituality. This is the bane of social relations in considering how such abuse promotes endemic corruption.

Elite rascality shows how the privileged few use ordinary people who belong to different religious movements to achieve their selfish political interests. Groupism and elite rascality encourage the political abuse of religion, which creates religious tensions. Securitized elite form cabals consisting of shadowy groups of people bound together by certain sinister political interests (Albert 2012). Elite rascality is usually rooted in the activities of cabals and privileged individuals who may have economic or political power and wield much influence in the polity. Campbell (2011: xxi) describes the elite problem in the country as follows:

Many of the elite are still convinced that Nigeria is “too big to fail.” Such a view encourages the elites’ unwillingness to address the issues that so trouble the country and may even promote their irresponsible behavior, such as the manipulation of ethnic or religious conflict for their own narrow political ends, over which they soon lose control. Successfully addressing issues potentially fatal to the state will require a political process that has the confidence of the Nigerian people.

Writing on how the elite, especially the political class, advance religion as a cause because of their legitimacy problem, Kukah (2001: 21) states that “the failure of the Nigeria state or political class, whether in uniform or out of uniform, largely accounts for the contradiction we now find within the whole question of religion in Africa.”

The advantage behind elite collegiality usually cracks during transition periods when the winner-takes-all political culture of the country becomes more intense and politicians engage in the struggle for power (Campbell 2011). It is assumed that losers of elections will be condemned and investigated by an in-

coming government for their previous activities in office. For such politicians, elite rascality is a way of facilitating their victory without taking cognizance of the social implications in society.

Elite rascality and the politics of religion occur at different levels and areas of national life, from policy formulation to implementation, political appointments, and the electoral process. The government in Nigeria has always established relationships with religious movements both at the federal and state levels. Kukah (2007: 37) identifies the exclusive relationship between Kano state governments and Muslims as follows:

When a state like Kano decides to set up a law enforcement organ like the *Hisbah* to enforce public morality, the idea may be noble, but it is exclusive and it punishes. To be an indigene of Kano and be a Christian denies you the right to join the *Hisbah* no matter your qualification. If the *Hisbah* are only Muslims, normally, you are placing non-Muslims in a vulnerable situation and dividing the society. Those Muslims who have jobs through the *Hisbah* would naturally rejoice that religion has given a privilege to them, but thus us an abuse of religion and it undermines our common humanity and citizenship. Why would I be a citizen of Kano and feel inferior because I am not a Muslim? Why should any door be shut against me because of my faith? These are the dangers that we must guard against and the earlier we attack this cancer, the better it will be for everyone.

No wonder one of the respondents interviewed noted that, “in fact, the political abuse of religion has become a clog in the wheel of progress of the ‘one Nigeria’ project.” This is because, rather than create an enabling environment for all groups, religion has become a hindrance to inter-group relations with the involvement of government officials who adopt religion in state matters. Such a development undermines humanity and citizenship because religious leaders have allowed politicians to use religion as a medium of law enforcement. It is noteworthy that Kano, like many states in the northern part of Nigeria, recognizes the sharia legal system. This is against the Constitution of Nigeria, which only upholds the secularity of the state.

It is worth mentioning that after the 2015 presidential election, which was won by the All Progressives Congress, post-election appointments were designed to widen the chasm of ethnic, regional, partisan, and religious lines in Nigeria (Mbah et al. 2019). The keenly contested election showed the level of divisiveness that has beclouded the country. Since then, the narrative of political appointments has centered on this situation with allegations of nepotism and religious domination in public life to the extent that people in the southern part of the country have accused the president of neglecting the federal character principle when appointing government officials.

The politicization of religious identities in electoral competition has taken an intra-party form, though national parties appeal to religious constituencies for electoral support (Nolte et al. 2009, cited in Singh 2011). From the interviews conducted while conducting this study, 62% of respondents agreed that politicians have abused religion since 1999, while 30.77% were undecided. About 7.69% disagreed with the position. About 91.67% agreed that the political abuse of religion generates tensions in the polity, while 46.15% rated the involvement of religious leaders not so desirable, 38.46% rated it somewhat desirable, while 15.38% rated their involvement as very desirable. What this means is that there is agreement that religious leaders have been involved in political issues in one way or another, even as shadow parties or as critics of the government.

A reflection on the views expressed by respondents indicates that despite being involved in political issues, religious leaders leave much to be desired, especially in the area of setting a boundary to prevent politicians from taking undue advantage of religion so as not to undermine the essence of their spirituality. Because the difference between religion and politics has been neglected, it is now easy for people to assume that religion is a platform for the business of politics or to disregard the piety and respect religious groups

are supposed to have (interviews, 2020), thereby creating a negative perception of religious leaders and religion itself due to its use as a tool for political gains.

Such a boundary between religion, politics, and state matters is imperative to prevent some scandals often associated with the relationship between religious leaders, political office holders, and their followers. This is needful because, according to Opeyemi (2016), “after the 2015 elections, many religious groups and individuals were alleged in corruption cases, receiving election bribes to campaign for a particular candidate. In the \$2.1billion arms probe, as published in Premium Times (Nigerian online news platform), Bafarawa confessed that he received N4.6bn from Col. Dasuki for ‘spiritual purposes.’ Christian leaders in the country and Islamic clerics were alleged to have received money to campaign for President Jonathan during the last election.” From this, one question that demands an answer is from what sources did they generate such funds? This also leads to another question on whether it is necessary to pay people for prayers for electoral success since God is the giver of power. Such a move would not have been seen as a necessity if politicians themselves built spirituality through faith based on the divine mandate that one who is ordained by God to lead should emerge as the winner of the elections.

Some electorates often vote for the candidates of their choice for religious reasons to avoid what they regard as religious imposition, and those who vote beyond religious considerations do so based on the economic empowerment aspect of manifestoes (Babalola 2020).

It is not surprising that the majority of the respondents who were asked whether religion should be separated from politics in Nigeria said yes, with only three responding no. So, the fact that very few people are in support of religion being involved in the political affairs of the country means that religious leaders and their followers need to keep to the boundary between politics and religious

matters. This will also enable them to make a point to discourage politicians from running to religious groups during elections for personal gain. This is apt because, as noted by one of the respondents on why politicians like using religious movements during elections in the Fourth Republic, “This is simply because the religious sects are the most populated and bonded unions in the society.” This is obvious, considering how desperate they are to gain the support of the masses, especially the electorate. All the respondents agreed that people are emotional and sentimental when it comes to issues of religion, and politicians’ attachment to any group gives them an advantage in the build-up to elections. Since people’s support could enhance their chances of emerging victorious, they desperately use any religious movement of their choice. According to one of the oral sources, “religious movements are very effective in changing the voting behaviors of the electorate.” In fact, such support is usually sought after due to the fact that the outcome of elections is determined by the number of votes cast by the electorate, whose voting behavior remains a critical factor for the candidates.

It is at the point of desperation to influence votes that party candidates abuse religion by engaging in acts that do not represent the principles of religious practice. This is where elite rascality undermines the electoral process by creating groupism and perceptions of hostility, which often escalates tensions in the polity. A respondent identified “the sentiments Nigerians attach to religious dogma and fanaticism,” which is why they easily embrace any faithful as part of them when they come campaigning for political offices. Such acts could lead to electoral and post-election violence. Another respondent also said that this is “because religion is the easiest tool to get their results, knowing that our people love religion so much, and once used, the person or people involved gets results easily.” This study disagrees with the argument of Noibi (2001) that

religion should be integrated into every fabric of our national life. One question worth asking in this regard is which religious movement would be projected as a state religion? This is difficult, considering the existence of different religious groups in Nigerian society. Besides, it would be difficult for religious leaders to prevent politicians and their supporters from perpetrating violence when they have already anticipated victory with the massive support of religious movements, and their supporters would hardly accept the outcome if they perceive the process as not being credible, free, and fair. Thus, amassing votes from populated religious movements is an added advantage.

The interviews also revealed that some religious leaders have been partisan, and that explains why politicians easily use religious platforms to campaign for votes. According to the respondents, “religious leaders often campaign for politicians and get rewards from politicians, and the ones who are involved in political issues take sides with parties and persons as against standing for truth, human rights, and justice irrespective of religious affiliation.” There are also views that some religious leaders get involved in political issues by commenting on the issues arising from the polity and also by supporting one group or person against the others. Only one respondent stated that the “Christian Association of Nigeria decided to sacrifice its platform for politicians to promote religious intolerance.” However, notable religious leaders have actively engaged in rebuking politicians for their perceived insensitivity to the plights of the people and the lack of political will to promote human rights.

In response to how religious movements and their leaders have been involved in political issues in the Fourth Republic, one respondent argued that:

They served as third-party campaigners for politicians. These politicians belong to a particular denomination which, of course, contributes financially towards the growth of faith-based organizations. Thus voting and campaigning for such politicians would place the church in a strategic position. By so do-

ing, religious leaders do everything possible to maintain their status.

It is necessary to mention the fact that involvement in political matters is not only born out of the need to give members who are in politics a platform for success but also based on the desire to ensure “Godly” people are in power, especially when some groups believe that righteousness exalts a nation and that ungodliness could subject citizens to danger. This explains why many respondents agreed that religious leaders are involved by casting their votes during elections and encouraging their members to register to get their voters cards ahead of elections.

The fact that some respondents identified religion as a spiritual commitment that regulates the physical world shows that politicians know the strategic significance of being identified with religious leaders for prayers, spiritual backing, and support. It is desired that this attachment translates to electoral success and spiritual security in office.

The political abuse of religion also reveals how politicians often visit places of worship to either worship with the faithful or seek the prayers and endorsement of religious leaders and their members with the intention of soliciting votes with promises of a better life when elected, even when such promises are supposed to be constitutional responsibilities of the would-be leaders.

There are also instances when politicians visit shrines to take an oath of allegiance to a deity or godfather to facilitate their electoral victory. According to Ajayi (2011), some political leaders have been alleged to have visited shrines and local cult associations that host different deities in the indigenous religion mainly for oath-taking and to pay allegiance either for secrecy or to sustain themselves in power. A notable instance is the Okija Shrine incident in the southeastern region during Olusegun Obasanjo’s administration. It is noteworthy that indigenous religion is known for accepting rituals and sacrifices of different types depending on the context and need. A study by Olumati (2015)

reveals that no natural phenomenon exerts so much influence or is as pervasive among the Ikwerre in Rivers State as Ali, the earth deity. This is spiritual security. The abuse of African Traditional Religion also shows how politicians are supplied with human parts for sacrifices and the preparation of charms ahead of elections, like a politician and his boys did in Niger State in 2011 before they were arrested by the police (Nwolise 2012).

The political abuse of religion occurs both at the central level and in the 36 states of Nigeria, especially as politicians go from one place to another in search of supporters. The clash of civilizations and confrontations arising from the multiplicity of religious movements explains why Mahdi (2001) makes a case for inter-religious coexistence with the assertion that the mutual acceptance of religious plurality, protection of religious freedom, religious tolerance, and peaceful cooperation between the faiths remains critical. It is not disputable that the perception of hostility between religious movements is occasioned by the neglect of religious tolerance and increasing competition, which sometimes has a connection with the struggle for power and resource accumulation.

This paper argues that the political abuse of religion became more prevalent in Nigeria's Fourth Republic due to the successful handover of power to the civilian administration, which created an enabling environment for the formation of more than 50 political parties and their politicking activities. The transitions in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 tested the country's democratization significantl

6. PICTURES OF RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS OF NATIONAL EVENTS



FIG. 1. INTERDENOMINATIONAL SERVICE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CENTRE



FIG. 2. NIGERIA'S 60TH INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL JUMA'AT PRAYERS, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 (SOURCE: AUTHOR VIA NTA NEWS)

Both pictures show the connection between religion and the state and how national events are also marked by Christians and Muslims. During the Independence Day service at the International Christian Centre, the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) used the opportunity to preach against bitterness, secessionist threat and hatred in Nigeria, and the need for equality as a matter of principle in the country.

S/ No	YEAR	CANDIDATES	POLITICAL PARTY	RELIGION
1	1999	Olusegun Obasanjo (President) and Atiku Abubakar (Vice President)	People's Democrat- ic Party	Christian and Muslim
2	2003	Olusegun Obasanjo (President) and Atiku Abubakar (Vice President)	People's Democrat- ic Party	Christian and Muslim
3	2007	Umaru Ya'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan (Presi- dent and Vice President)	People's Democrat- ic Party	Muslim and Chris- tian
4	2011	Goodluck Jonathan and Nemandi Sambo (Presi- dent and Vice President)	People's Democrat- ic Party	Christian and Muslim
5	2015	Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo (Presi- dent and Vice President)	All Progressives Congress	Muslim and Chris- tian
6	2019	Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo (Presi- dent and Vice President)	All Progressives Congress	Muslim and Chris- tian

TAB. 1. WINNERS OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC (SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILATION).

S/NO	PERCEPTION	CONSEQUENCE
1	People see religion as a tool for political benefit	Endorsement of wrong candidates/ vote-buying
2	It makes people think politicians are more important than religious groups	Motivates people to go beyond the bound- ary between politics and religion
3	It portrays religion as a business	Vote-buying
4	Politicians think it is possible to hijack religion to create division in society	Religious intolerance and disunity in the country
5	People think that electioneering is an opportunity for religious groups to capture power for the benefit of their adherents and to demonstrate superiority	Threat to other religious groups
6	It portrays religion as a platform for unhealthy rivalry	Perception of hostility
7	The involvement of politicians with different religious affiliations means mutual suspicion	Electoral violence and hate speech
8	Political power determines the destinies of people rather than the supernatural, and God is indifferent to the polit- ical mismanagement of national wealth	Struggle for power, vote-buying, and endemic corruption
9	Politicians know that religion is the easiest tool to use to get sympathy from their followers	Religious conflicts during elections
10	It makes followers think that a person of the same faith as them can govern better than others, thereby causing conflicts among different groups	Religious intolerance

TAB. 2. HOW THE POLITICAL ABUSE OF RELIGION CREATES NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS IN NIGERIA (SOURCE: AUTHOR'S COMPILA-
TION).

Table 1 shows the winners who have ruled Nigeria within the period under study. The issue of the zoning of the pres-

idency also played a significant role in determining the choice of candidates by political parties, especially the ruling parties.

Table 2 shows how the political abuse of religion explains why elections in the country are also periods of religious politics, with elites creating different perceptions through their activities and promises. It was alleged that during the 2003 presidential elections, Major General Muhammadu Buhari cautioned Muslims to vote only for Muslim candidates, thereby generating cold blood between Christians and Muslims (Ayantayo 2009). The politics of religion and associated debilitating costs caused General Buhari, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress, to respond to criticisms over alleged fanaticism, saying that he does not encourage extremism. He swore that he had no disdain for adherents of Christianity, and the negative perception held in some quarters that he is an Islamic fanatic was rebutted when a group of pastors under the aegis of the Northern Christian Leaders Eagle Eyes Forum endorsed his bid for the presidency in Abuja (Abuh 2015: 3).

This paper is significant considering that Nigeria celebrated its diamond jubilee on October 1, 2020. Nigeria has gone through years of interethnic and religious crises, some of which have a political coloration. The People's Democratic Party has produced more presidents, while the strong opposition presented by the All Progressives Congress contributed to the victory of the party in 2019. The year 2011 was more violent due to the fiercely contested presidential election that saw the Congress for Progressive Change lose to the People's Democratic Party; many people were killed, especially Christians, while some were raped during the post-election violence.

It is not disputable that religion has social control values, but they need to be channeled into making society more peaceful by preaching tolerance and forgiveness instead of giving politicians the opportunity to abuse religious principles through the politics of exclusion, unhealthy rivalry, and struggle for power. This is in tandem with Marsilio's secular state thesis, which suggests that religion

should remain where it belongs in the state and that the state should not be at the mercy of religious groups. Nigeria stands to gain from this with reduced controversies generated by politicians and religious movements during electioneering. The avoidance of politics remains crucial if all religions are to speak with one voice to address a common problem that affects the national development, corruption, which requires an "ethical revolution," which Ndubisi (1991) sees as a solution to the country's predicament rather than indulging in the politics of religion. The desperation to attempt overshadowing religion with politics or using religion to advance the goals of politicians would downplay sincerity. This could undermine the people's consciences and national integration.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the abuse of religion by politicians. Religion preaches the force of faith and the belief in the capacity of omnipotent God to transform human society with his power to save people from danger and give them dominion in their environment. In religion, spirituality is expected to make people have the vision to see beyond the present, and this is why adherents are not supposed to allow political issues to make religion an instrument of violence. Unfortunately, groupism promotes the activities of anti-democratic forces and creates a platform for the political abuse of religion.

The competition between religious movements in Nigeria is more pronounced within the foreign religions of Christianity and Islam than the indigenous religions. The latter have not taken center stage as far as politics is concerned. Even those who identify with indigenous beliefs rarely practice their activities openly but instead carry out the demands of their faith, like sacrifices for political success or influence, secretly. However, there are times when candidates visit communities of some groups to meet either their traditional rulers or leaders of religious groups for the purpose of soliciting votes.

From this study, it is obvious that the country does not need the religionization of politics for good governance and the consolidation of democracy. Although it is not disputable that religious movements are attractive to politicians because of their size and loyalty to their spiritual leaders, their inability to check elite rascality sustains the political abuse of religion, which hinders the actualization of a united country. This is why all groups should draw inspiration from the holy books to be properly guided by the commandments in their actions in the polity to discourage the violation of the value of religion to humanity. Such actions would be within the principles of socioeconomic justice, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation.

It is possible to reduce religious tensions usually associated with political activities in the country, but this can only be achieved when all stakeholders put an end to dragging religious leaders and their followers into matters that are outside the spiritual responsibilities of the movements. Instead of being platforms of political tensions, religious movements should promote inter-religious peacebuilding involving all political parties, advocating for peaceful intergroup relations in the electoral process.

WORKS CITED

- Abuh, A. (2015). "I'm not a Religious Fanatic, Buhari insists." *The Guardian*, February 13, 2015.
- Achebe, C. (2012). *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. New York: Penguin.
- Adesina, O. C. (2020). "A Terrain ... Angels Would Fear to Tread": Biographies and History in Nigeria." *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 45, 1: 6–29.
- Ajayi, S. A. (2011). "The Place of Ogboso in Baptist Missionary Enterprise in Nigeria." *Ogiri: A Journal of African Studies* 8: 16–38.
- Ajayi, S. A. (2017). "From amalgamation to the quest for national integration in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and prospects." *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies* 7, 1: 1–33.
- Albert, O. I. (2012). "The Securitized Elite: A Deconstruction of the 'Cabals' in Nigerian Political Economy." *NISER RSS* 8: 1–26.
- Accessed July 5, 2020. http://www.niseonline.org/downloads/Albert_Cabals%20and%20Nigerians%20Final2.pdf.
- Ayantayo, J. K. (2009). "Religious Factors in the Nigerian Public Sphere: Burdens and Prospects." *Africa Development* XXXIV, 3 & 4: 93–10.
- Babalola, D. (2020). "Ethno-religious voting in Nigeria: interrogating voting patterns in the 2019 presidential election." *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 109, 4: 377–385.
- Bala, Y. U. (1987). *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria 1977–1987*. Kaduna: Vanguard Printers and Publishers Ltd.
- Bariledum, K. and Vurasi, S. S. (2013). "Political Elites and the Challenges of National Development: The Nigeria Experience." *European Scientific Journal* 9, 31: 161–172.
- Beyers, J. (2015). "Religion as Political Instrument: The Case of Japan and South Africa." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 1: 142–164.
- Brubaker, R. (2002). "Ethnicity without groups." *European Journal of Sociology* 43, 2: 163–189.
- Campbell, J. (2011). *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Chidester, D. (2018). "World Religions in the World." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 31, 1: 41–53.
- Danjibo, N. D. (2012). "The Impact of Sharia' on Intergroup Relations in Post-Colonial Nigeria." In *The Dynamics of Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria Since 1960. Essays in Honour of Obaro Ikime @ 70*, eds. Ogbogbo, C. B. N.; Olaniyi, R. O. and Muojama, O. G., 231–249. Ibadan: BWright Integrated Publishers.
- Danjibo, N. D. and Okolie-Osemene, J. (2018). "Religious Movements and Lethal Violence in Nigeria: Patterns and Evolution." *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 11, 4: 177–185.
- Dzurgba, A. (2008). *Case Studies of Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
- Ejituwu, N. C. (1995). "Yok-Òbòlò: The Influence of a Traditional Religion on the Socio-Cultural Life of the Andoni People." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 65, 1: 97–113.
- Ekekwe, E. (1966). *Class and State in Nigeria*. Lagos: Longman.
- Ekwonna, S. I. (2015). "Capacity Gap in Elitism, Group, and Power Frameworks: The Phenomenon of Envy as Framework of Analysis." *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 4, 6: 23–31.

- Falola, T. and Heaton, M. (2008). *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox, J. and Sandler, S. (2003). "Quantifying religion: Toward building more effective ways of measuring religious influence on state-level behaviour." *Journal of Church and State* 45, 2: 559–588.
- Goshit, Z. D. (2002). "The influence of religion on the reform movements in the 19th century U.S.A.: Lessons for Nigeria." In *Religion in the United States of America*, eds. Amali, S. O. O.; Owens-Ibie, N.; Ogunleye, F.; Adesina, O. and Uji, C., 33–45. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Graf, W. D. (1983). "Nigerian Elite Consolidation and African Elite Theories: Toward an Explanation of African Liberal Democracy." *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee / Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 16, 2: 119–138.
- Horton, R. (1984). "The Contemporary Relevance of Kalahari Religion." Paper presented at Buguma Centenary, Port Harcourt.
- Ibaba, S. I. (2011). "Harnessing the peace-development nexus: Overcoming cultural barriers to peace in Nigeria." *Journal of Intra-African Studies* 5: 190–213.
- Jacobsson, K. and Lindblom, J. (2016). *Animal Rights Activism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Kastfelt, N. (1994). *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity*. London: British Academic Press.
- Kinane, J. B. (2018). "The trauma of frustration and depression: A dilemma for mental health professionals in Nigeria." Inaugural lecture, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, April 26, 2018, Port Harcourt.
- Kitaue, R. H. and Achunike, H. C. (2013). "Religion in Nigeria from 1900–2013." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, 18: 45–56.
- Kukah, M. H. (2001). "Role of religion and nation's density." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 20–23.
- Kukah, M. H. (2007). *Religion, Culture and the Politics of Development*. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation.
- Lenzie, N. E. and Inalegwu, S. A. (2014). "Clash of Religious Civilisations in Nigeria: Understanding Dynamics of Religious Violence." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, 17: 47–60.
- Mahdi, A. S. E. (2001). "Religion and national integration." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 7–19.
- Martin, N. (2019). "Enforcing political loyalties in local elections: An ethnographic account from Punjab." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 58, 1: 63–81.
- Mbah, P. O.; Nwangwu, C. and Ugwu, S. C. (2019). "Contentious elections, political exclusion, and challenges of national integration in Nigeria." *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, 1: 1–21.
- Moyser, G. (1991). *Politics and Religion in the Modern World*. London: Routledge.
- Ndubisi, A. F. (1991). *Nigeria What Hope?* Enugu: CECTA (Nig.) Limited.
- Noibi, S. D. (2001). "Religion as necessity for human existence." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 24–25.
- Nwolise, O. B. C. (2012). *Spiritual Dimensions of Human and National Security*. Ibadan: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan.
- Odubajo, T. and Alabi, B. (2014). "The Elite Factor in Nigeria's Political-Power Dynamics." *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences* 8, 1: 121–139.
- Odunlami, B. A. and Oyeranmi, O. S. (2020). "Ethnic-Politics, Class Identity and the Crisis of Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1914–1970." *Kampala International University Journal of Humanities* 5, 2: 55–65.
- Ogoloma, F. I. (2012). "Secularism in Nigeria: An Assessment." *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 1, 3: 63–74. Accessed August 25, 2019. <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/article/view/106671/96580>
- Ogwu, J. (2001). "Introduction." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 1–4.
- Okolie-Osemene, J. (2021). "Nigeria's Security Governance Dilemmas During the Covid-19 Crisis." *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 48, 2: 260–277.
- Oladipo, O. (2000). "Nigeria in Twenty-First Century: Challenges of freedom and development." *Recall: A Chronicle of Nigerian Events* 1: 120–130.
- Olumati, R. (2015). "The Impact of Christianity and Modernity on Ali – Earth Goddess of the Traditional Religion of the Ikwerre People, Rivers State, Nigeria." *African Research Review* 9, 1: 95–108. Accessed May 25, 2020. <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/afrrrev/article/view/113878/103593>.
- Olusakin, A. M. (2006). "Peace in the Niger Delta: Economic development and the politics of dependence on oil." *International Journal on World Peace* 23, 2: 3–34.
- Onapajo, H. (2012). "Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, 9: 42–66.
- Onapajo, H. (2016). "Politics and the Pulpit: The Rise and Decline of Religion in Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Elections." *Journal of African Elections* 15, 2: 112–135.

- Opeyemi, O. R. (2016). "Opinion: Religion and corruption in Nigeria-an interplay." *YNaija News*, November 13, 2016. Accessed August 25, 2020. <https://ynaija.com/opinion-religion-corruption-nigeria-interplay/>.
- Oraegbunam, I. K. E. (2011). "Sharia Criminal Law, Islam and Democracy in Nigeria Today." *Ogirisi: A Journal of African Studies* 8: 181-209.
- Osetien, P. and Gamaliel, J. D. (2002). "The law of separation of religion and state in the United States: A model for Nigeria?" In *Religion in the United States of America*, eds. Amali, S. O. O.; Owens-Ibie, N.; Ogunleye, F.; Adesina, O. and Uji, C., 14-32. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Oshewolo, R. M. and Borok, A. M. (2015). "Religion and politics in Nigeria." *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 6, 3: 1-12.
- Oyefusi, A. (2018). "Comparing socioeconomic and human development in Nigeria and other oil-producing countries." In *The Unfinished Revolution in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Prospects for Socio-economic and Environmental Justice and Peace*, eds. Obi, C. and Oriola, T, 76-102. London: Routledge.
- Rotimi, O. and Olatomide, B. (2018). "Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace in Face of Security Challenges in Nigeria." In *Security Challenges and Management in Modern Nigeria*, eds. Olukoju, A.; Adesina, O.; Adesoji, A. and Amusa, S., 527-538. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Singh, G. (2011). "Religion, Politics and Governance in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania: An Overview." Working Paper 55, Religions and Development Research Programme, International Development Department, University of Birmingham.
- Smythe, H. H. (1958). "The problem of national leadership in Nigeria." *Social Research* 25, 2: 215-227.
- Stewart, F.; Brown, C. and Mancini, L. (2010). *Monitoring and Measuring Horizontal Inequalities*. CRISE Overview No. 4. Oxford: CRISE.
- Thom-Otuya, B. E. N. (2016). *National Security in Nigeria*, vol. 1. Owerri: Priscillia Omama Publishers.
- Suleiman, S. (2019). "The 'Middle Belt' Historiography of Resistance in Nigeria." *Afrika Zamani* 27: 15-44.
- Vaughan, O. (2016). *Religion and the Making of Nigeria*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.