RELIGION AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING, 1980-2009.

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my 2nd son Oshoke Adrian Anyia who at just 2yrs old, on the 8th February 1999 was deprived of oxygen for 22minutes during a routine Tonsillectomy. He suffered massive brain injury, was given 50% chance to survive the next 5yrs then, but he is here with us today by the grace of God and the Most Merciful.

My Other children, Ethasor, ILamosi and Oshoze

My wife Awele; Oshoke's 24/7 praying mother "Who can find a virtuous wife? for her worth is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10). Surely, she managed the household throughout my studies and put the children to bed while I worked nights in my study. Thank you to all those praying for Oshoke, may God answer us all

My parents: Late Chief Benedict Anyia and Chief Mrs Esther Anyia;

My siblings, cousins, entire extended family and in-laws;

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Albert Anyia

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CAN - Christian Association of Nigeria

CCN – Christian Council Of Nigeria

ECWA - Evangelical Church of West Africa

FBOs - Faith-Based Organizations

FOMWAN - Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria

JNI - Jama'atu Nasril Islam

NASFAT - Nasrul-Lahil-Il-Fathi Society of Nigeria

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

NIREC – Nigeria Inter-Religious Council

NIPSS – National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies

NISER - Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research

NSCIA – Nigeria Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs

MURIC – Muslim Rights Concern

OIC - Organization of Islamic Conference

PFN - Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria

RO - Religious organization

SCSN – Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria

SIAC – Sharia Implementation Advisory Commission

Chapter 1. Introduction

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960 and more notably from the 1980s onwards, the socio-economic, political and religious landscapes of Nigeria have been substantially influenced by religion[1]. Over time the significance of religion and its impact on various aspects of life in Nigeria has consistently come to the fore. Among other things, this has enabled religion to become increasingly an important factor in Nigeria's political activity and organisation. These circumstances are prevalent because first and foremost most Nigerians are religious people and religion is an integral part of the individual both in his/her private life and as part of the general community.[2] From the onset, it is imperative to clarify the key concept in this study – religion, in terms of its conceptual and relational ambiguity in politics. According to Tar and Shettima, religion refers to any belief system in which adherents submit themselves to a particular supreme being – supernatural, material or cosmic – as a sacred independent entity with invincible capacity to supply a range of mundane and after-life satisfactions in return for unconditional obedience, devotion and loyalty.[3] Broadly, this definition applies to all faiths Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religions (ATR), Buddhism and Sikhism etc.

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[1] Religion is a very complex matter; J Haynes opines that it is problematic www.wiscnetwork.org/getpaper.php?1d=67, (Listing 17 different definitions, ME Marty, in his contribution to the study of religion, concludes that scholars will never agree on the definition of religion, thus he noted "five phenomena to describe and capture it. Religion focuses our 'ultimate concern', builds community, appeals to myth and symbol, is enforced through rites and ceremonies, and demands certain behaviour from its adherents. This suggests that we approach the concept of religion as a (1) body of ideas and outlooks, such as, theology and ethical code, as (2) a type of formal organisation, such as an ecclesiastical church and as (3) a social group, such as faith-based organisations. Finally, religion affects the world in two basic ways: by what it says and does. The former relates to doctrine or theology, while the latter relates to religion's importance as a social phenomenon and mark of identity, which manifests in various modes of institutionalisation". In ME Marty. Politics, Religion and the Common Good: Advancing a Distinctly American Conversation About Religion's Role in Our Shared Life. 2000 Josey-Bass publishers, San Francisco, USA, pp 10 –15.

[2] For useful literature on the importance of religion in the lives of Nigerians, see among others:

(i) M Hassan Kukah & T Falola. *Religious Militancy and Self-Assertion; Islam and Politics in Nigeria* (Making of Modern Africa). 1996 Ashgate.

(ii) J Paden, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria; Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, USIP Press, Washington, 2008, T Falola, *Violence in Nigeria; The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, University of Rochester Press, NY, p 1, 1998, P Williams. *The Nigerian Predicament: The Religious Impact on the Nation State*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1995

(iii) A Mbachirin, *The Response of the Church in Nigeria to the Socio-Economic, Political and Religious Problems in Nigeria*: A case study of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Unpublished PhD. Thesis Baylor University Texas, pg 1, 2006, I Enwerem, *A dangerous Awakening; The Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria*, IFRA Ibadan, 1995 Mathews, Ojo. *Pentecostal Movement, Islam and the contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria, in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol.18, issue 2, April 2007, pp 174–188, Routedge.

(iv) Korieh Chima, Nwokeji Ugo. (Eds) *Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria*, University Press of America Maryland USA, 2005

[3] U Tar & A G Shettima, *Endangered Democracy?* The Struggle over Secularism and its Implications for Politics and Democracy in Nigeria, Discussion paper 49, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2010, Accessed, 4-1-2011

However, in this study I will emphasise on two "organised religions" that are prevalent in Nigeria: Christianity and Islam.[4] Generally, organised religions are characterised by a set of norms and values expressed through visual symbols (such as the cross or crescent); systems of worship (prayers, meditation); physical spaces for meditation (church, mosque); textual compendia (Bible, Qur'an); membership of a group (Christian and Muslim) and a structured hierarchy; both horizontal and vertical. Though by no means exhaustive, these features serve as a prima facie basis of collective identity and action.[5]

Mbachirin claims that every religion seems to have grown in the number of adherents in Africa generally and in Nigeria in particular.[6] This is evident from the way most religions and indigenous churches flourish in Africa as compared with or better than their places of origin.[7] For example, adherents of Islam and the number of Muslims in Nigeria is far greater than those in any other Arab nation, usually Nigeria has the largest or second largest number of pilgrim contingent to Mecca who performs the *Ummra* and *Hajj* yearly.[8]

Furthermore, the Christian religion has grown tremendously particularly in Southern Nigeria. These high growth levels have led researchers such as Jenkins to claim that Africa in general, will soon become the World centre of Christianity.[9] To buttress this claim, it is noted that Nigeria has the largest number of Anglican Church members in the world and also the growth rate of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is phenomenal especially for example, is the increase in the congregation of the Redeemed Christian Church of God.[10]

Religion and politics have no clear boundaries in Nigeria's domestic politics and international relations. Nigeria political scientists and researchers have been increasingly concerned with what appears to be an intertwining of religion and politics within the polity; fundamentally

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[4] Ibid. See also Kukah and Falola, (1996), Femi Ajayi, *The Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, iUniverse Bloomington, IN, 2009

[5] Ibid.

[6] Mbachirin, Op.cit pg 1.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid, See also A Mazuri. *Religion and political culture in Africa.* Journal of American Academy of Religion, Vol. 53, December 1985, pg, 820, The *Ummra and Hajj*: Ummra is the lesser pilgrimage to Mecca and it is not compulsory but it is recommended to Muslims, while the Hajj is the major pilgrimage which is compulsory for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it

[9] P Jenkins. *The Next Christendom*, Oxford University Press, NY, 2002. He further notes that Christianity is more vibrant in Africa than in the West; this is because Christians in Africa and the East have similar experiences as the early Christians in the first century.

[10] The Redeemed Christian Church of God http://www.rccg.org, M Ojo, *The End Time Army: Charismatic movement in Nigeria*, World Press, 2006, Mbachirin, pg 2, full details in Afe Adogame and Frieder Ludwig (Eds) European Traditions of the study of Religion in Africa, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, Triannual, 2004

calling into question the once hegemonic explanatory power of the secularisation paradigm.[11] As this thesis highlights, sectarian politics seems to be central to the dearth of democracy in Nigeria and events since Obasanjo's fourth republic in 1999, particularly the rise of political Islam in the North, which led to Sharia law and Christian/Pentecostal revivalism, have had a profound impact on the country's fledgling democracy and claims to secularism.[12] Kukah asserts that Islam is both a religious and political force in modern Nigeria.[13] Section 10 of the Nigeria's constitution stipulates that 'the government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion'.[14] Broadly, the constitution prohibits the adoption of a state religion and guarantees religious freedom. Thereby ensuring the neutrality of the state and linking Nigeria with countries such as Turkey, USA, France, etc. where secularity is state policy. This is an abstract provision that is far from reality: both the state and the governing class have always approved and supported religious narratives and symbols – such as divine revelations, mystical interpretation, mosques, churches, shrines, etc. – in advancing and promoting state policies. Comparatively, the implication of this section in Nigeria, demonstrates that it did not apply a regime of strict separation between religion and the state as noted in other countries such as the US and certain European countries.[15] Nigeria's constitution promised the citizens religious freedom and insisted at the same time on secularism, thus contradicting itself, as the two constitutional principles are mutually exclusive. While Christians praised secular law as a safeguard of religious tolerance, Muslims saw it as a means of oppression and their rights being trampled upon.[16]

Furthermore, many authors and scholars,[17] argue that many people in Nigeria believe that religion is an integral part of the individual and through its appeal with millions of its people, it is being used to organise the peoples sentiments, utilised to garner support during political elections and choose leaders[18] etc. Accordingly, Marshall in his survey claimed that 92% of Nigerians agree that religion is important to their life and also that religion plays a critical role

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[11] J Haynes & A Hennig, (Eds), *Religious actors in the Public Sphere; Means, Objectives and Effects*, Routledge London, pg 1. 2011

[12] U Tar and AG Shettima, Op.cit,.

[13] H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit. pg, 2, 1996

[14] JM Otto (Ed), *Sharia Incorporated; A comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*, Leiden University Press, pg 584, 2010

[15] Ibid, see also P Ostein & Gamaliel; *The Law of separation of religion and state in the USA*: A model for Nigeria, 2002. Http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1458421.

[16] J Harnischfeger, *Democratisation and Islamic law; The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*, University of Chicago Press, IL, 2008, pp 221–224, see also Op.cit. JM Otto (Ed), 2010

[17] The list is inexhaustible however noted are the works of: T Falola, *Violence in Nigeria, 1998*; H Kukah and T Falola, *Religious Militancy and self assertion*; Op.cit. J Paden, 2008; E Osaghae, *crippled giant;* Ihonvbere & Shaw, *illusion of power: Nigeria in Transition*; Korieh & Nwokeji, Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria; etc.

[18] J Harnischfeger, Op.cit.

in their social life and everyday living.[19] Haynes discusses the various ways by which religion affects politics in relations to authority, legitimacy, power and equity.[20] This is very relevant in Northern Nigeria particularly, especially because of the role and political nature of Islam and the Islamic leader; who is both the spiritual and political head. When describing the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria, Falola describes them as bedfellows;[21] and Nigerian politicians, in their quest for political power, will do everything to exploit the role of religion, use it to seek support from the population and go to the extent of describing themselves as religious leaders worthy of emulation.[22]

The result is that the overall relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria promotes mutual distrust and suspicion to the extent that virtually every national issue is seen from the religious point of view and tainted with religious bias. The religious climate in Nigeria is equally vivacious,[23] because religions assumes great political significance within the polity, and also generate tension as a result of the country's ethnic-religious mix, role of religious organisations and actor's ability to influence policy outcomes. This tension has a clear connection with the growth of uncompromising Muslim and Christian activism, which since the 1980s have led to a growing culture of religious violence, particularly common in the North between adherents of the two most popular religions: Islam and Christianity.[24]

In the game of government policymaking multiple actors (legislators, party leaders, Military leaders, President, interest groups, lobbyists, media, etc.) interact in an attempt to converge on a competitive outcome in a policy space,[25] giving rise to complex interactions between religious / secular interest groups and decision makers. In Nigeria especially, this study has noted that politics is a competition to influence government decision-making outcome because of the centralisation of power in the federal / state government institutions. Therefore, individuals, such as those in Christian and Muslim religious groups, with different ideas and interests mobilize and compete to produce collective outcomes through their various interactions with policy makers and it is this competition between the religious groups in

[19] K Marshall, Africa: *How and Why is Faith Important and Relevant for Development*, April 30. The World Bank Dialogue on Values and Ethics (HDNDE) Working Paper, http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csrc/PDFs%20and%20Jpgs/marshall-africa.pdf. 2005. Accessed 10-09-2011)
[20] Ibid, see also, J Haynes, *Religion in Third World Politics*, Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1994
[21] T Falola, Op.cit. 1998
[22] H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pg, 2, 1996
[23] Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 1
[24] Dapo Asaju, *'The Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria' in studies of selected Nigeria Problems*, S. Johnson (ed), Okanlawon Press, Lagos, 1990. p 112
[25] M Grossman. *Institutionalized Pluralism: The Prominence of Interest Organizations in National Policymaking*, Institute of Governmental studies, UC, Berkeley, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6vj3q74r, 2006, Accessed 10/09/2010

Nigeria that specific policy issues are highlighted in this thesis. The characteristics of these religious interest groups affect the extent to which they organize their leadership to influence government decision making and the manner of their representation.[26]

This thesis is primarily concerned with the political influence of religious actors in the Nigeria government decision making process over time. The emphases here are the measures of organizational access by religious interest groups for example to policymakers and their influence over policy outcome with respect to the political process.[27] That is, when and how specific religious actors seek to influence political outcomes of government decision making both in domestic and foreign policy. This is examined in relation to two key issues: Nigeria's membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the introduction of Sharia law, which have been key issues respectively in, foreign and domestic policies. Together, these two issues have significantly sharpened the focus on the interaction of religion and politics in Nigeria in recent years.[28] Baumgartner and Jones, claim that case studies of the policy process in specific fields (such as the examples of the OIC and Sharia law above) indicate that interest organizations (in this case religious groups), representing public constituencies often play a significant role in defining political options and influencing government decisions.[29]

Furthermore, this thesis examines the issues from both a historical and empirical viewpoints. In terms of foreign policy, Nigeria's relationship with the OIC over time will be examined. The influence of religion on politics in the domestic sphere focuses on both leading Christian and Muslim actors, and focuses empirically on the controversial issue of Sharia law in many of Nigeria's Northern states.[30] These two issues (OIC and Sharia law) have represented two of the most important policy issues involved in religion and politics in Nigeria over time.[31] The overall conclusion is two-fold. First, the religion of the decision makers is very important to the outcome of policy, as the introduction of Sharia clearly demonstrated. Second, that Muslim religious actors were consistently more effective, compared to their Christian counterparts, in encouraging policy makers, through the articulation of what can be called

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid, see also in K Andrews & B Edwards, "*Advocacy Organizations in the U.S. Political Process.*" Annual Review of Sociology 30 (1): 479–506. 2004

[28] See full discussion in Op.cit. F Ajayi, pg 38, 2009, Op.cit. T Falola, Op. cit. H Kukah and T Falola, 1996

[29] F Baumgartner and B Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, University of Chicago Press, 1993

[30] Sharia, or Islamic law, is a religious set of principles based on the four pillars of Islam: Qu'ran (Islamic Holy text), the Sunna (teachings of the Prophet Mohammed), the Ulama (religious scholars) and the Qiyas (case law). Ismene Zarifis, Rights of Religious Minorities in Nigeria, 10 HUM. RTS. BR. 22, 22 (2002)

[31] F Ajayi, Op.cit., D Asaju. Op.cit.

'religious influence' to persuade relevant policy makers to adopt the policies they prefer in relation both to the OIC and Sharia policies.

This thesis is located in a wider context, and the influence of religion in politics is noted to be a growing phenomenon, not only in Nigeria, but also over much of the world, with the probable exception of Western Europe.[32] Within Nigeria, however, it is a very controversial issue. This is because it is widely believed that if the relationship between religion and politics is not carefully controlled and managed, it has the potential to be a very significant destabilising mechanism. Fears are heightened in this regard by recent events, including serious recent clashes in the Northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims, which led to major losses of life.[33]

In other parts of the world for example, many authors attest to the significant role of religion in both domestic politics and international relations, with some observers noting a recent widespread religious resurgence[34] in world politics, in the US, India, Sudan and Nigeria.[35] In some of these countries, religious leaders either gained political power or clashed with secular authorities as political boundaries were defined, redefined and in general they have been successful such as the Ayatollah Khomeini Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979,[36] and or the introduction of Sharia in Northern Nigeria.

Influences on government decision makers can be wielded in several ways because various religious leaders and organisations claim to speak for millions of ordinary citizen, an attribute that can give them the ear of the decision makers. One way of doing this is regular face-to-face meetings. In various countries including Nigeria, religious actors seek to influence the outcome of government policies by encouraging policy makers to adopt policies that are informed by their religious beliefs and norms. In countries where significant studies have been carried out in relation to the role of interest groups and the decision-making institutions, such as the US[37] for example, which is considered a highly religious country,[38] domestic

[32] P Norris & R Inglehart. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, New York. pg. 4, 2004
[33] Falola, Kukah, Op.cit., Enwerem, Op.cit., Kenny Op.cit., etc., see full details in their works.
[34] J Haynes, *Religious and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, Iran and India: Towards a Research Agenda*, www.wiscnetwork.org/getpaper.php?1d=67, Accessed 19/12/2008, see also Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, London: Pearson, 2007; J Fox, S Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2004
[35] T Falola, Op.cit., p 11
[36] Islam, http://www.iranchamber.com/history/islamic_revolution/islamic_revolution.php, Accessed 15 may 2010
[37] Especially recently the works of; JN Victor, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2004, M Grossman, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, etc.

evangelical groups are very powerful; it is argued that they are sometimes able to convince the US government through the use of their significant religious influences.[39]

This is clear in the way these evangelical groups oppose the funding for contraception, abortions and support for family values etc. The role of the conservative Christian evangelicals in this regard is very significant, especially since the 1970s, when it sought to target successive US government in relations to these policies/sympathies. The presidencies of Bill Clinton (1993–2001) and George W Bush (2001–2009) were aggressive targets for these groups. As Wessner noted, the crusade of the Christian evangelicals is as evident as anywhere in the words, pronouncements and deeds of the then Bush administration.[40] For this influence to be effective, it is important to note that when certain religious views are held / shared by religious groups or actors and the decision makers – including the President, then it is likely that religion and religious influences will be significant in the decision-making process in relations to specific policy outcomes. When the US government agrees to such policy actions and curtail / increase funding as the case may be to these groups, then it is emphasising the significant role of religion within the government.[41]

In other countries where religion's prominence are also well documented such as in Saudi Arabia, India and Iran, religious leaders' ability to affect policy depends on whether they can gain and retain the ear of influential policy making figures,[42] and or be involved personally in the decision-making process, for example, in Iran, where the role of the Khobregan[43] are very significant in many policy issues. In addition, Falola claims that it would be inadequate to attempt to understand the politics in Saudi Arabia since the late 1920s without considering the role of the Ulama.[44] Close personal relations with key players, good relations with influential

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[38] J Haynes, Religious and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, Iran and India: Towards a Research Agenda, *Third World Quarterly*, 29, 1 (February 2008) pp 143–165. See also P Norris and R Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular; Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, 2004

[39] Ibid.

[40] D Wessner, *Addressing Fundamentalism by legal and spiritual means'*, Human Rights and Human Welfare, Vol.3:65–76; and also in J Haynes, *Religious and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, Iran and India: Towards a Research Agenda, Third World Quarterly*, 29, 1 (February 2008) pp 143–165

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid, also more details in Hudson Michael, the United States in the Middle-East, in L Fawcett (Ed), *International relations of the Middle-East*, Oxford University Press, UK, pp 293–305, 2005

[43] The Khobregan (Assembly of Experts) meets for one week every year, it consists of 86 "virtuous and learned" clerics elected by the public to 8-year terms. It was required by law to meet in Qom, but up to now its sessions have been held in Tehran out of convenience. Nevertheless, the Secretariat of the Assembly of Experts is based in Qom. Like presidential and parliamentary elections, the Council of Guardians determines who can run for a seat in the assembly. Members of the Assembly of Experts in turn elect the Supreme Leader from within their own ranks and periodically reconfirm him. The Assembly has never been known to challenge any of the Supreme Leader's decisions; http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/experts.htm.

[44] Ibid. Ulama is an Islamic cleric/Teacher

print and electronic media can help to alter policy makers' behaviour.[45] Religion, as noted in this study, can often wield direct or indirect influence that can be instrumental in helping construct the mind-set of policy makers, in relations to both domestic and foreign policy matters. However, Inamete (2001) suggests that Nigeria government policy decision-making structures involves policy decision being passed from the top to bottom in hierarchies consisting of predominant leaders with a subordinate and pliable staff.[46] These assumptions and role of religious actors are crucial to this research.

Aims of the Study

The role of religion and politics in the Nigerian government decision-making process is significant because it allows us to determine the extent to which religions have been embedded in the political process. Nigeria operates a federal system of government that have evolved over time, from the three regions that were in place at independence in 1960 to the present 36 states. Its ethno-linguistic and religious diversity make it one of the most complex countries in the world, and it is the need to accommodate these many strands that has been the driving force in the country since its independence.[47] The bureaucratic and political changes associated with post-independence development within the federal structure have influenced not just the location, but also the identities of the various ethnic–religious groups within Nigeria and the opportunities available to them. This is evident in the way each major group in their respective regions constituted themselves into a 'core' ethno-political unit. (see Table 4 in chapter two).

Traditionally, the dominant ethnic group in Northern Nigeria are the Hausa–Fulani with an overwhelming Muslim majority. The Yoruba tribes are predominant in the South West, over half of the Yorubas are Christians and about a quarter are Muslims, with the remainder following mostly traditional beliefs. The predominantly Christian Igbo are the largest ethnic group in the South East, with Roman Catholicism constituting the largest denomination (Table 4 shows the Ethnic breakdown of Nigeria). However, other Christian denominations, such as Pentecostals and other Evangelists, have very strong presence in lobbying elected representatives (Figure 1 and Table 1).[48]

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[45] J Haynes, Op.cit. February 2008, pp 143–165

[46] U Inamete, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Nigeria*, Associated Press London, pp 17–19, 2001.

[47] Ibid.

[48] M Raufu Abdul, *Ethnic Minority Groups in Nigeria: Current Situation and Majority Problems*, commission on human rights working group on minorities, United Nations 9th Session, 12–16 May 2003; See also J Paden, *Ahmadu Bello. Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986

This thesis provides a clear and concise account of the ways in which selected Nigerian religious actors, such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (the CAN) and the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), interact with government policy actors on two key policy issues: OIC membership (international) and the adoption of Sharia law (domestic). Focusing on these policy issues enabled us to understand the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria, particularly, how key religious actors and individuals have sought to use religion as a tool of influence to achieve specific goals. The key goals of this research are:

- To investigate thoroughly the role over time of religion within the context of Nigeria's policy process, with specific focus on the impact of significant religious organisations and actors who have sought to influence decision makers in relation to OIC membership and the introduction and consolidation of Sharia law.
- To investigate how key religious groups namely, the CAN and the NSCIA managed to acquire and retain significant positions in the country's socio-political and economic terrain thus, helping these religious organisations to use their important influence to affect policy outcomes.

This study focuses in detail on these religious organisations, as they plausibly claim to represent Christian and Muslim constituencies in their relationship with government.[49] Both the CAN and the NSCIA enjoy popular support in Nigeria; Christianity and Islam are followed by over 80% of the Nigerian population (Table 1).[50] In this context, it is reasonable to hypothesise that both the CAN and the NSCIA seek to influence key decision makers on various policy issues, to demonstrate to their respective communities that they are worthy of their support because of the influence they can wield with 'big men'[51] in government, at both national and state levels.

In summary, this study examines specific governmental decision-making processes in relations to the specific policy issues identified at both national and state levels, with a view to

[49] I Enwerem, Op.cit. 1995; see also Op.cit .A Mbachirin, Op.cit. H Kukah, *Religion and Politics in Northern Nigeria Since Independence*, PhD. Thesis, University of London, 1989.

[50] Ibid. For the religious identity and demography of Nigeria see also in O Odumosu, A Simbine, *Religious Organisations, Values and Rivalry in Nigeria: Exploring the Implications for Development and Politics*, Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), RAD Working paper 64, 2011

[51] The term 'Big Men' generally refers to specific individuals in the community who are highly influential, rich and possess political, economic and social power. They are perceived to be significantly influential in the community and in the corridors of power. In Nigeria, the 'big man' may seize power by the bullet or though the ballot but refuses to relinquish when it is time to do so. He may sometimes provide economic assistance and protection to his followers who in return give their overwhelming support to his whims and caprices.

understanding how selected religious organisations and in some cases, individual leaders, wield influence. They seek to do this in various ways, including the exploitation of personal relationships and contacts, as well as the lobbying of elected representatives and officials. The overall aim of the thesis is to clarify exactly what role these significant religious organisations and leaders' play in the context of these specific foreign and domestic policy issues and outcomes over time. The purpose then is to establish the outcomes of the relationships between selected religious actors and decision makers. What difference, if any, does it make if they share religious allegiance, and are these allegiances reflected in the policy decisions made in relation to the membership of OIC and adoption of Sharia law? These are the questions this research will investigate thoroughly. Investigating these religious actors is useful in ascertaining their importance of the roles they occupy and the impact they have within the policy-making structure in Nigeria as well as the role of the three arms of government in the Muslim-dominated Sharia states. This study argues that these probably enhanced and promoted favourable policy outcome for their respective religious interest groups.

The scope of the thesis covers the period from 1960 to 2009. It notes the period from 1961, when the JNI was formed to 12 years later, when the NSCIA was established. In effect, this created a representative organisation for Nigeria's Muslims. Three years later, in 1976, the CAN was inaugurated, claiming to represent Nigeria's Christians.[52] A few years after this, in the 1980s, 'religion' became a significant political issue in the country, and as Enwerem noted at the time, religion rose steadily into the political limelight.[53] Until then, Nigeria's post-independence political wrangling had been centred not on religion, but on ethnic division, questions about oil revenues and regional issues; in short, secular concerns dominated the public political domain until the 1980s, when the role of religion becomes more noticeable. It is also very important to note from the onset, that at the time of this research, Boko Haram[54] was not active and the subsequent dilemma in Northern Nigeria was not an issue, and therefore, this has not included it in this study.

[52] Enwerem Op.cit., op.cit. A Mbachirin, op.cit. H. Kukah, op.cit. T Falola, pp 108–109, 1998
[53] Ibid
[54] Boko Haram is Nigeria's militant Islamist group. also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, in Arabic it means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" their idea lies on the principle of Islam which makes it forbidden for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. Boko Haram was set up in 2002 by Mohamed Yusuf, but it came into prominence in 2009 after a state of bombings in Maiduguri (North eastern Nigeria) and after storming a police station.

Literature Review

Before we begin to examine issues referred to above, it is appropriate to locate the concerns of the thesis in the context of previously published relevant study, in order to show how this thesis advances knowledge in a number of areas. The literature review of religion and politics in Nigeria throws up numerous issues. The majority of the existing relevant literature focuses on broad issues such as politics of ethnicity, religious demography, faiths, growth, militancy and religious violence in contemporary Nigeria especially over access to state power. There is very little existing literature on the role of religion in the domestic and foreign policy decision-making process in Nigeria, especially the role of religious interest groups on the lobbying processes / policy outcome in realtion to specific government religious policies in Nigeria. This lack of research on the subject matter of this thesis is behind Enwerem's comment that 'the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria has received minimal attention and that early studies in this area did not advance sufficiently to integrate politics and religion into a satisfactory whole.[55]

Accordingly, Mbachirin claims that the obstacle to a holistic scholarship to the study of religion and politics in Nigeria is because the Nigeria academic community has, for some time, tended to link religion, especially Christianity with colonisation. Falola observes that early Nigeria scholars, rather than examine objectively the political role of religion, felt it was both necessary and rewarding to correct the pervasive hostile characterisation of indigenous religion as primitive, pagan and fetish[56] during the colonial period. This was mainly because such writers were more focused on the issues, burden and negativity associated with the colonial mentality. They seriously failed to recognise or discuss anything in relation to the significance or growth of religious organisations which accounted for a clear evidence of the politicisation of religion in Nigeria, according to Enwerem.[57] Studies such as those of Idowu were seriously concerned with the explanation and defence of indigenous religions as both rich in content and relevant to the indigenous Nigerian people,[58] as a result, until recently, such scholars showed no interest in religious actor's activities.[59] It is noted that Islam and Christianity did not encounter a religious vacuum in Nigeria, religious consciousness is deep, widespread and as old as the indigenous communities, whose indigenous political structures

[55] Op. cit. Mbachirin, p 22. Op. cit. I Enwerem, pg xi, 14, IFRA, Ibadan 1995
[56] Op.cit. T Falola, pg 6
[57] Ibid, I Enwerem, Op. cit., see also Op.cit. M Kukah, 1989, M Chukwuma, *Nigerian Politics and the role of religion: An analysis of national integration* (Bonn: Rheinischer Friedrich-Wilhelm University, 1985); Op.cit. F Ajayi, 2009
[58] Ibid, see also B Idowu, Olodumare: *God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman, 1960)
[59] Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 22, Op.cit. Enwerem, Op.cit.,

have always been inextricably interwoven with religion. What is more evident from previous studies was the emphasis or focus on the historical and political development of Nigeria with little or no attention to policy-making processes.

Other social researchers failed to recognise the impact of religion in Nigeria, instead concentrating on ethnicity and regionalism as more important than religion and its ability to be a divisive factor in the country, thus only focusing on religion narrowly. The emergence of religious violence in Nigeria, especially the outbreak of the Maitatsine riots in 1980, in Kano state, in which thousands of people were killed and the secrecy surrounding the OIC membership, according to Falola,[60] brought the religious crisis to its climax. Such events have led to religion receiving more serious thought, whereas previously, as noted by Enwerem, none of the relevant social scientists devoted any serious attention to religion between 1960 and 1980. The *Journal of Economic and Social Science*, for example, did not publish any articles on religion in these two decades.[61] This implies very few serious studies were undertaken that dealt with the significant role or impact of religion in the policy process in general, or for that matter, government decision-making process and policy outcome, in particular. Thus my study will evaluate the role of religious actors i.e., CAN and NSCIA in their attempts to influence policy making and fill this gap. Enwerem claims that this failure is due to the underdevelopment of social sciences in Africa as a whole, with academic neglect of institutions assumed to support colonialism and a proclivity to attribute African problems to colonialism and its aftermath.[62]

However, from the mid-1980s, social scientists started giving serious attention to the role of religion and the politicisation of religion in contemporary Nigerian politics.[63] Haynes, in his contribution to the study of religion and politics, stated that the neglect of religion is common in modernisation and dependency analysis of third-world politics, both of which models treat religion as a mere epiphenomenon. He asserts that religion is regarded as part of the traditional past, which will decline in importance as that society advances towards Westernisation.[64]

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[60] Ibid, T Falola, pg 8,Enwerem, Op.cit., pp 9–45

[61] Ibid

[62] Ibid.

[63] I Enwerem, Op.cit.,pg xi. These researchers include, Amucheazi, *Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria*, 1945-1966: A Case Study in Pressure Group Politics, Lagos, Macmillan, 1986; J Ibrahim, *The Politics of Religion in Nigeria: The Parameters of the 1987 Crisis in Kaduna State*, Mimeo, 1987; Y Bala Usman, *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria*, 1977–1987, Kaduna: Vanguard printers, 1987; D Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change Among the Yoruba*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989; P Lubeck, *Islamic Protest under Semi-industrial Capitalism*; ' Yan Tatsine Explained', African Affairs 55/4, 1985; Idem, *Islam and Urban Labour in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1986)

[64] Ibid. T Falola, see also J Haynes, *Religion in Third World Politics* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1994), pp 4-8

Turning to Nigeria specifically; the works of Amucheazi, Usman and Laitin are very important in the study of religion and politics in the country, as they show both background knowledge and understanding, yet they either subsumed religion into ethnic politics or attempt to demonstrate that religion is apolitical.[65] This viewpoint was because the majority of these earlier studies paid attention to Islam and its importance in Northern Nigeria, and Christianity's impact in the society was not worthy of any serious academic attention.[66] Other notable scholars such as Paden, Last, Gbadamosi, Smith and Adeleye have discussed extensively[67] the history of Islam and Christianity, concentrating on the spread and growth of these religions in terms of sociological not political issues. For example, Islam was treated with importance in Northern Nigeria, while emphasising its great contributions to state building, the Uthman dan Fodio nineteenth-century jihad in Northern Nigeria, according to Falola and Kukah, produced what they called 'a social revolution that created an Islamic state'.[68] What these early studies offer are only restricted insight into the significant role that religion is capable of attaining within the political settings of Nigeria's future, and they were not able to predict that religion would come to almost dominate the socio-political sphere of Nigerian society. Other scholars focused considerable attention into the history and spread of Christianity, for example, Ajayi, Ayandele, Peel and Ekechi.[69]

Accordingly, to date there have been few sustained and thorough attempts to investigate the significant role of religion in the context of national and state government decision-making processes within the domestic and foreign policy environment. Religious actors' especially Muslim actors have manipulated religion to achieve their personal and sometimes religious group's interests to attain political power and influence policy outcome.[70] The initial study in this area was that of Usman, 'The manipulation of religion in Nigeria 1977–1989', the focus of this study was not well established, containing a collection of relevant lectures, none focusing on any analysis of the connection between religion and the policy-making processes

[65] Ibid. I Enwerem
[66] Ibid.
[67] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 6, Extensive readings on this are found in: J Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*; Murray Last, the Sokoto Caliphate (London: Longman, 1976); A Smith, *A Neglected Theme of West Africa History: The Islamic Revolution of the 19th Century*; *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 2* (1961); 169–185; RA Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, 1804–1906 (London: Longman, 1971) TGO Gbadamosi, *the Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908* (London: Longman, 1978)
[68] H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit. pg 3, 1996.Also other details in D Laitin. Hegemony and Culture; Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba, University of Chicago Press, 19986
[69] Ibid. See also A Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891* (London: Longman, 1965); EA Ayandele, *the Missionary Impact on modern Nigeria 1842–1914* (London: Longman, 1966); J Peel, Aladura: *A Religious Movement Among The Yoruba* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
[70] Such as the Presidency of Nigeria; this has been dominated by the Northern Muslims from the 1960 independence. (eight Muslim and five Christian heads of state)

and structures in Nigeria.[71] In addition, Usman made no attempts to explore or establish any direct links between the role of religion, religious actors and the decision makers.

More recently, other earlier studies on religion and politics generally, particularly those by Aluko (1981), Olusanya and Akindele (1986), Akinyemi (1989) and Ojo (1986) ignored the impact of significant religio-political influences that may affect the decision making of specific domestic and foreign policy formulation and execution in Nigeria. What is therefore relevant to this research in relations to religious organisations and government decision making, are the issues concerned with the institutional structure, political processes and the various hard endeavours associated with the formulation and implementation of policies.[72] Although issues on religion were more prominent in daily discourse within Nigeria's domestic politics, no clear attempts were made in these studies to examine the impact of religion. However, the goal of this research, as mentioned above, is focused on the role of religion and religious influences in the decision-making processes as manifested through the policies affecting Nigeria's membership of the OIC and the adoption of Sharia law through the recognition of the significance or growth of religious organisations; this, according to Enwerem, has accounted for the politicisation of religion in Nigeria.[73]

Another important work in the area of religion and politics is the contribution of Kukah[74] in his work: 'Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria', in which he examined the political domination of the Northern Muslim elite and contends that the Muslim political elite are able to control and dictate the politics of Nigeria.[75] He claimed that through the use of their political advantage they are able to advance their religious agenda, in relation to the attainment of political power. It is noted that these Muslim elites have succeeded in building an Islamic hegemony by locating, defining and grounding their politics within Islamic discourse. This research finds that, the successes of the OIC and Sharia policies buttress such arguments by Kukah. Furthermore, he insists "it is easier to hold the polity together by depicting political opponents, not as politicians with different views, but as being a bad

[71] A Mbachirin. Op. cit. pg 23, Bala Usman. Op. cit.
[72] These includes; Akindele & Olusanya, *Nigeria's External Relations: The First 25 years*, University Press Ltd. Ibadan. 1986; O Aluko, Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy, Unwin Hyman, 1981
[73] Ibid. Enwerem, Op. cit. see also, H Kukah, Op. cit. 1989); M Chukwuma, *Nigerian Politics and the role of religion: An analysis of national integration* (Bonn: Rheinischer Friedrich-Wilhelm University, 1985); Op.cit. F Ajayi, 2009
[74] Hassan Kukah, A prominent Catholic Reverend Father from Kaduna, in Northern Nigeria and presently the Bishop of Sokoto in Nigeria.
[75] In A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg .23

Muslim".[76] This kind of political advantage has had significant impact in the role of religious actors in religious conflicts, claims and counterclaims in Nigeria, and this study will show that influential Muslims leaders and organisations such as the NSCIA and JNI have been instrumental in fostering Islamic-focused goals and pursuit of individual ambitions, such as support for the introduction of Sharia law.

My research thus explores the relevant contributions on religion and politics in the works of contemporary Nigeria scholars such as Enwerem, Falola, Kukah, Ostein, Abegunrin, Idang, Inamete, Tanko and Ajayi.[77] Such studies are relevant to this thesis in a general sense, because they present and seek to explore the contributions of religion to post-independence Nigerian politics. Although their contribution to the understanding of the role of religion and religious actors to contemporary Nigeria domestic and international policy environment, especially in relations to the influence of religion on decision making is minimal. However, some of these scholars are Catholic priests and or eminent and articulate Christians: Kukah was the secretary of the Catholic secretariat and a celebrated newspaper commentator, Tanko is a radical Christian contributor; Kenny and Enwerem are Catholic priests in the renowned Dominican institute in Ibadan, and they have established an international role for their contribution to religion and politics. It is noted that their studies represent a Christian perspective, with Falola accusing them of using their scholarship to further an agenda that is just and legitimate in a restricted context.[78] Because their opinions and research are widely circulated, they have become influential religious actors in Nigerian politics and religion, and they themselves have become part of the religio-political problems, and their studies have become part of the historiography of religion and politics in Nigeria.

The historiography of the influence of religion on Nigerian politics concerns itself with the history of Islam and Christianity separately and recently, more studies have continued to demonstrate the significant impact of Islam and Christianity in shaping the history and politics of Nigeria. These include specific studies, whose relevance to these researches concentrated on or deal with specific issues; such as the works of Falola, for example, 'Violence in Nigeria:

[76] Ibid. pg 25, also in H Kukah, Religion, *Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, pg 4, Spectrum books, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1993

[77] These studies include the following; A Adefuye, *Culture and Foreign Policy; The Nigerian Example*, NIIA, Lagos. 1992; T Falola, *Violence in Nigeria;* 1998; Gordon Idang, *Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy, 1960–1966*, Ibadan University Press, 1973, M King, *Basic Currents of Nigerian Foreign Policy*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996; U Inamete, *Foreign Policy Decision – Making in Nigeria*, Associated Press, London, 2001, Olayiwola Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy Under Military Rule, 1966–1999*, Praeger publishers, Westport, 2003, F Ajayi, *The Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, 2009

[78] T Falola, Op.cit., pp 8–9

the crisis of religious politics'; Enwerem's 'Dangerous awakening: the politicisation of religion in Nigeria';[79] and Ajayi's The effect of religion in the political process'.[80] Despite these titles suggesting wider scopes of study, which are supposed to address specific aspects of religious politics in Nigeria, no recent studies have dealt with the interface of religion, religious actors and decision making in Nigeria as a whole; this thesis brings these themes together.

My review highlights the significant roles of CAN and NSCIA, and also establishes their role as representatives of the religious views of the people for over four decades, therefore mandating these organisations to deal directly with the government. Yet there are no available studies investigating their role as interest groups in policy outcomes discussed in this thesis. What is important is that studies investigating the link between the role of such religious interest groups and policy outcomes, identify crucial questions that needs to be explored both rigorously and systematically.[81] These include: their lobbying strategies, relationship between religious organisations and the policy maker, finance / size of the organisation, and their general ability to influence policy outcome. My research will investigate and fill the gap in this rich and dynamic field of significant role religious organisations and Nigeria government decision making.

Lastly, this thesis highlights the relationship that exist between the religious actors and government decision making, specifically as it relates to the roles of religious actors in these processes. For the purpose of this research the Sharia and OIC policy issues were examined from the perspective of a domestic and foreign policy issue respectively. These issues help us to comprehend the role of significant religious actors in the volatile mix of religion and politics in Nigeria. This is important because if these domestic actors; contoured by religious claims and counter-claims were able to influence government decision-making output in Nigeria over time, it would then enable us to draw significant conclusions in relation to the role of religion and religious actors in government decision-making processes.

[79] Ibid. Enwerem, Op.cit. F Ajayi, Op.cit., 2009
[80] Ibid
[81] O Odumosu, A Simbine, RAD Working paper 64, 2011

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative method. To gauge the veracity of this method and to explain the roles of selected religious actors in decision making at the state level, this research methodology is that of an empirical case study. This approach is suitable to this thesis because it gives appropriate insight into the interviewees' attitude, behaviour, opinion, and involves personal interaction and dialogue between the researcher and the researched. Thus addressing the diversity of issues related to the topic, ie, religion's role in political decision making in relation to OIC membership and Sharia law in Northern Nigeria over the past three decades. By incorporating detailed case studies of these religious actors in Nigeria identified in this thesis, this has enabled a more integrated understanding of the issues involved and informed insight into how religious actors in Nigeria are very much occupied and perceived to play significant role in the government decision-making and policy processes.

Written and oral materials produced by relevant organisations were examined, such as government agencies and religious groups, in line with current debates. Where relevant, qualitative research methods were applied, which involved face-to-face process, making observations and conducting interviews. This enabled this researcher to examine responses and discuss the respondent's experiences. It also enabled the questioning of key respondents about the facts of this research issue, as well as their opinion on general political development.[82] Data were collected, documents and audio recordings were made of these conversations, based on a combination of structured and semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

My research involved case studies focusing on religious leaders and organisations in some selected 'Sharia' and 'non-Sharia' Nigerian states (600 semi-structured interviews conducted, see detail in Chapter 7). It should be noted that the sSharia survey conducted for this research were similar to Mathew Kirwin's Afrobarometer surveys conducted in 2007 [83], which helped to improve knowledge of Nigerians' perceptions and acceptance of Sharia law as of 2009. Also important is the fact that this Afrobarometer survey engaged a nationally representative sample. My research, on the other hand, reflected the relevant views of a small segment of society which were however informed by questions asked in and criteria of Afrobarometer, i.e., Sharia and non Sharia states. The reason for the relatively small-scale of my survey is

[82] R Yin, Op.cit.,

[83] M Kirwin, *Popular Perceptions of Shari'a Law in Nigeria,* Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.58, February 2009, www.Afrobarometer.org, Accessed 10 May 2010

primarily due to the huge amount of financial and human resources whch would be needed to conduct a similar survey as Afrobarometer's, both huge scale and very expensive to undertake. Note however that Afrobarometer examined some other aspects of Sharia law which are not relevant to my study.[84]

However, in order to validate my data and the results as noted above, I applied rather similar criteria to Kirwin's study and because my survey is smaller, I selected my sample from Sharia and non-Sharia states, surveyed different segments of the adult population including mixtures of both Christians and Muslims, administered questionnaires, and examined several similar questions on Sharia law.[85] Similarly, the main question relevant to both studies and which this study corroborated with Afrobarometer survey was to verify 'if the level of support for Sharia law was, and or, is still strong or diminished' from 2001-2007[86] and between 2007-2009 when I conducted my survey in sthe Sharia and non Sharia states. Also verified is the support level for Sharia law in Zamfara state. As detailed in Chapter 7, this study has showed that although the level of support for Sharia law has declined it was still significantly high during the time of my research.[87] These case studies ensured the reliability of the information obtained and understanding the contextual aspects of the research, flexibility, openness of respondents, together with a more holistic interpretation of the research problem.
Lastly and in comparison, the result of this survey and Afrobarometer data especially in relation to the acceptance level of Sharia law are congruent, and these results helped to answer some of the questions this study posits. The similarity in significant aspects of methods, data and the context issue examined, imply that the results are acceptable as a true reflection of the perceptions of support and acceptance for Sharia law both in the Sharia and non Sharia states of Nigeria.

My research methodology involved research questions, data collection and analysis. Information for this research came from multiple sources of evidence, including primary sources of documentation, archival records and interviews with key individuals during planned field trips to Nigeria, meetings in the UK, and other resources available on the

[84]Ibid., such as survey questions on the impact of Sharia law, Sharia law and political violence, support for Sharia law amongst different Muslim groups, etc.
[85]Ibid., see also Albert Anyia, My Survey Report in Chapter 7, See AppendixB of this Reseach. 2012
[86]M Kirwin, Op.cit.,
[87]The survey I conducted in 2009 was carried out among a ramdom representative sample of 600 Nigerians and of 18years above. Interviews were conducted in English and Pidgin languages, howver Yoruba, Hausa, and Ibo languages were used when necessary. See also deatails in Chapter 7, A Anyia. Op.cit.,

Internet.[88] As noted above, Islam and Christianity are the two dominant religions in Nigeria and their adherents constitute the subject of this research. In order to capture the views of their members from both dominant, mixed Muslim and Christian states and cities in different ethno-regional settings, Four locations were chosen for selected interviews and surveys. This was conducted by four Nigerian assistants and the required basic training was provided.[89] The religious mix included:

- Zamfara and Sokoto states in the Northwest (Muslims)
- Kaduna State and Abuja – Federal capital in the North Central (Muslims and Christians - Mix)
- Lagos state and Ibadan city in the West (Muslims and Christians – Mix (Including ATR who were not surveyed))
- Benin and Auchi cities in Edo state in the Southwest (Muslims and Christians – Mix (Including ATR who were not surveyed))

These case studies were selected to enable a detailed examination of the issues involved in religion and politics in the communities, general population and religious organisations. They highlight the relevant characteristics of the subjects, ensuring the surveys are illustrative rather than representative,[90] because generalisations cannot be made from them. Fieldwork was completed in November 2009 the whole process of interviews and questionnaires administration was supervised and monitored.

Numerous field trips were made to Nigeria from 2005 to 2010, spending overall a total of 6 months undertaking fieldwork. During this period subjects were interviewed extensively[91] leading religious leaders from the CAN, JNI, NSCIA, Leader of Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), Imams, academics from the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), activists (especially in the Sharia states), political leaders and representatives of the Civil Liberties Association of Nigeria (eg, barrister Mike Ezekhome) and key government decision makers (including the former Vice-President of Nigeria, Augustus Aikhomu and Chief Peter Anegbeh, former Nigerian High Commissioner to Malaysia and an experienced civil servant

[88] See interviews list in Appendix
[89] Basic Training included: (a) Identifying the primary sampling area, such as the secretariat, higher educational institutions etc. (b) All respondents recorded accordingly in the questionnaires, (c) All respondents chosen by the same or appropriate selection criteria, ie, individuals and households
[90] O Odumosu, A Simbine, *Religious Organisation, Values and Rivalry in Nigeria: Exploring the Implications for Development and Politics*, NISER, Ibadan, RAD working Paper 64, 2004
[91] Ibid

with 40 years in service). This research also built heavily on a Nigeria governmental source of official information on the OIC at the NIIA, through interviews with Prof Eze (Director General of NIIA) and Prof Bukarambe (Research Fellow).[92] Also relevant transcripts were examined along with minutes from meetings and round-table discussions of research and conferences held at the NIIA.[93]

Interviews were held with religious leaders in Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Kaduna, Auchi and London. The sampling technique was opportunistic, selective and involved asking participants to nominate other potential interviewees.

My shortcomings included the relatively high number of male respondents, which reflected the male-dominated structure of the Sharia states, religious organisations and most government decision-making structures. In the case of religious organisations, female participation was mostly relegated to a separate 'women's wing',[94] which created a regrettable bias in some cases (eg, in Sharia states). Furthermore, all interviews and most of the questionnaire respondents were members of the Nigerian educated elite, implying the domination of educated individuals in the religious organisations and government decision making. Therefore it has not captured the views of those with fewer educational attainments.[95]

During the structured interviews, questions were asked that were relevant to the participants' evaluations of religion, politics, role of religious organisations on domestic and foreign policy in relation to decision making in Nigeria; the effectiveness of opposition religions ie, Christians and Muslims via the CAN and the NSCIA; their opinion on religious issues in general; and their level of satisfaction with Sharia law. Interviews and surveys last between 15 and 20 minutes and between 65 and 75 individuals in each state / city were surveyed randomly in three Sharia states, three non-Sharia states and two other areas.[96]

All the respondents were offered confidentiality, but this offer was declined by many. Interviews were conducted mainly in English. (See appendix for questionnaire sample)

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[92] O. Eze, Interview, Director General of NIIA, Lagos 2007 and 2008

[93] NIIA Library is a very good source for information. My personal contacts have been helpful in this regard

[94] I Nolte, N Danjibo and A Oladeji, *Religion, Politics and Governance in Nigeria*, Religion and Development working paper 39, DFID, 2009

[95] Ibid.

[96] M Kirwin, Op.cit., See also my survey report in Chapter 7 (The Sharia states area include Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokotoi. Non-Sharia areas where surveys were carried out included Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, Benin and Auchi. Randomly Interviews were conducted with individuals during my travels.

The secondary sources explored included an extensive literature review of data and materials mainly from facilities including the British library and the London School of Economics and Political Science library. Other significant sources included specialised government policy institutes – the NIIA, NIPSS (Nigeria Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies), newspaper archives, and communiqués and speeches. Further material was sourced from Arewa House in Kaduna, the Catholic Secretariat in Lagos and the personal archive and research of Fr Joseph Kenny at the Seminary Ibadan Nigeria.[97]

The examination of these sources enable us triangulate the information, comparing it with information obtained from interviewees. All this information enhanced the contextualisation of the findings from field studies. Based on the questionnaire results, the field data was analysed singlehandedly, generating the tables in Chapter 7. However, given the lack of research attention to the links between religious interest groups and government decision making in Nigeria over the past 40-45 years, especially considering the significant role of religion in the political process, much of my study was exploratory, thus revealing evidence of the role of significant religious actors in government decision making.[98]

During the field work for this thesis, some challenges were encountered; this research highlighted the greater problems of inadequate records, record keeping and sometime non-availability of records. Other problems included the scarcity of original sources of information from Christian and Muslim organisations examined (the CAN, JNI, NSCIA, Pilgrims board, NIIA, etc.)[99] who did not provide the requested documents. Another challenge was organising appointments with key individuals, this involved access to numerous high-placed individuals in the community, and in Nigeria this is not always easy, unless the researcher has useful personal or professional connections.

In particular, the Foreign Affairs Ministry library at Abuja was unbelievably empty. It should be noted that newspaper archives (eg, Daily Times, Daily Trust, etc.) were based in their

[97] Fr Joseph Kenny is a Catholic Reverend Father and a Professor of Islamic studies in the last four decades and has spent up to 50 years in Africa generally but particularly in Nigeria. He has conducted extensive research on Islamic religion. He is involved in the general discourse in the role of religion in Nigeria, presently based at the Major Seminary Ibadan.
[98] See alsoas cited in, O Odumosu, A Simbine, Op.cit., RAD Working paper 64, 2011
[99] Pilgrimage Office could not provide statistical records for pilgrimages in Nigeria. The director referred me to the individual Pilgrims state offices. Visited February 2008

offices based in Lagos, Abuja and Kaduna in paper format, with no specialised libraries. Furthermore, in order to access some of the relevant papers and materials, a token was paid.

Finally, a significant problem the assistants[100] and the researcher faced was the limited ability to incorporate more women in North Nigeria into the surveys and interviews, specifically in the Sharia states, as mentioned previously. This limitation was overcome in non-Sharia states and areas (for example, Abuja, Ibadan, Lagos and Benin) where there was a higher level of access to female interviewees.

It was also dangerous to gather some information on issues concerning Sharia in some Northern states, for example, Zamfara and Sokoto,[101] because religion is a sensitive topic and the individuals were sceptical of questioning (Chapter 7). During a trip to Northern Nigeria in 2008, the researcher grew a beard and wore long flowing gowns (*Babariga* and *Dashiki*) to give the impression of being a local and to blend into the community. Conversely, in the South, when interviewing Christians, it was helpful to portray my Christianty. In addition, in Southern Nigeria, there was the constant fear of kidnappers and the menace of armed robbers on the highway, which could have potentially been a life-threatening experience.

Scope and Structure of Study

It is important to note that this thesis is neither a full-scale study of the two main religions in Nigeria: Islam and Christianity; nor is it concerned with the success or failure of government policies in relation to the adoption of Sharia law or membership of the OIC. Instead, it is an investigation of the role of two religious organisations, the CAN and NSCIA, in the areas of government decision making in relation to these two specific issues. To achieve this, the thesis is divided into eight chapters, which will explain how selected religious organisations and actors have sought to articulate the views of their religious groups. The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 is the general introduction to the thesis. It includes an overview of the key issues identified in the study. The chapter examines the available relevant literature with the purpose of ascertaining the perspectives of previous researchers and the existing literature in relations

[100] 1. Moses Akhigbe, Lecturer in College, Lagos; 2. Benjamin Okhumode, Undergraduate University of Abuja; 3.Timothy Kuku, Personal Assistant to Etsakor East local Government Chairman; 4.TiTi Azimi, Student Edo state University; 5. Tony Emale and Osinor Akhigbe, Edo State University, Ekpoma Nigeria.

[101] In all the survey carried out in Sharia states, women were not interviewed, However, in all the other areas women were included in the total sample.

to the scope of the study. It concludes that the study of the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria has, at present, received minimal attention, especially with respect to the role of religious actors in government decision making.

Chapter 2 is a general overview of the role of religion in Nigeria's politics. This kind of historical overview is relevant to this thesis because it helps clarify the socio-political situation of Nigeria, particularly in the context of its dominant religions: Islam and Christianity. It further places the issues examined in this thesis in proper perspective, ie, the centrality of religion to the individual decision maker and the policy process. This chapter also clarifies the role of religion in an individual's life and the general community. Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa,[102] and similar to the rest of world, it is experiencing a resurgence in religion. Previous studies have not identified a link between religious actors, decision makers and policy outcomes; this thesis attempts to fill this gap.

Chapter 3 focuses on the role of religious interest groups in the decision-making process in Nigeria. In particular, it will explain the role of selected religious actors[103] in policy outcomes. It argues that, two religious actors in particular; the CAN and the NSCIA have significant roles in this regard. To examine the issue, the organisation and mobilisation of these actors is analysed, drawing on interest group theory and analysis. The CAN and the NSCIA are compared with secular interest organisations in relation to their ability to significantly influence of outcome of government decision making under the civilian and military regimes.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of the most important Christian organisation in Nigeria, the CAN, as a significant religious actor, including its origins, structure, organisation, political influence and significance. This is important to understand the CAN's motives, principles and the socio-political issues. It is also important to understand why and how the CAN has sought to influence policy outcomes in Nigeria, especially in relation to the issue of OIC membership. This research finds that the CAN is a well-structured national organisation; placing the group in an advantageous position to significantly influence policy and key decision makers through its vocal national leaders and notable members. This chapter concludes that although the

[102] GT Kurian, *Encyclopaedia of the Third World*, 3rd Edition Volume 2, 1987, pg 1472. (Nigeria has over 140 million people, the USA Department of State has 148 million, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm. Recent estimates by the Population Institute indicate close to 152 million, Population and failing states, www.populationinstitute.org/external/files/Nigeria.pdf)

[103] In this case a religious actor is an individual, group or organisation that seeks to influence domestic or international outcomes through the application of religiously-derived ideas or ideology

organisation has a viable *modus operandi*, which helped to give a better understanding of how the organisation is run, in reality it failed to achieve, exert or mount serious challenges to its Muslim counterpart's influence over the Nigerian government, implying minimal influence on decision making.

Chapter 5 examined key Islamic organisations representing the religious and socio-political interests of their members in Nigeria, focusing on the role of two mains Islamic religious organisations: the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI: Society for the Victory of Islam) and the NSCIA. These organisations were examined separately, but their roles are entwined through the Sultan of Sokoto who is jointly their Supreme leader. These two Islamic organisations amongst other Islamic groups are viewed as counterpart to the respective Christian organisation, the CAN.[104] It concludes that these organisations were significant in their support during the political tension resulting from the OIC membership and Sharia law policy issues. It is also plausible to assert that although the Muslim organisation do not match their Christian counterpart in structure and organisation, but they make up for this through the subtle influence that they exert on key decision makers.

Chapter 6 focuses on Nigeria's membership of the OIC. The issue is explored through the examination of both Christian and Muslim perspectives as expressed through the CAN and initially the JNI followed by the NSCIA. The discussion also establishes that the OIC membership controversy is a key focus of Christian–Muslim divisions in Nigeria, which is essential to this study because of the wider role of Muslim religious actors in the structures of decision making. There is also an examination of the link between Muslim majorities, especially in the composition of government decision-making structure and the ability to exert or significantly influence specific policies compared with the CAN.

Chapter 7 focuses on the recent introduction of Sharia in Nigeria, with a case study of the Northern Nigerian state of Zamfara (First Sharia state in Nigeria in 1999). It examines the role of significant Muslim actors, the pressure and their influence on decision makers to introduce and implement Sharia. For analytical purposes, Sharia implementations in some other Northern states (Kano, Kaduna, Borno, Kebbi and Sokoto) were also examined. The various results of field research are analysed in this chapter and the possibility of a direct correlation

[104] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 1. Other details in H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., 1996; see also Op.cit, J Paden, p.533, 1986; J Paden, *Faith and Politics in Nigeria: Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008

between Muslim religious actors and their influence on government officers to introduce Sharia is discussed. This is important to this research because it showed the significant role played by, and the level of influence of, influential Muslim religious actors in government decision-making.

The concluding Chapter 8 presents the thesis findings. This research demonstrates that, in reality, the role of religion in the policy maker's life is perceived to be significant in influencing policy outcomes within the policy-making process in Nigeria.
The main conclusions of the thesis are listed below:

- Nigeria's joining of the OIC led to serious controversies between the Christians and Muslims, but Babangida justified his reasons for joining the organisation on economic grounds. What is evident is the ability of Muslim groups to use their superior religious influences to support and justify Nigeria's membership and the inability of the Christian groups to exert their own influence on government policy making. Above all, government introduce and implement policies favourable to the Muslims (OIC membership), regardless of the agitations from their Christian counterparts, because they dominate the decision making at the national level, especially in the Northern states. However, Babangida's claim of an economic motive for OIC membership were highly criticised by the Christian organisations and such arguments were rendered unsustainable.
- In 1986, when the issue of OIC membership was prominent in Nigeria, the country was under the control of a military junta. Military regimes are known to be undemocratic, implying a lack of quasi-democratic institutions in the country, which religious interest groups such as the CAN could attempt to influence, weakening their lobbying and mobilisation strategies on specific policies. During the dominance of the military, government decision making were not clearly defined as power was entrusted to a select few military leaders, with Babangida possessing overwhelming power. This hierarchy attributed to the failure of Christians and the CAN to articulate effectively their objection to the membership of the OIC. Despite the presence of effective CAN structure and country-wide networks, the most senior Christian leader in government (Babangida's deputy Ebitu Ukiwe) was sacked during this period for his OIC criticisms. The role of the CAN may have been more effective in a democratic political regime.
- This thesis has also identified and examined the significant role of influential Muslims in the NSCIA creation and the development of Sharia law, especially in relation to the

influence on the Governors of the Northern states and their legislatures, which in some cases are completely populated by Muslims. Therefore this thesis concluded that due to the superior significant role of influential Muslim elite and support from a majority of Muslims, the introduction of Sharia law in the Northern states was conducted without any significant hindrance.

- This research also found that the Christian acceptance level of Sharia has not diminished since it was first introduced in 1999. Surveys in some of the non-Sharia states especially Lagos, Benin and capital Abuja, whose populations are equally divided between the Christians and Muslims, highlighted that Christians advocate a system similar to that favoured by Muslims, in the form of a government based on the canon-law, which would emulate some of the successes in some Northern Sharia states with regards to moral and social issues. Socially, for example, Anegbeh claims that Sharia law has "significantly helped the North to prevent the incessant rate of the kidnappings presently ravaging Southern Nigeria", he opined that this will not be the case in the South if there is a similar Christian government in power (This is an area for further research).[105]

Lastly, an important observation is that Sharia law was introduced in Zamfara in 1999 during the period of this study, its adoption has maintained appreciable levels of acceptance and stability in the states where it was introduced; and so long as Nigeria is in its current democratic political dispensation, Sharia law is here to stay in Northern Nigeria. The outcome of this research information showed that in the Sharia states the Muslims (over 95% and in some cases 100% such as Zamfara, Sokoto, Yobe states) dominated government decision-making organs: executive, legislature and the judiciary. This made Sharia implementation policy decisions easy to make and pass through the legislature, and although it has other social problems, which are outside the scope of this thesis, it has survived the numerous criticisms from the Christian religious groups.

The remainder of this research further assessed the veracity of the various hypotheses and assumptions highlighted in this study. This study will bring together the insights drawn from the entire period of research for this study, and will therefore illustrate a better understanding of the connection between religion and specific decisionmaking issues in Nigeria.

[105] Ambassador Peter Anegbeh, Nigeria's ambassador to Malaysia, Phone interview 4 July 2010

Table 1: Nigeria's Religious Profile

Figure 1: Religious Trends in Nigeria

Chapter 2. Historical Background: Religion and Politics in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria covers an area of 923,768 km^2, on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. It has Benin on its Western side, Niger on the North, Chad in the Northeast and Cameroon to the East and Southeast. With its estimated over 150 million people, Nigeria is the most populated country in the African continent. It's also the tenth largest country by population in the world.[1] The variety of customs, languages and traditions among Nigeria's ethnic groups gives the country a rich diversity.

The assumption is that, there are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria, but the fact is that nobody knows the real figure and estimates vary widely depending on the criteria used by the researcher. According to Mustapha; Bangura puts the figure at 470, Otite identified 374 groups; Hoffman has 394 ethnic groups, while Wente-Lukas provides his estimates between 550 and 690 groups.[2]

The complexities of these numbers has much to do with problems of classification and data gathering as with the tendency for ethnic segments to coalesce or differentiate in the face of economic or political developments. While classifications such as that of Hoffman's are based on linguistic criteria, Otite has included issues such as notions of common descent and a shared socio-ecological space.[3] Others have used criteria such as multilingualism, language, politics and 'dialect question'. This problem of classification and enumeration is further complicated by the problem of group coalescence or differentiation, largely as a consequence of political, administrative and economic changes.

Nigeria came under the Colonial rule of the British (United Kingdom) during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. The British dependencies of the Northern and Southern Nigeria were merged into a single Territory in 1914, and Legislative Council was created in 1922. Traditional native rulers administered various territories under the supervision of the colonial authorities, through the indirect rule system of governance.[4]

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[1] GT Kurian, Op.cit., Pg 1472
[2] Raufu Mustapha, Op.cit., United Nations 9th Session, 12–16 May, 2003
[3] Otite Onigu, *Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnicity in Nigeria*, Shaneson, Ibadan, 1990
[4] Nigeria: History and Politics, Institute of Security Studies, Pg 1. www.iss.co.za/af/profile/nigeria/politics.html, Accessed 15 July 2009

Presently, Nigeria is a federal system of government that has evolved from the three regions that were in place in 1946 to the present 36 states. The bureaucratic and political changes associated with these developments within the federal structure have influenced not just the location but also the identities of the ethnic groups and the opportunities open to them. This is evident in the way each majority ethnic group in their respective regions constituted themselves into a 'core' ethno-political group.

Traditionally, the dominant ethnic group in the Northern two-thirds of the country is the Hausa–Fulani, the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslim. Other major ethnic groups of the North are the Nupe, Tiv and Kanuri. The Yoruba people are predominant in the South West. Over half of the Yorubas are Christians and about a quarter are Muslim, with the remainder following mostly traditional beliefs. The predominantly Christian Igbo are the largest ethnic group in the East and South East. Within this group, Roman Catholics are the largest denomination, but Pentecostal and other Evangelical denomination are also strong. The Efik, Ibibio and Ijaw (the country's fourth largest ethnic group) communities also comprise a substantial segment of the population in that area. The ethno-regional blocs were strengthened with the devolution of financial powers to the regions in 1954; this ensured that their hold onto power was much more intensified. As a result, the minority groups within the regions have to align themselves with the core groups, so as to avoid being marginalised.[5] (See table 3)

It should be noted here that the knowledge and significance of these ethnic and religious facts will help to understand the background, orientation, the religious and socio-political issues and influences that affect key actors in decision-making processes on domestic and foreign policy.

However, religion in Nigeria has always played significant role in Nigeria's history and political processes during both the civilian and military governments. With the return to democracy in 1999, the interface of religion and politics in the public sphere has become increasingly important and the role of decision makers has come more under public scrutiny as never known before in Nigeria. This religious factor in Nigerian politics and its rather strong expression in post authoritarian transitions is an instrument by which the political elites seek relevance, legitimacy and access to power[6] and ability to influence government policy

[5] Mustapha, Op.cit.,12–16 May, 2003

[6] U Tar & A G Shettima, Op.cit.,Discussion paper 49, 2010, Accessed, 4 January 2011

making. In this research, I identify, discuss and focus on the contested construction of linkages between religion, key religious actors that have instituted / and contributed to political mobilisation and the implication of and participation in the discourse of and connection with significant religious policy issues relevant to the public domain over time.

Prior to independence, the domestic politics and international relations of newly independent African states, such as Nigeria, Ghana and Gambia was analysed mainly in terms of decolonisation, non-alignment, economic emancipation and African solidarity.[7] These were their major concerns. Academic attention in Nigeria specifically, has been bias over the years towards studying various aspects of Nigeria foreign policy with little or no emphasis on the impact of religion, either externally, or within the domestic environment. Modern-day bureaucracies managed national systems of education, social control and social welfare and pay little attention to religious affiliation.

The reason for this lack of emphasis was the perception by scholars, sociologists and political scientists of the declining influence of religion in modern world (late twentieth century). There was a general consensus that religion was no longer very important. Most social scientists expected this downward trend to continue, as evident in Western Europe where the levels of public religiosity had declined to low levels, and the assumption was that this trend would follow in other societies.[8]

They further predicted that by the end of the millennium, it was expected that religion would be confined to the less developed societies, and at the very least, governments and politics were expected to be free of the influence of the religious elite and religious citizens. Regional peripheries tended to be more traditionally religious than cosmopolitan centres, but that was treated along with flick accents, as a proof of quaint backwardness. In most Western societies active participation in organised religion was in decline.[9]

This assumption is wrong in the case of Nigeria where religion has fully entrenched itself into every aspect of the people and government. Presently, religion is resurgent in Nigeria, and other parts of the world. The unsecularisation of the world is one of the dominant social facts

[7] O. Aluko, *The Foreign Policy of African States*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977
[8] Jelen & Wilcox, *Religion: The One, the Few, and the Many*, Cambridge University Press. pg 1, 2002
[9] S Bruce, *Politics and Religion*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. United Kingdom, pp 2–6, 2003

in late twentieth century as argued by Weigel.[10] Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, the general world outlook is different, partly because of Global events and changes in perspectives, religion is now back on the agenda of political commentators and the powerful role of religion in ethnic and national identity is now very important. Huntingdon further affirmed, "In the modern world, religion is a central, perhaps the central force that motivates and mobilises the people". He claimed that there will be a reinvigoration of religious traditions; this reinvigoration means that religion is the source of political mobilisation in many nations.[11]

Socio-political studies of politics in the State played down religious dimensions in analysing politics. Scholars such as Edward Luttwak, have suggested that policymakers, diplomats, journalists and scholars who are ready to over-interpret economic causality, who are apt to dissect social differentiations most finely, and who will minutely categorise political affiliations were still in the habit of disregarding the role of religion and religious institutions in explaining politics and conflict, and even in reporting their concrete modalities. Equally, the role of religious leaders, religious institutions and religiously motivated lay figures in conflict resolutions has also been disregarded or treated as a marginal phenomenon worth nothing.[12] He further contends that the refusal to grant religion the recognition it deserves is even demonstrated by staunch believers in various religion themselves.

Furthermore, Haynes also noted that, there was little general academic awareness of the importance of religion in most studies of politics in the third world,[13] until recently in Western academic circles; religion was a declining force in politics in general. It is significant to note that between 1945 and 1960 just over half of the world's civil wars were to some large degree, informed by religio-ethnic identity. It may also be argued that part of the conflicts in Azerbaijan, Palestine and Indonesia or particularly Nigeria result from religious ethnic affiliation or ideology. We cannot doubt that many of those involved in such struggles and or conflicts explain and justify their causes by reference to religion.

Further to this, three distinct events as identified by Haynes, in the late 1970s that have forced politics of religion in the third world to the forefront of both academic and governmental

[10] G Weigel, *Religion and Peace*: An Argument Complexified, Washington Quarterly 14:27. 1991
[11] Jelen & Wilcox, Op.cit., pg 1; see also, S Huntingdon, *Paradigms of American Politics: Beyond the one, the two, the many*' Political Science Quarterly 89, 1–26. 1974
[12] E Luttwak, Religion; *The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Oxford University Press, 1994, pg 9
[13] J Haynes; *Religion in Third World, Issues in Third World Politics*, Open University Press, 1993. pg.1

concerns. These were the Iran's Islamic revolution of 1978–1980, the civil war between communists and Islamists in Afghanistan from 1978 and the establishment of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua in 1979. These events were, however, only the most overt manifestation of renewed signs of the prominence of religion in the politics of diverse countries and religions.[14]

More recently, its own fundamentalist movements affected the US, when the moral majority Christian Voice and other conservative Christians pressure groups became active in electoral politics (eg, during the presidential elections of 2004). Since the September 11th, 2001 attack, and the attacks in London on July 7th and 21st, 2005, a renewed focus on the interactions between politics, theology and culture was essential in order to gain information and an understanding of a third world which stubbornly refused to conform to Western stereotypical expectations.

Over tine, in Nigeria there was a shift by decision makers in the way government policy issues were tackled and, to some degree, the role of religion was important in this shift. It is possible that a key factor that affected shifts in Nigeria's position on policy issues were the frequent change of government. Since independence in 1960 there have been 11 administrations (seven military regimes and four civilian governments).

Rubin further postulates that on a sub-national level, religion underlies the definition of communities, each of which may contend for political power. He claims that in the absence of strong social institutions, the church, mosque and local traditional leaders (as in the case of Nigeria), and their hierarchies play key roles in society, because they define the communal values, social goals, foreign linkages and political base of support for the rulers and opposition.[15]

In Nigeria, there is strong religious belief and strict adherence to religious laws, (especially Islamic laws in Northern Nigeria where the Emirs wield enormous power and influence and also serve as a significant rallying point for most adherents of the faith). In addition, religious structures are some of the strongest institutions, partly because state apparatuses are nearly always weak. Religious institutions play significant roles and maintain effective religious

[14] Ibid.
[15] B Rubin, *Religion and International affairs; Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Oxford University Press, 1994, pg. 24

networks capable of executing expected levels of service to the people, such as the organisation of the yearly Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj). Some Northern states in Nigeria, have successfully declared, introduce and implement Sharia law (See chapter 7). This is, and has been, a very controversial development in a country that is constitutionally described as a secular state as,[16] which also involved the establishment of Islamic structures in place to administer and strictly enforce the Sharia. This has further reinforced and demonstrates the weakness of the federal state against very strong religious structures and institutions in Northern Nigeria.

Before independence, a federal system of government was established, with just three regions: the Eastern (Ibo), Western (Yoruba), and Northern (Hausa–Fulani) regions. As indicated in Tables 2 and 3, these categorisations mask the reality of the ethnic and religious complexity of each zone and each state. For example, the Northwest of Nigeria is categorised as Muslim, but there are still notable Christian populations in Southern Kaduna state. The idea was to reconcile the regional, ethnic and religious tension between the three areas as well as accommodating the diverse interests within these groups, such as the repeated agitations by the ethnic minorities.[17]

In most third-world, newly emerging, or independent states, religion served as a rallying point in the local communities during local festivals, whether the occasion is Christian, Muslim or Traditional in nature. Political aspirants use this forum to introduce and showcase themselves and their political programmes to the people. The idea of religion is that of a central political pillar maintaining the power of any ruler (as most rulers are seen as the chief custodian of the customs and traditions of their communities), it has a major role in determining the peoples loyalty – and is a key ingredient in determining a nation's stability or instability.[18]

Generally, Nigerians are very religious people, there are Christians, Muslims and Traditional religionists, all living together throughout 'Nigeria's history, and religion has always played a vital role in the country's political processes. As noted by Falola, religion and politics are typical bedfellows, and even in Nigeria's pre-colonial era, religion was integral to the state. It was part of identity construction, a means for power legitimation and a determiner of economic might. During the colonial period, Islam and Christianity spread rapidly.

[16] The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
[17] Kurian, Op.cit., pg 1472
[18] Rubin, Op.cit., pg 20.

Christianity was particularly privileged and produced new elite that controlled the postcolonial economy and bureaucracy.[19]

Falola further suggested that since the late 1970s, religion has become as disruptive as ethnicity, and there have been more than a dozen serious religious riots in Nigeria, claiming thousands of lives and properties. Underlying these riots has been the issue of religious dominance, with the proponents of Christianity and Islam seeking to unseat the rival religion to impose their own values and to control the state. Thus the struggle for political power has come to entail the manipulation of the symbols and beliefs of both religions.[20] Politicians even urge their followers to vote along religious lines; Muslims are told to vote for Muslims and Christians to vote for Christians. (Sheik Gumi advised Nigerian Muslims in a speech broadcast nationally on the eve of the 1979 Presidential election not to vote for non-Muslim candidate). This is more noticeable because of the way the country is regionalised and the intense religious rivalry and division that separate the main groups, the Muslims into the North, the Christians in the South. The imperfect distribution of Islam and Christianity is complicated further by their ethnic differences.

Part of the problems of regionalisation in the country includes a Northern fear of a 'Southern tyranny of skills' matched by a Southern fear of a 'Northern tyranny of population'.[21] As a result of the influence of ethnicity on Nigeria's politics and to enhance and promote inter-ethnic cooperation amongst the various groups and regions, there have been progressive division and subdivision of the country into greater number of states (Table 2) from three regions at independence to 36 states as of 2003.

The political implications of these are that some states are ethnically homogeneous, with sub-ethnic divisions being politically salient at the local level, while others contain a majority group together with some minority groups. The particular composition of the state might affect the fortunes and prospects of the minority group.

In broad terms, the Northwest is the 'core' Hausa–Fulani and Muslim zone, the North-Central is the zone of the quintessential ethnic minorities of the old Northern region. They are

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[19] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 1, 1998
[20] Ibid. pg 2
[21] Philip Aka, *the "Dividend of Democracy" Analysing U.S. Support for Nigerian Democratisation.* Journal of Third World Issues, 2002, in www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821

more likely to be Christians or followers of African religions. The Northeast zone is also a zone of Northern ethnic minorities, but with the important presence of the Kanuri, with their thousands of years of state-formation and Islamisation. The Southwest zones with the 'core' Yoruba area have Islam as an important factor, while the Southeast zone is the 'core' Igbo area and are largely Christians or followers of African religions.

It should be noted that this categorisation masks the reality of the ethnic and religious complexity of each zone and each state, for example in the North West, which is characterised as Muslim, there are still substantial Christian populations in the Southern Kaduna and Kebbi states.[22]

In the past and present Nigeria, political processes have witnessed widespread interaction between religion and politics; these have always been along the lines of political power, democracy and the ability to wield authority. Generally religion has always been 'political', and that change within doctrinal development is both normal and continuous, a function of culture and geography.[23]

Interplay of Religion and Politics From 1980s

As noted above, several religions coexist in Nigeria, this helps to emphasise regional and ethnic distinctions amongst the various communities within the country. Although critical, controversial and highly subjective, to the religious background of the writer, student or researcher, demographic report of Nigeria population shows that there are 50% Muslims, 40% Christians, while the remaining 10% adhere to traditional religious beliefs.[24] In general, however, the country should be seen as having a predominantly Muslim North and a Non-Muslim, primarily Christian South, with each as a minority faith in the other's region; the Middle belt is more heterogeneous.[25]

Furthermore, Korieh and Nwokeji noted that, the interplay of religion and politics has played a crucial role in shaping Nigeria. As in other parts of pre-colonial Africa, religion was

[22]Mustapha. Op.cit., 2003
[23]J Haynes. Op.cit., pg 15, 1993.
[24]J Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pg 36, (see other Information / controversies on Nigeria's population figures as noted in the Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile Nigeria, 2005, Freedom House, Talibanization, Consistently these studies have showed that reliable census figures for Nigeria are not available. The Nigeria population commission discovered population data are overestimated and distorted as demonstrated by the 2006 census when the figure was put at 140 million even though many Nigerians claimed not to been counted
[25] Ibid.

intertwined with politics and, indeed, other aspects of life in the societies that later became Nigeria. The introduction of Islam and Christianity in recent centuries ushered in new dynamics, and the imposition of the colonial state and notions of modern nationhood further complicated the terrain. In spite of the momentous developments, religion has remained central to Nigerian life and the discourse about religion has taken shape in the backdrop of unconcluded pre-colonial era religious struggles, persistence of traditional religious beliefs and tendencies, international developments, changing macroeconomics circumstances and a myriad of other (non-religious) differences that exist among various Nigerian groups.[26]

It is important briefly to trace how these two dominant religious groups came into Nigeria, how they spread, the issues surrounding that spread, as well as their beginnings in Nigeria and later religious proselytisation issues; overall, these issues will illustrate the enormity of the religious groups' impact over time, an impact which has had such a significant – yet, under-examined effect on the country's politics.

As observed above, throughout most of the third world, Europe and the West, since the late 1960s and the 1970s there has been a *de facto* resurgence of religion and with the accompanied effect on both the domestic and international environment. In Nigeria, other very real factors are the resurgence and influence of Pentecostal religious groups and the impact of very active Muslim fanaticism / fundamentalism.

Islam in Nigeria.

The origins of Islam dates back to Prophet Mohammed, who was a prosperous merchant of the town of Mecca in Arabia. In AD 610, he began to preach a series of revelations granted him by God (Allah), and he continued to receive these divine messages from Allah during solitary visits into the deserts throughout his life.

Islam spread at a remarkable pace in the Middle East and North Africa, it was from here it spread into West Africa.[27] Islam came to Northern Nigeria as early as the eleventh century, and by the seventeenth century Islam had become well established in many Northern Nigerian cities and capitals, which prided themselves on their Islamic merchants, scholars and political

[26]CJ Korieh & GU Nwokeji, Op.cit., 2005
[27]T Falola, Op.cit., pg 24

figures. It further spread into the countryside, towards the Middle Belt and downwards to the Western (Yoruba speaking) part of the country.

Early merchants and traders plying trans-Saharan routes were the first to make contacts with North African Muslims and as these contacts spread with the growth in trading, Islam also spread and slowly transformed into a religion of the elite, specifically rulers and merchants. Falola suggests that the expansion of Islam was made possible by the activities of the merchants, missionaries, brotherhoods and political leaders.[28]

However, in the middle belt, Islam's advance was stopped by the resistance of the local people's incorporation into the emirate states.

Islamic influences became prominent with successful jihads of Usman Dan Fodio, this triggered a social revolution that created or established the Northern Nigeria's first Islamic state. His dynamism brought him many converts and disciples and he influenced many to identify with his vision of a new society. As a result, this generated a new and alternative power centre, the Hausa kings and Fulani aristocracy emerged, presiding over the caliphates. This caliphate was divided into emirates ruled by the emirs, and a single Sultan oversaw the emirs. At the core of the caliphates was the Islamic religion. The Islamic law, Sharia, "the immutable law of God" was the official legal system that was introduced and implemented in these emirates.[29] What is evident in the former Northern Nigeria region was the presence of well-established political structures (Emirates) erected under the banner of the Islamic religion with the Sultan at the top while the communities with their Emirs subordinate to him.

The Sultan was both the religious and political head / leader and his word is final, however, Usman Dan Fodio's legacy is still evident in present day Northern Nigeria, and indeed the Western part of Nigeria, with the creation of a central Imamate, the widespread rule of Sharia (Northern States) and a geographic expansion of Islam unprecedented in the region of the caliphate (As far as the West of Nigeria). Northern political elites, Muslim scholars, merchants, local rulers and bureaucrats saw Islam as both a religious and political force in

[28] Ibid
[29] H Kukah & T Falola, Op.cit., pg 3

modern Nigeria, and used the religion as a political tool for their ambitions to attain political power.[30]

Islam reached Southern Nigeria in the nineteenth century and was partly embraced by some Yoruba areas.[31] The Eastern Nigeria was never won over by Islam and it is rare to witness clashes between Muslims and Christians in the Eastern part of the country. By this time, Islam was already established in some urban areas, notably Ilorin, Epe, Lagos and Badagry, but here it was a minority religion for merchants, slaves and traders, especially those of Northern origin.[32]

Ilorin became the capital of the Southern caliphate created by Dan Fodio and this was significant to the spread of Islam to other areas of the West such as Ibadan, Oyo and Abeokuta; however, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Muslims constituted themselves into a vocal minority in most Yoruba towns.
Due to the tolerance and willingness to accommodate the indigenous traditional belief of the Yorubas by Islamic jihadists as against the strict application of its doctrines in the North, Islam spread with ease among the elite which, to the present day has tended to give the Yoruba Islam a different orientation. The main theme of the Yoruba Muslims in the South West was that they managed to construct an Islamic identity for themselves without calling for a jihad.

Eventually the British colonial administration came into contact with Islam in the North, they introduced the system of indirect rule of administration with the Muslim North, which was a compromise with the established Islamic system which allowed the emirs and the elite to continue to govern. The British colonial officers were ambivalent in their attitude to Islam; their attitude was that they did not disturb that which is in place and already working perfectly, so long as it does not stand in the way of colonial objectives. According to Falola, the Muslims were regarded as more intelligent and civilised than the adherents to traditional religions. Ironically, the Muslim elite were also preferred over the Western-educated Nigerians, who came to be regarded as arrogant and impatient. Indeed the British found it

[30] Ibid
[31] See detailed study of the Origins and role of Islam in Western Nigeria' s political history in; Makinde, Abdul-Fatah, 'The Institution of Sharia in Oyo and Osun States, Nigeria, 1890-2005', PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, 2007
[32] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 24

more useful to minimise the influence of the Western-oriented elite by promoting the cause of Islam and its own elite.[33]

Islam was very popular in the North and over time it spread to other parts of the country via the improved road network, railways and enhanced communications: these developments served significantly to enhance the spread of Islam through Muslim scholars who travelled to spread their faith.

Within the Muslims communities in the North, it was wise to identify with Islam, if one wanted to acquire or control power, or influence politics. The main political actors who took over from the colonial ruler of the first republic government immediately after independence were Awolowo, Azikiwe (Southerners), Balewa and Bello (Northerners). Azikiwe became the figurehead president, Awolowo became opposition leader in the house of parliament, Balewa became the Prime Minister, while Sir Ahmadu Bello (Sardauna) who was the head of the winning party and should have become Prime Minister but passed this post on to his deputy, remaining in the North as the Sardauna of Sokoto and the godfather to Balewa the Prime Minister. Sir Bello was committed to the spread of Islam and the identification of Nigeria as a member of the Muslim world. He was very influential and powerful in the whole of the Northern caliphate, appointing and dismissing emirs.

One of the main objectives of Sir Bello and his political party in the North was to make all efforts to bring all Northerners together under an Islamic ideology. This he believed would help win political influence and serve as a basis to consolidate power. Until recently, in Nigeria this objective was true as the Northern Political elites have mostly controlled political power. Organisations such as the JNI and the Islamic society of Nigeria were formed to pursue the interests of Muslims all over Nigeria, setting up Islamic schools and education, fund raising, organising the yearly Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, dealing with all Muslim matters and promulgate doctrines to the adherents of Islam. Important and lasting contacts were made with other Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Egypt, and both monetary and Islamic scholarly support was provided to Muslims in Nigeria.

[33] Ibid. Pg 27

The Muslim North shunned Western education for the fear of Christian doctrines being passed on to their children, while in the South, the Western Christian religion was embraced and modified to embrace Islam and introduce Arabic language into the school curriculum. The Yorubas in the West knew that in order for large numbers of Muslims to take part in politics and the civil service, they needed to acquire Western education, and in the process modernise Islam.

Christianity in Nigeria.

The Christian faith was and is associated with the Southern Nigeria as already stated above. The first serious presence of Christianity in Nigeria was the brief but significant Portuguese encounter with the kingdoms of Warri and Benin in the late sixteenth centuries. That enterprise fizzled out with the waning and ultimate collapse of Portuguese influences in the international arena. The current Christian presence in Nigeria can be traced to the missionary endeavours of both Protestant and Catholics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the space of the last 150 years, Christianity has made phenomenal progress in Nigeria, catching up with, and almost overtaking Islam, which has been around for many centuries. This fact partly explains the sense of keen and urgent rivalry that now often characterises Christian–Muslim relations in Nigeria.[34]

However, for the missionaries to achieve their desired impact of converting the native, they had to devise new strategies to include the use of indigenous clergy. Increased direct competition with Islam together with greater financial support and the creation of an economic base to support evangelism thus creating a new elite via the promotion of commerce and agriculture. The abolition of the slave trade made available young and strong men, ready and able to assist in missionary work.[35]

The Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther's Church Missionary Society (CMS) through the Niger mission was very instrumental to the spread of Christianity in the South, it penetrated into the SouthWest Nigeria from Badagry, Abeokuta, and Ibadan to Lagos. While the Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church made gains into Calabar and the Igboland.[36]

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[34] Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, *Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Dialogue, Author's speech to SEDOS ON 17th October. 2001*

[35] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 32

[36] Ibid. pg. 32 (See also accounts of G.O.M. Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta*, Leiden: EJ Bril, 978; and F Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857–1914*, London: Frank Cass, 1972

Furthermore, the missionaries employed a variety of strategies to get their religion across the native Africans, by establishing schools to educate and convert the children, churches, hospitals, dispensaries, involving the indigenes in missionary work, employing them as interpreters and teaching them the English language, all these factors helped to propagate the faith and created an elite group within their communities[37] In addition to this, many independent churches emerged under the control of Nigerians and women were not excluded from the whole process as it was the case with Islam. This also brought added benefits such as access to higher education, limited empowerment and integration into the Western civilisation.

It should be noted that by the end of the colonial period, Christianity had emerged as the dominant religion in Eastern Nigeria and as a major religion in the West and Central Nigeria. The Catholics, Anglican and the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) intensified their efforts to ensure that as many areas as possible were reached and churches built for them to enhance missionary activities.

In Northern Nigeria, it was not as easy as was envisaged for Christianity to hold, and it was also very difficult for the missionaries to evangelise in the area. They encountered problems with the incumbent socio–political system as well as the colonial administration. During the colonial period, the indirect rule system had helped ensured the authority of the traditional rulers and there was a workable relationship between the British administration and the Northern rulers. This meant that the colonial government was cautious and sceptical, not allowing the Christian mission to operate, as they would have wanted to in the North. It is hard to imagine the missionaries having to request permission from the Emirs of the area they want to operate in, and this was what they had to do.

It is also noted in the North that, there were areas designated for non-indigenes or immigrant community called Sabon Gari ('New City' or 'Strangers Ward'), this is where the missionaries worked and were expected to evangelise. The missionaries themselves were considered as outsiders too, and would be expected to stay in the Sabon Gari area.

[37] Ibid. (See also in SN Adiele, *Early Strategies of Proselytization in South – Eastern Nigeria*, Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies 22, No. 2 (1990): pg 87 –101

Eventually the missionaries attributed their failure to fully penetrate Northern Nigeria with their Christian religion to the evil power of Islam, lack of support from the colonial administration and the limited enthusiasm from the Northerners. They criticised the British policy of indirect rule system of administration on the ground that, in the application of the policy it was too protective of Islam and prevented Christian evangelisation.[38]

To further enhance the spread of Christianity, the bible was translated into several local Nigerian languages, which then broke a major communication barrier, and educated Nigerians also helped to propagate the faith. At the time of independence, Christianity had become firmly entrenched in central and Northern Nigeria. Nigerian-led indigenous churches have proliferated quickly and continuously. This proliferation of churches in Nigeria makes the situation very complex, because of the varieties of religious organisation and doctrines. The Catholic church is the largest denomination, but it is gradually being over taken by other influential Pentecostal and charismatic groups, such as the Anglican church as well as the Aladura church and African traditional churches.[39]

A major issue that faced the Christian group is the difficulty for a national Christian leader to emerge, and to enjoy the loyalty and support of such a high number of diverse organisations. According to Falola, it was only the threat of Islam that forced these organisations to come together in the 1970s under the common umbrella the CAN.[40]

Christians also lacked the financial resources that were available to the Northern counterparts. It is noted by Falola and Kukah that one of the important officer of the Christian groups, the Travelling secretary, travelled on a bicycle, and at its most important meeting in 1948, they only managed to raise £50.[41]

It is evident that what the Christian group lacked in resources they compensated for with zeal and enthusiasm. A Christian bloc was very obvious to all and especially to the Muslim North (via the Northern People's Congress (NPC), who in the 1956 meeting of the National Muslim Congress noted and criticised the efforts of the Christian missionaries for assisting the

[38] Ibid. pg 35; also see E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, London: Cassell, 1979.
[39] Adiele, Op.cit., Korieh & Nwokeji, Op.cit.,
[40] T Falola, pg. 36, Op.cit.,
[41] H Kukah & T Falola, Op.cit., pg 237

demands of the middle belt people and warned that the religious freedom demanded by the Christian would lead to unrest.[42]

Also during this period, Christian politicians attempted to establish political parties to counter the NPC and the Hausa–Fulani hegemony, and in 1952, the non-Muslim league was formed as a protest movement, but it achieved very little. Similar parties such as the Middle Belt Zone League and the United Middle Belt Congress failed to create strong political platforms, because they lacked the resources and the strategy to fight back in the North.

By 1964, the Northern Christian Association had been formed, as a bigger group to take on the NPC, it too soon failed, this time as a result of the political crisis within the country. But it was successfully transformed into a national organisation after the civil war to create a bigger Christian umbrella and to present a common front when relating to the government. This led to the formation of the CAN, in 1976, following a meeting of Christian leaders and the government. Their main aim was to safeguard the interests of Christians.[43] The CAN has been very vocal and radical since its formation, especially in the 1980s. It has been a forum for Christians to express their opinion, organise opposition to government, and speak out during moments of crisis and political unrest in the country. For example, barely 3 months into the military rulership of General Mohamadu Buhari, catholic bishops sent a well-publicised memorandum to the president to reconsider his policy of arbitrary detentions, which then became the order of the day.

Generally many of the CAN's functions fall on ecumenical issues. However, three of the clauses could be interpreted as either political, or as a justification to take political positions when the body thinks it is important to do so:

- To be a watch-dog of the spiritual and moral welfare for the nation.
- To promote understanding among the various people and strata of society of Nigeria.
- To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member-churches can consult together and, when necessary make common statements and take common actions.

[42] Ibid. pg. 238
[43] Ibid.

The whole idea of the CAN was and is rejected by the North, because of the fact that a lot of the Southerners began to join the organisation to add political coloration to the body. According to Bishop Onaiyekan, through the CAN, from the 1980s the political aim of the Christians changed to halting the strategy of Islamic expansion and their vigorous attempts to dominate the Nigerian state.[44]

Many prominent Christians were vocal and challenged the intentions of the government and dominance of the Muslim North in political appointments of the federal government. During the General Babangida regime, Jolly Tanko, a former Ambassador and of Christian middle belt ethnic origin, asked the federal government to explain the reason for the deliberate exclusion of Christians from power, he claimed that the list of civilian ministers from the North, has never had the inclusion of one Christian, and also he asked if there were no educated Christians to represent the Christian interests. He maintained that if you find any Christians they are Khaki men (uniformed men ie, in the armed forces).[45]

Finally, over the years, the CAN have grown in both image and stature, it has become more prominent since CardinalAnthony Olubunmi Okogie, (the former Archbishop of Lagos) assumed the dual mandate as President of the Catholic Bishops Conference and President of the CAN. His outspokenness and comments on controversial national issues have seen the CAN snowball into the protest voice against the perceived discrimination against Christians in Nigeria. This has drawn the association into running battles with governments on all issues, ranging from religion, social, political and economic matters.

There are demands from the youths in the organisation and even from their elders who faced the repressions of the Northern ruling class pre- and post independence for the CAN to become and transform into a political party in consonance with the new times.

Conclusion

This chapter functions as a general overview of the role of religion in Nigeria's politics from an historical perspective over time. Its purpose is to clarify the socio-political situation of Nigeria in relation to the country's numerically dominant religions: Islam and Christianity. It also places the issue of the centrality of religion in relation to individual decision maker and

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.; See also African Concord, June 25, 1987, pg 18

the policy process in general, thus setting the scene for how Nigeria's 'religious aristocracy' and the theocratic class employ religious discourse and dogmas to its advantage both to mobilise the people and to legitimise its hegemony over society.[46]

Figure 2: Regions of Nigeria

[46]U Tar & A G Shettima, Op.cit., Discussion paper 49, 2010, Accessed, 4-1-2011

Figure3. Nigeria Political Map showing the 36 States

Table 2. Nigeria 2003: Six Zones and 36 States of the Federation.

Table 3. Location of Minority Ethnic Groups in Nigeria

Table 4. Major Religious Groups

Table 5. Religions of Nigeria, 2000 Estimate

Chapter 3. Religion and Policy Decision-Making Process in Nigeria

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the role of religious interest groups in the decision-making process in Nigeria. In particular, it will explain, the role of selected religious actors[1] in policy outcomes. It will argue that, two religious actors in particular; the CAN and the NSCIA have significant roles in this regard. To examine the issue, the organisation and mobilisation of these two groups are analysed, drawing on interest group theory and analysis. These two organisations claim to speak on behalf of their respective religious constituencies in relation to national political issues. The CAN and the NSCIA are compared to other secular interest organisations; however, establishing similarities between religious and secular advocacy is not as straightforward as is often posited. This issue is very important in this thesis because the government primarily has views that examine such religious actors as mobilising agents, through which state institutions often attempt to co-opt religious organisations for various political purposes, thus, the greater prominence of religious organisations in society and politics in some countries and not so in others.[2] Also, this chapter will seek to explain and interpret the rationale that the mobilisation of religious interest groups constitutes a unique subset of political activity or if it is a series of dissimilar case studies of the general patterns of organised representation.

Scholars have noted that globally, there are both similarities and differences in the political mobilisation activities of religious actors compared with secular interest groups, where the latter tend to lobby decision makers via lobby ranks, for example in corridors of Washington and Brussels.[3] However, the lack of a clear conceptual framework that is required to systematically compare religious and other interest groups has been a major barrier to the formulation of more generic conclusion. As already noted in this thesis, religion seems to be relatively a neglected topic in political science,[4] but studies in religious advocacy are even scarce and are predominantly single case studies of religious advocacy or political behaviour

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[1] In this case a religious actor is an individual, group or organisation that seeks to influence domestic or international outcomes through the application of religiously-derived ideas or ideology

[2] S Telhami, *Between Faith and Ethics*, in JB Hehir, M Walker, L Richardson, J Lindsay, C Krauthammer & S Telhami, *Liberty and Power, A dialogue on Religion and US Foreign Policy in an Unjust World*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, pg 71; also see J *Haynes Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, pg 252, 2007

[3] J Haynes and A Hennig, (Eds) *Religious Actors in the Public Sphere: Means, Objectives, and Effects*, London: Routledge, pg 3, 2011; also in DH Lowery & H Brasher, *Organised Interests and American Government*, McGraw Hill, New York, 2004; see also, M Grossmann, *The organised representation of American religious groups: A unique form of mobilisation or just Interest group Politics*? Dept of Political science, University of California, Berkeley, 1995, accessed 02/01/2011

[4] Ibid.; see also Wald and Wilcox, *Getting Religion; Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor*, American Science Political Science Review 100 (4) :523–529

across different denominations.[5] Therefore it becomes difficult to observe and differentiate whether a religious group with political aspirations is either a disguised standard (secular) interest group or a unique phenomenon.[6]

In summary, some religious interest groups are important political actors, and under such circumstances, government is likely to be cooperative towards them, tending to listen to what they have to say in relation to a variety of political issues. Thus, it is important therefore to have a clear conception of the roles these religious groups adopt in civil society.

Bringing Religious Interest Groups Theory into the Policy Process

This section will examine interest groups and the general conceptual framework of interest group behaviour in terms of the influence production process.[7] Firstly, we must conceptualize interest groups as having some discrete organisational format, which interact with public decision makers to represent their group's private interest. According to Philpott, the term 'religious interest group' refers to organisations of varying organisational formats, which interact with policy makers and represent a set of norms and values imposed by supernatural or impersonal powers, the existence of which is taken as axiomatic.[8] Thus, an interest group generally, is an organization whose members share common concerns and try to influence government policies affecting those concerns. They are also known as lobbies; lobbying is one of the ways in which interest groups shape legislation and bring the views of their constituents to the attention of decision-makers.[9] By extension, religious interest groups share the same format and characteristics as other interest groups in the polity and interact with government policy makers, similarly many national and intergovernmental groups now cooperate with religious organisations.[10]

For the purpose of analysis, interest group theory will be examined from the idea that politics is the competition to influence decision making, where individuals with different ideas and interests mobilise and compete to produce collective outcomes. Interest groups scholars are

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[5] Ibid.

[6] J Haynes and A Hennig, Op.cit., Details in D Philpott, *Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion*, the American Political Science Review, 101, (3), pp 505–525, 2007

[7] Ibid.; also in Op.cit. D Lowery & H Brasher, 2004.

[8] Ibid.; Details in D Philpott, *Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion*, the American Political Science Review, 101, (3), pp 505–525, 2007

[9] JN Victor, *The Challenges of Evaluating Interest Group Influence in Congress*: A Study of the 106th House Resources Committee. Presented at the 2001 Midwest Political Science Association Meetings in Chicago, Ill (April 18–22); Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests: The importance of groups in politicsand in political science*, 1998, Princeton University Press, Princeton, USA

[10] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op.cit., see also M Minkenberg, *The Policy Impact of church-state relations: Family policy and abortion in Britain, France and Germany*, West European Politics, No 26(1): pp 195–235, 2003; C Warner, *Confessions of an Interest group: the Catholic Church and political parties in Europe*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000

interested in the features of this competition: 'who gets what, when and how' are important. David Truman's group theory research posits that shared opinions and social associations are key steps in the articulation of political interests. He argues that the characteristics of social groups affect the extent to which they organise a leadership to influence political decisions and the manner of their representation.[11] Modern interest group scholars accept the basic structure of traditional group theory but focus on the role of organisations and political institutions in structuring mobilisation. Rather than assume that constituencies are automatically represented, these scholars argue that mobilisation is reliant on leadership entrepreneurs using financial and organisational support from patrons.[12]

In countries such as the US, where the significance of various religious interest groups in politics are well documented, religious influences may take the form of demand on or support for government policies.[13] Government may have policies that are significantly influenced by various religious concerns, for example, some American governments, especially those of George W Bush (2001–2009), are said to have been especially indebted to massive evangelical support, with both sides sharing mutual interests. In particular they were an important political and moral voice on relevant issues, especially on human rights.[14]

Other empirical research in this area addresses how and when religious organisations act as interest groups to influence government policy making. This thesis adopts a case study approach that concentrates on specific religious organisations but with attempts to provide evidence of their potential effect on the policy-making process in Nigeria. This research follows that of Grossman, who examined two major studies in the US, looking at the full scope of organised religious representation.[15] Hertzke, he claims, argues that as lobbyists for large public constituencies, religious organisations act as a countervailing force against traditional interest organisations. While Hofrenning, argue that religious organisations in Washington are a completely unique interest groups. Also, rather than acting as policy advocates, they act as 'prophet' seeking fundamental political transformation using the outsider strategies that are not used by other interest groups.[16] However, in the studies of

[11] D Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political interests and Public Opinion*, 2nd ed. New York, 1951 in Op.cit. M Grossmann, 1995
[12] Ibid. Grossmann; see also the works of J Walker, *Mobilising interest Groups in America: Patron, professions and social movements*, University of Michigan Press, 1991
[13] J Ugwu, *Nigerian Foreign Policy: Alternative Futures*, Macmillan publishers, pp 45–46, 1986
[14] J Haynes, *Religion and a Human Rights Culture in America*, 2008
[15] Matt Op.cit., pg 3
[16] Ibid.

Moen, it was demonstrated that the closer the religious groups become to policy process politics, they begin to face similar problems to those of other interest groups,[17] highlighting the mobilising potential of religious group for political activity.[18]

One may then wonder whether group-level characteristics of religious subpopulations affect their representation and one can ask how religious groups in Nigeria, Europe or the US compare to the constituencies of other interest organisations.

As a result ofthe controversies surrounding the OIC and Sharia Law in Nigeria, religious interest groups and the government decision making were in the forefront of the interaction of religion and politics in Nigeria. My study highlights how religious interest groups / actors acted politically in this context, interacting in a variety of ways for specific purposes discussed in the thesis. These groups strongly entered the public sphere, with effects on both political society and state. Given the importance of this topic it is surprising that there are no full length studies that describe or account for the role of religion in government policy- and decision-making and associated outcomes over time. However, with the recent resurgence of religious violence in Northern Nigeria, it is important to examine how the various religious actors play a crucial role in these multifaceted processes of entering or re-entering public spheres of the state, political and civil society.[19]My study contributes to these issues from this perspective.

Herein I will briefly examine the role of religious interest group with respect to specific Nigerian government policy outcome, because in relation to lobbying strategies, interest groups and religious actors are observed as choosing from a wide range of alternative strategies in order to influence decision maker.[20] Relevant decision makers can be contacted, media campaigns can be launched and members mobilised to exert pressure on politicians. However, different levels of influence and pressure exerted by interest groups in different situations, either at national or state level, will yield outcome to policy initiatives differently. For example, the pressure to introduce Sharia law in Nigeria was successful at the state level but unsuccessful at the national level. The influence of religion was significant in structuring political competition from the early post-colonial years and even in the clashes occurring both

[17] Ibid.
[18] M Moen, *From Revolution to Evolution: The changing nature of the Christian right, the sociology of Religion*, No. 55. Vol. 3, pp 345–357, 1994
[19] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op.cit., pg 1. 2011
[20]JN Victor, Op.cit., 2001

prior to and during the 1966 military coup and countercoup and the Biafra war (1967–1970) were described in religious terms.[21]

Regardless of the method of mobilisation strategy chosen, there are two main routes that interest groups choose to achieve their political objectives: an insider strategy or an outsider strategy.

Strategies which involve close consultation with the decision makers and are based on an exchange of expertise or other resources in turn for access to policy makers are referred to as the insider strategy. Outsider strategies, on the other hand are concerned with public appeals via the media and the mobilisation of interest group members and individual citizens.[22] However, both strategies may also combine elements of the other[23] to achieve their desired policy outcome, which vary according to the context of the issue at a particular period and the type of political/administrative environment they are operating in (In Nigeria this may be either a military junta or a Civilian government). The actual policy outcomes are the final stages of the influence production process, which is the extent to which policy outcomes reflect the input of specific interest groups, be they religious or secular advocacies. Each stage on the route to a policy outcome individually explains the differing aspects of interest group behaviour (Table 6). Collectively, these stages allow for a more generic explanation of potential biases in policy outcomes and interest representation.[24]

Table 6: The Influence Production Process

[21]The works of H Kukah, Op.cit., *Religious Militancy and self-Assertion* 1996, ; F Ajayi, *the Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, 2009; they provide a rich source of information and insight into religion and politics in Nigeria
[22]J Haynes & A Hennig, Op.cit., Details in WA Maloney, G Jordan & AM McLaughlin, *Interest Groups and Public Policy: The insider / Outsider Model Revisited*, Journal of Public Policy, 14 (1), pp 17–38, 1994
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

Source: Haynes & Hennig (Eds) 2011; Originally adapted from Lowery & Brasher 2004 and Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008

The above table illustrate that, within the influence production framework, mobilisation of its individuals, goals, resources and strategy represents the first, early stage of interest group's initial act of getting organised. Accordingly, the size of the group and the nature of their goals are shown to be important threshold for mobilisation, which when successful, is a by-product of the coordination of groups collective goals.[25] The idea is that the feelings of belonging to an organisation, strong leadership of the group and the presence of solidarity benefits are all derived from the group's activities. Olson argued in his research that all these above empirically support the fact that organisations with collective goals successfully mobilise.[26]

The second stage represents the influence strategies that interest groups choose from, to apply to their goal of influencing decision making. It is noted that actual influence in policy is not so much a function of a contribution to the politician's political campaign from secular and religious interest groups or resource utilisation as previously hypothesised,[27] but rather, it is whether an interest group has direct access and contact with policy makers, who comprise government decision-making structures which are important indicators of interest groups influence.[28] Relevant decision makers are therefore identified, contacted, media campaigns launched and members of the group may be mobilised to exert pressure on politicians and relevant decision makers involved in the process, through the strategies identified above. Overall, this suggests a pattern of biases in policy outcomes, which generally favour interests that are closely aligned to the *status quo*, (ie, the government) or that enjoy an insider status.[29]

In order to explain if and how groups actually exert influence over the decision-making process and legislation, it is important also to examine the unique explanatory factors of religious interest groups and the similarities, if any, with secular interest advocacy. The influence production process as mentioned above is the point of focus to accomplish these tasks.

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.; see also JL Walker, Op. cit. 1991
[27] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op.cit., Details in FR Baumgartner, JM Berry *et al.*, *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Looses and Why*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2009
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Religious and Secular Interest Group Mobilisation Strategy in Nigeria

Generally, both religious groups and secular advocacies can generalize about their various strategies for dealing with government officials and policy makers, but sometimes they may be hesitant to generalize because of their choice of lobbying tactic, is dependent on the issue context in which they are lobbying. Interest groups must consider the extensive and specific explanation of group strategies and their relationship to the strategic context of legislation or issue at stake before they can determine which lobbying strategy to employ. The context will shape both the incentives for the group to use insider or outsider lobbying and the opportunities for the group to undertake multiple avenues to achieve their desired outcomes. It is therefore important for interest groups to have clearly defined strategic context of issues they want resolved, in which groups engage decision makers. Many scholars have performed large-scale surveys of thousands of interest groups in the US, in an attempt to learn about lobbying techniques.[30] The way to account for the strategic context of a given issue is to survey and examine religious and other interest groups in relations to their activities on a given issue.[31]

However, there are two categories of religious actors attempting to influence government decision making:[32]

- *State-related religious actors.* They are closely linked to, but conceptually distinct from the government ie, they are sets of religious actors who have close contacts and relationships with the government. They may sometimes influence government policy making and outcomes, such as the Shiite mullahs in Iran and the Catholic Church role in the return to democracy in Latin America and Eastern Europe in the 1980s[33]
- *Non-state religious actors.* They include groups such as the NSCIA and the CAN. They are religious organisations that attempt to influence policy outcome in both domestic and international contexts. They may work with other religious organisations to try to pursue their policies with government

Non-state religious actors are prominent in Nigeria, they generally attempt and wish to inaugurate, embed and develop interactions with like-minded individuals and groups

[30] Milbrath 1963; Bauer, Pool & Dexter 1963; Berry 1977; Walker 1983, 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Knoke 1990
[31] JN Victor. Op. cit., Evaluating Interest Group Influence in Congress2001
[32] J Haynes. Op. cit,. Introduction to International Relations and Religion, pg 34, 2007, see also Religion, Soft Power and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, India and Iran, 2007
[33] J Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics, Explaining Deprivation*, www.law.emory.edu/ihr/worddocs/haynes2.doc. Accessed 10 September 2008

domestically in other to influence the outcome of policies. The prominence of the NSCIA and the perceived domination of Muslims in Nigeria politics, led the CAN to accuse the NSCIA of being a state-related actor. The influence process is likely to be characterised by the transmission and receipt of interpersonal and inter-group exchange of information, ideas, personnel and money.[34]

Other scholars and many observers of Nigeria politics have duly noted within government policy process the prominence of religion and religious actors in politics.[35] Kukah and Falola described religion as a political tool in modern Nigeria,[36] through which Northern political elites and religious groups lean on the use of religion to engage in intra-and inter-regional political competition, which can be beneficial to their members' lobby strategies, ascendance to political office, and in this case, influence of government's decision-making processes. Religious actors in Nigeria are characterized by their primary motivation to promote the advancement of their religious interests and dominance within the Nigeria polity in equal terms with other secular interest groups. Ajayi's research, explore the variety of lobbying activities through which groups engage, (see for example Ajayi's research on the lobby activities of both Christians and Muslims at the various constituent assembly debates in Nigeria) these lobbying efforts are based on their targets or the type of activity they want to influence. There is evidence of religious groups/actors putting pressure on constituent members to support the introduction of Sharia law.[37]

Mobilisation strategy as discussed above is effectively used to organise the collective actions and goals of interest groups, this is also essential because of their proximity and closeness to the grassroots for potential political activity, especially, for example, in the introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria. Also because of the significant influence of Islam in Nigeria and especially, in the North, religious groups mobilisation credentials suggest that, as a result of the religiosity of the Nigeria people in general, they are more inclined to be engaged in 'active civic participation' than non-religious people.[38] Other studies in the US, for example,

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[34] J Haynes, Op. cit. Introduction to International Relations and Religion pg. 35, 2007

[35] Other readings includes: E Abrams, *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2001; Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular, Religion and Politics Worldwide*, 2004; J Haynes, Op. cit.2007; J Haynes (ed) *Routledge handbook of Religion and Politics*, 2009; S Wright, *African foreign policies*, 1999; Op.cit. T Falola & H Kukah, Op. cit. 1996; D Johnston, *Religion and the Missing Dimension of Statescraft*,1994; J Paden, Op. cit. *Faith and Politics in Nigeria*, 2008

[36] H Kukah & T Falola, Op. cit. 1996

[37] F Ajayi, 2009, Op. cit. *The Walkout Protest over Sharia*, West Africa, April 17, 774, 1978, NIIA Library, Y Bala Usman, *The manipulation of religion in Nigeria, 1977–1987*, Vanguard Publishers Ltd. 1987

[38] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op. cit.

have found a significant positive relation between the individuals religiosity and membership of interest groups and the correlation seems to apply in a broader international context.[39]

Another factor that enhances the mobilisation credentials of interest groups are the selective benefits members enjoy, this can determine their level of success. Religious interest groups are able to provide certain distinctive selective benefits that keep the members attached to the organisation, even though they lack interest in political matters. These benefits could also help to explain the high membership rates among religious adherents and their mobilising potential. The CAN and the NSCIA claims to represent majority of the Christian and Muslims in Nigeria. (see other details of the activities of the CAN and the NSCIA in Chapters 4 and 5) Having originated from various religious traditions and background, religious actors and individuals draw on their religious beliefs and take active role in the participation of government and influence domestic politics and indeed international relations.[40]

They derive their inspiration from religion and seek to influence the country's policy agenda through the use of their religious influences when dealing with policy makers. For example, in Nigeria, there are religious groups lobby and they put continuous pressure on the federal and state governments to increase state subsidy and contributions to Christians and Muslims towards pilgrimages to Mecca and Jerusalem, which subsequently have led to the establishment of state Muslim and Christians Pilgrims board. These are the result of pressure and direct lobbying on the government decision makers to establish these boards.[41]

Furthermore, Nigeria is so religiously diverse, to the extent that support for almost any conceivable domestic and foreign policy can be found somewhere and within the decision-making milieu of the country.[42] Thus the religio-political debate in Nigeria in so far as who controls government policy-making structures are well captured in the informal extension of the constitutionally established 'federal character principle'[43] favouring the Christians and Muslims. This principle was originally devised to guarantee the equitable representation of Nigerians from all states of the federation in the decision-making structures of the government (Political and bureaucratic).

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[39] Ibid., also in R Lowry, *Explaining the Variation in Organised civil society cross states and time*, Journal of Politics, No 67, pp 574–594, 2005
[40] J Haynes, Op. cit., pg 35, 2007
[41] F Ajayi, Op.cit. pp 140–163, T Falola, Op. cit.,
[42] Full discussion of this in Abegunrin, 2003; Inamete, 2003; see also H Kukah and T Falola, 1996
[43] I Nolte, N Danjibo & A Oladeji, Op. cit., 2009

Applied by different military and civilian governments since the 1980s and continued systematically under the new democratic dispensation since 1999, the practice of balancing the number of Muslims and Christians office holders, and often the pairing of a Muslim chair with a Christian vice-chair (and vice versa), has contributed to a tacit understanding that government will ensure Muslim–Christian parity in federal Institutions, and obviously its decision-making structures. Within this framework lies religion, religious actors, interest groups, access to decision making and power.

It therefore follows that this form of political–religious arrangement according to Paden, constitutes a way of managing the Christian and Muslim tension and debates at the federal level and therefore understood as a *de facto* acknowledgement of the multi-religious nature of the Nigeria state.[44] This fact is important because, in some areas especially in the Eastern Nigeria, religious rivalry is closely linked to patronage politics, which are determined by the links of politicians, and their backers or 'godfathers', to the central government. While in the North for example, the state government does not officially include religious groups in the running of its own affairs, but through the proportional distribution of posts amongst religious groups, they ensure that the major interests are considered, who then become the target for lobby groups.

Over time, religion has acted as an integral social and political avenue of influence in Nigeria, to the extent that it is an important aspect for many people both privately and in public, as it serves as a means of identity construction, political legitimation and a determiner of economic might.[45] In terms of mobilisation, religious people in general seem more likely to become active members of religious interest groups probably a function of the specific selective benefits religious interest groups can offer to members. In this way, and in contrast to what is often argued, religious interest groups look more similar to secular interest groups or business associations, which traditionally also have strong selective benefits to offer as well as more options to maintain high membership rates.[46] Yet, while the selective benefits that business associations can offer have strong potential in enlarging their constituency and thus have a positive effect on political mobilization, political activity is not the prime aim of individual

[44] Ibid. pg 17, see also J Paden, *Muslim Civic Cultures and Conflict Resolution; The Challenges of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, pp 81–83, 2005
[45] Ibid. I Nolte, N Danjibo & A Oladeji
[46] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op. cit.; also see Baumgartner and Leech, Op. cit.

members of religious groups. Lastly, it seems that religious interest groups use lobbying more as by-product of their activities, and not as an attribute with which to attract members, more than their secular counterparts.[47]

Assessment of the Nigeria State: Religious Interest and Access to Policy Process

Analysing the Nigeria's decision-making processes involves the systematic examination of how various interest groups get the 'ear' of policy makers, thereby effectively prying into the 'black box' of the state, the input that go into this process and the nature of the processes themselves. Such analysis requires the necessary incorporation of the factors of both the external and internal pressure that affect the decision-making process.[48] Abegunrin suggests that to understand this process, it important to investigate not only what actually happens, but also how, why, where, and under what conditions the behaviour of those who act on behalf of a nation state are shaped.[49] It is well known that decision-making is a cognitive process, which leads to the selection of a course of action or activities in the presence of various options, ie, the cognitive process of reaching a decision.[50] To analyse how selected religious interest groups in Nigeria attempt to influence the decision-making process, it is important to understand 'religious lobby strategies', which employ the use of 'framing' as an important aspect or tool of lobbying. Interest groups will lobby policy makers, and it helps if the latter share the former's ideas and concerns as it will make the job of persuasion easier than if this is not the case.[51]

This section will briefly examine the secular world of lobbying and how interest groups lobby, the strategies used and how similar and effective they are in comparison with other secular interests.

Generally, interest groups use lobby strategies which comprises the insider or outsider strategies as noted above. The concern here is whether the individual's religiosity also significantly affects the choice for certain lobby strategies. Interest groups studies in the US and beyond, which are also applicable to Nigeria, suggest that there is considerable variation

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[47] Ibid.

[48] C Hermann, *Foreign Policy Behaviour, That Which Is To Be Explained: In Why Nations Act*, (ed) M East, A Salmore & C Hermann, Sage University Press, Beverly Hillsp. 34, 1978

[49] Abegunrin, Op. cit., pg 6, 2003

[50] Decision Making, http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/180/decision-making-factors-that-influence-decision-making-heuristics-used-and-decision-outcomes, Accessed 10 september /2010

[51] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op. cit., In details, RL Hall & AV Deardorff, *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy*, American Political Science Review 100 (1):69–84. 2006

among religious interest groups in terms of the strategies they use. However, identifying a specific 'religious component' that could account for this variation is not as straightforward as it seems. For instance, a recent study showed that the strategies of a group of Dutch religious interest groups, in terms of insider and outsider strategies, do not differ from their secular counterparts when controlled for specific group characteristics such as resources and group size.[52]

Interest groups that possess a privileged position towards policy-makers for instance, aim to lobby on issues that are salient and are more eager to use outsider strategies to win the support of the public to put pressure on policy makers. These variables need to be included in studies that deal with religious lobby tactics before we can affirm or disaffirm whether there is indeed a religious aspect involved in lobby strategies. Thus framing is considered as an important yet somewhat distinct aspect of lobbying tactics. Interest groups often lobby like-minded policy makers with similar ideas and frame their issues accordingly.[53] Framing is thus an important tactic of religious interest groups,[54]however in most Western countries, the mingling of religious concerns with political matters is contentious.

The case is different in Nigeria; the interaction of religion with politics is both controversial and commonplace. In this context, framing becomes particularly important and religious groups, in attempting to influence public policy, in relation for example to the question of Nigeria joining the OIC in the 1980s or the issue of the introduction of Sharia law in 1990, seek to pursue their demands in the context of secular frames.[55] For example, the agitation for Nigeria's OIC membership were characterised not so much as a 'religious' issue as one with clear secular advantages: joining the OIC would help impoverished Nigeria access 'Arab oil money', which would provide economic and developmental gains. On the religious side, the argument was that joining the OIC would link Nigeria explicitly with millions of other Muslims so as to achieve a bigger and unified Islamic community or influence (religious frame). The former probably found more resonance and compromise among secular advocates in Nigeria compared to the latter, this is so because it was a way of reinforcing ethical behaviour into public life.

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[52]Ibid. J Haynes & A Hennig; also in MC Hanegraaff, *Divine Influence: A comparative analysis of religious interest groups in the Netherlands*. Master Thesis Religious Studies, Leiden: Leiden University Hanegraaff 2008

[53] Hall and Deardorff Hall, *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy*, American Political Science Review 100 (1):69–84. 2006

[54] RC Lieberman, *The 'Israel Lobby' and American Politics. Perspectives on Politics* 7 (2):235–257. 2009

[55]J Haynes and A Hennig, Op. cit., Catholic Actors and Bio-Politics in Liberal Democracies: The case of Poland and Italy, paper presented at ECPR General Conference, September 2009

Moreover, the act of religious groups seeking exemption from general, secular-oriented, norms and rules can also be interpreted as a type of framing tactic. This process commonly referred to as accommodation, entails granting religious groups distinct privileges based on the freedom of religion. For example, by lobbying for exemption of regular working hours to serve praying practices on Fridays. Compared with secular interest groups, religious groups more often engage in attempts to seek exemption from general rules to accommodate specific interests. The question is whether this is a distinct practice of religious groups? This is obviously not the case as other interest groups often do the same thing but in a different manner. They often ask for regulation, referring to the need for a 'level-playing field', rules that often effectively benefit their interests, for instance import and export subsidies. In short, accommodation practices are often viewed as something distinctive of religious actors. And while the nature for accommodation is indeed distinctive, lobbying for exemption seems to apply to a broader set of interest groups as well.[56]

Extreme tactic are the final lobbying strategy that can be employed, ie, to resort to violence or other illegal means. This tactic is often portrayed as an important strategy to exert influence for fundamentalist religious groups, such as Al-Qaida, Hamas,[57] in Nigeria's Boko Haram. The use of extreme tactics is usually determined by the political context in which these groups operate and especially the distance of their policy proposals from the political *status quo*. Religious groups, however, do not have the monopoly on such tactics, as many left, right, environmental and anarchistic extremist groups have followed similar paths when confronted with fierce political opposition as well as sceptical or hostile public opinion.

To summarise, given the variation among religious interest groups in terms of the choice of insider and outsider strategies as a means to influence policy outcomes, and the lack of systematic studies thereof across policy issues, the identification of a distinct aspect of religious lobbying is difficult. In terms of framing and the tendency to lobby for accommodation of specific interests, it seems that religious interest groups are more similar to business interest groups.

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[56] Ibid.

[57] M Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, Columbia and Princeton: University of California Press, 2000

Government Policy Making Structures: Civilian Administrations

In order to ascertain the role of religious interests, it is important to assess directly the decision-making structures in Nigeria and the level of direct influence or impact of religious actors on actual policy outcomes, from both the civilian and military perspectives. When policy outcomes are formulated to accommodate the needs of specific interests rather than to the interests of the overall public, this reflects a bias in interest representation. It must be noted that measuring interest group influence however, is not an easy task, and so, one of the most frequently used indicators for influence is the likelihood of direct access to policy makers.[58] Depending on the type of government in power, the decision-making structures may include the "president, military leaders, prime minister, cabinets, interagency groups, coalitions and parliament".[59] In the past 50 years of Nigeria's independence, the military have held power for 30 years, while the civilians have been in power for the reminder. It is important to examine the mechanisms by which interest groups, especially in terms of this thesis, religious interest groups may or may influence policy outcomes.

In this section and those which follow, the paradigm of the influence production process identified above will be applied, ie, policy outcomes, to explore the unique explanatory factors of selected religious interests groups in Nigeria the CAN and the NSCIA. Civilian and military administrations will be focused on separately, to discuss if and how religious actors are able to have significant impact on government policy process and outcome. This will clarify the suggestion that the level of influences and political closeness of religious interest groups and indeed other interest groups vary depending on the type of government and the level of contact they may have within government decision-making.

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the military and civilian have alternately ruled.[60] This section shall investigate and ascertain that the level of contact and approach by religious interest groups, including the CAN and the NSCIA, in relation to policy outcomes is a reflection of the type of government in power. This is because the impact of interest group activities on both civilian and military regimes is different, because of the differing level of access these religious groups may have with decision makers. However, measuring religious

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[58] A Dur & D DeBievre, *Inclusion without Influence: NGOs in European trade policy*. Journal of Public Policy 27(1): pp 79–101, 2007

[59] J Haynes, Op. cit., *Introduction to Religion and Politics*. Pg 19 ; Full details on Decision Making in M Hermann, F Hermann, J Hagan, *How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy Behaviour*. 1987, F Hermann, C, Kegley Jnr and J Rosenau, (eds), *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Boston: Allen and Unwin, pp.309 –336

[60] The African Guardian, June 18, 1990, In T Falola, Op. cit., 1998

or other interest group's influence is difficult because of the various biases in interest representation. The question at this point is how religious interest groups become a significant factor in civilian government policy making and outcome, and its mobilising effect, for example, religious interest groups role in recent introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria. The level of success religious groups possess can be measured by the extent to which they have access to policy makers, for Micon argues that, the extent to which religious lobbyists are a 'known name' and have 'frequent contact' with policy makers contributes to the success of religious groups.[61] Thus one has to examine how religious actors have access to influence government decision-making process. This is important because of the abundant knowledge in their specific area of interest that the interest group possesses and the ability to supply information to like-minded policy makers is an advantage to successful policy outcomes, they both need each other.

The three arms of government are the main government policy-making structures, supported by other specialised agencies. The Nigeria National Assembly comprises the upper House of Senate and the lower House of Representatives. The office of the Presidency or the executive has encroached upon the role of the ministries.[62] Within the government is the ultimate decision-making unit (Figure 7-). According to Inamete, these are the units that are often at the apex of the policy decision-making organs of government. For example, the office of the President which is usually dominated by powerful individuals or 'big men' who if they agree, will have both the ability to commit the resources of the state in policy affairs and the power and authority to prevent other entities within the government from overtly reversing their position.[63] In the current Nigerian political dispensation, this group has been referred to as the 'kitchen cabinet or the cabal.[64]The ability of various interest groups, including religious actors, to get access to this kitchen cabinet is very important to policy outcome.

The efficacy of these interest groups depends on how they apply the influence process to the leadership of government. Scholars such as Macebuh, Kwitney, Inamete and Abegunrin, have noted that the Executive Office of the President (EOP), for example, during the Alhaji Shehu Shagari's government (1979–1983) operated a 'minimum' government in terms of both

[61]J Haynes & A Hennig, Op. cit., Ed, Other detail in J Micon, *Limestone Prophets: Gauging the Effectiveness of Religious Political Action Organizations that Lobby State Legislature*. Sociology of Religion 69(4): 397–413, 2008

[62]Inamete, Op. cit., 2001; Abegunrin, Falola, Kalu and Paden have all noted in their studies of Nigeria and the OIC – This will be examined fully in Chapter 7

[63] Ibid. Inamete, pg 19, see also Hermann, Hermann & Hagan, Op. cit., pg 311, 1987

[64] Kitchen cabinet or cabal: This refers the small group of close advisers, friends and associates to the president's inner caucus, in Nigeria they are the untouchable big men and are also involved decision making for the administration

domestic and foreign policy. They opined that the President was weak and did not come to grips with active decision making when necessary.[65] This study notes that Shagari's government was not faced, threatened or deal with any significant religious issues between Christians and Muslims with any meaningful impact on government policy outcome.

Shagari's second republic government (1979–1983) is examined because it was the first presidential system of government in Nigeria, upon which subsequent civilian administration built on. It also exemplifies the argument in this study with relation to religious groups and their influence on policy making. Common to this government and other civilian administrations is the EOP, which consists of the President, Vice-President, cabinet members and advisers on political, economic and national security affairs. Other specific agencies include the State Security Service and Intelligence agencies, the NIIA and the NIPSS.[66]

Obozuwa[67] observed that in the corridors of power, the individuals who represent the government are high-level officials, who work for the President and have direct personal access to him and the decision process. They gather, analyse information and provide varied options on policy matters for the President and are involved in the input process of policy making, thus become target objects of influence for any related interest groups concerned with influencing specific policy. He further suggested that, because of the lack of leadership and dynamism from Shagari on major policy matters, ministries and policy officers were subject to the influence of influential interest groups and religious actors such as the CAN and the NSCIA.[68]

The influence process, as examined above, is relevant and useful to the examination of how selected religious actors and other interest groups, inspired by religion and welfare issues that concern the citizens, seek to influence the government policy process and agenda. On the national level, these processes have not been as clearly observed compared with what operates

[65] Wall Street Journal, September 2, 1980, S Macebuh, *Minimum Government by Shagari*, West Africa, 12 November 1979, pg 2077; O.Abegunrin, Op. cit., 2003

[66] Inamete, Op. cit., Pg 140, 2001

[67] Obozuwa Austin, Interview comments, Former Legal Adviser to President Shagari and Joseph Wayas (Senate President) 1979–1983 and Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee House of Assembly 1999–2004, he was personally involved in the workings of both the executive and legislature. Influential politicians during this administration included Vice President Alex Ekwemeh, Ministers such as Umaru Dikko, Adamu Ciroma, Gusau and Iya Abubakar. These were Ministers in charge of important ministries including transport, finance and defence, or dealt with any significant religious issues, clashes and or violent rioting between the Christians (This study noted that Shagari's government was not faced or threatened by religious issues with any meaningful impact on government policy outcome which may have highlighted the activities of religious groups. See account in Olusanya and Akindele 1960–1990 Akindele and Olusanya, (Eds) *The Structure and Processes of Foreign Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960–1990.* NIIA, pp 247–248, 1990

[68] Ibid.

as at the state government level. For example, during the World Health Organisation Polio Vaccination controversy in Northern Nigeria between July 2003 and 2004, Islamic religious groups such as the JNI, the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) campaigned and lobbied both the Federal and Northern State governments on the allegations that the vaccines were contaminated with anti-fertility substances and the HIV virus. They argued that, this was a plot by Western governments (ie, USA) to reduce Muslim populations in Nigeria, in particular, and so urged the government to ban the vaccines. The Kano State spokesman for the government eventually banned the vaccines.[69] Some other states followed, Katsina, Kaduna and Bauchi, for example. This illustrates a successful lobbying and significant influence of a government process at a state level.

The implementation of Sharia law brought religious lobby strategy to the fore through the application of the framing strategy and sometimes the threat to use extreme tactics. Kenny suggests that the Muslim governors Yerima and Shekarau demonstrated that their actions are informed by firstly their shared religion, Islam, consequently these leaders turn to, listen and are influenced by Muslim interest groups and secondly, religious actors that inspire them.[70] This is also illustrated by the cordial relationship that Sheik Umah Ibrahim Kabo, the chairman of the Ulama in Kano, had with the Kano governor, which was significant to the introduction of Sharia in Kano state.[71]

Other Muslim religious groups; such as Nasrul-Lahi-ll-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) and Ansar-Ud-Deen Society (ADS) in the North of Nigeria were proud of their cordial relationship with the state governments in Zamfara, Yobe and Kano. Especially concerning tax payments on Islamic activities; the use of state-funded Hisbah group (Islamic volunteer group that enforces Sharia law) for security matters;[72] direct access to the governor; government donation of lands, transport and financial gifts; and the building and repair of

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[69] J Kaufmann, H Feldbaum, Diplomacy and the Polio Immunization Boycott in Northern Nigeria, http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/28/4/1091.full. Accessed 31 October 2009. Traditional rulers in Northern Nigeria call for halt to polio vaccination, BBC World Africa - Thursday, 27 June, 2002; www.allafrica.com, *'Reps and the Polio Vaccine Controversy'*, Daily Trust Newspaper 30 December 2003; IDS working paper 26, *the polio controversy in Northern Nigeria* by Maryam Yahya, March 2006, www.ids.ac.Uk; *'Polio Vaccine: Our Boycott is Lesser Evil,* Says Gov Shekarau', Vanguard Newspaper, 27 February 2004.

[70] J Kenny, *Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a 'Secular' State,* Journal of religion in Africa, Vol.26, Fasc.4. Nov., 1996, pp 338–364

[71] Five Nigerian states consider imposing Islamic law http://www.domini.org/openbook/nigeria19991019.htm Accessed 16August 2008; also, Sheik Gumbi, Interview, 28 February 2008, A Symposium on Religious Conflict in Nigeria, May 8, 2007 http://www.cfr.org/content/meetings/nigeria_symposium_summary.pdf, Accessed 22 August 2008.

[72] Crackdown on Nigeria Sharia group, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/4700314.stm, 10 February 2006, Accessed 27 June 2009

Muslim schools.[73] Analysis of the significant relationship and closeness between religious actors and 'big men' that wield power, can aid the examination of the ways by which known religious actors such as the CAN and the NSCIA, deriving their inspiration from religion, may seek to influence policy outcomes specifically through the application of direct access to effect policy changes.[74]

In reality, the ability of Nigeria's religious actors to translate potential ability into actual influence within government policy structures depends on several factors, such as the ability to access and potentially influence decision-making structures via personal contact with government members and via other channels such as the media.[75] Using these channels they may achieve their objectives by encouraging government to pursue policies that are consistent with their values, norms and beliefs.[76]

In continuation, in Eastern Nigeria, the relationship between religious interest groups and government are important as observed by Nkolika Obianyo.[77] The ability of various Christian denominations to exert influence and lobby government, especially Catholic and Anglican denominations are particularly significant in the decision-making structure. It is common for a political aspirant to get the approval of the Catholic and Anglican Church in order to guarantee success at the polls, and the Bishops of these denominations are recognised active religious actors in the region.[78] Political members who enjoy the support of the Church are openly endorsed to the congregation during church services, who are directed on how and who to vote for. For example, in Anambra state, Governor Chinwoke Mbadinuju (1999–2003) was elected because of the support of the Church.[79]

Lastly, an important mechanism that religious interest groups use to obtain access and achieve an influential position within the policy-making process is as an intermediary for national and local governments during the process of public policy implementation. The involvement of religious and cultural or ethnic interest groups in the implementation phase of policy stems from the inability of governments to reach out to certain communities within society.

[73] I Nolte, N Danjibo and A Oladeji, Op. cit., (Executives of ADS, Ayedun and Jimoh; claimed to be close to the Governor of Kano state).
[74] Ibid.
[75] J Haynes, Op. cit., pg 252; see also in http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/articles_akinade.htm
[76] Ibid. J Haynes (ed) *Routledge handbook of Religion and Politics*, pg 296, 2009, (Obianyo; Through the return of mission schools back to Catholic from the state government when a member is the Governor)
[77] N Obianyo, Op. cit., CODESRIA, 2008
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

Especially when tensions are high within a multi-ethnic (urban) society, such groups prove to be successful in getting in touch quickly. In Nigeria, religious organizations such as the CAN and the NSCIA are perceived to be very valuable in preventing or reversing the process of radicalization, ie, the process by which young people tend to turn to fundamentalist and violent branches of their religion.[80] In this regard, the Nigerian government maintain close ties with religious groups (through the activities of Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and task this group to demonstrate their usefulness in mitigating race riots. The ability of religious and cultural groups to mediate between their constituents and the government, in particular to mediate conflicts within a given society,[81] thus seems to be beneficial in terms of exerting influence.

To satisfy religious interest groups and balance the religious mix of the country, especially within the government policy making structures, appointments to government positions are divided between Christians and Muslims, and sometimes between different denominations of these religions. This is to ensure that religious interest groups are able to function as important intermediaries.

Government Policy Making Structures: Military Administrations

This section will examine the important role of religious interest group lobbying strategy and influence within government policy-making structure of the military juntas that have ruled Nigeria, so as to ascertain if there are any differences to how interst groups attempt to ascert influence in their policy processes. As noted above, decision-making processes vary from administration to administration and as a result the long periods of Military rule in Nigeria, government policy making structures have mainly comprised institutions set up by the junta.[82] In this case, the office of the President, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) are important decision-making organs which interest groups attempt to lobby. The SMC/AFRC served as both the executive and legislative arms of government.[83]

[80] C Poppelaars, *Resource Exchange in Urban Governance: On the means that matter.* Urban Affairs Review 43 (1): pp 3–27. 2007

[81] C Poppelaars. *Steering a Course between Friends and Foes: Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups*, Delft: Eburon. 2009

[82] Inamete, Op. cit., 2001 (Study of Nigeria's Military regimes)

[83] Akindele and Olusanya, Op.cit.,

Nigeria has had eight military juntas since independence in 1960, regimes that are naturally are undemocratic have not encouraged the growth of either secular or religious interest groups in the country. However, Babangida's SMC/AFRC (1985–1993) regime is especially significant to the argument of this thesis, because of its role in Nigeria's OIC membership, this regime also serves as a wider reflection of how other military regimes ruled Nigeria, including having similar decision-making structures.

In the structure of any of Nigeria's military governments, there was a fusion of legislative and executive powers in the head of state, whether as the chairman of the SMC or AFRC and or some other ruling body. The judicial power of the state was subsumed in the absolute legislative authority of the state.[84] This implies within the Military policy-making structure, the main leader is identified and prominent to the extent that other agencies such as ministers, civil servants and commissioners become less significant and wield little or no influence; so state policies are determined by the head of state.[85]

The SMC/AFRC councils set up the military regime became the most important government policy organ, responsible for broad policy guidelines. This organ also directly handled government policy making. Thus the SMC/AFRC served as an institutional mechanism for coordinating policy decision-making at the highest level, for the whole country, implying that the individuals who constitute and have control of the AFRC/SMC are influential to policy outcome.

The composition of the AFRC/SMC is therefore important and usually reflected a Northern and Muslim majority, which sometimes was controversial.[86] For example, the Buhari government's SMC comprised of 16 Northern Muslims and six Southern Christians. This lopsided arrangement can be viewed as significant in government policy-making structure. Babangida's administrative structure made no significant changes to the AFRC/SMC, which was perceived by Southerners and Christians as mainly constituting Northern Muslims. The

[84] B Nwabueze, *A Constitutional History of Nigeria*, C Hurst & Co. Ltd. pp. 229–230, 1982

[85] U Ukiwo, Op.cit., pg 17: This was the experience of General Theophilus Danjuma, Former Defence Minister in the Obasanjo regime, he claimed to be frustrated by a clique in the Presidency; see also Eghosa Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independent: The Crippled Giant*, 1988;Abegunrin, Op.cit; This Day 10 November, 2003. NIIA Library archive (example, Gen. Danjuma claims that for projects to get executed, contractors are often told to use their personal contacts and influence and access to the Chief executive for funds approval or change in policy to be effective. This implies that formal actors sometimes have to depend on informal actors to get what they want from the chief executive, and refusal to rely on such informal channels could result in frustration)

[86] See full details in the works of Femi Ajayi, pp 148–158, T Falola, Op.cit., 1998.

service chiefs of the army, navy, and police were Muslims; only the chief of the air force was a Southerner.[87]

AFRC members were handpicked by the Presidency and made up of his close associates and individuals who, in the first instance were instrumental in the coup that brought them to power; hence the AFRC is directly linked to the Presidency. These members constitute the 'big men' in government.[88] The CAN, as a religious interest group, always questioned the composition of the AFRC and other important government ministerial posts and parastatals because of Muslim domination; they argued this placed Muslim groups in an advantageous position when lobbying and to influence policy outcomes. Accordingly, Falola affirms the use of religion to gain political office and power is well entrenched in Nigeria.[89] Framing is, as discussed above, also a significant tool when interacting with Nigerian military regimes, whereby Islamic actors identify with and lobby fellow Muslims within the military to support their specific interest, as the case of the membership of OIC demonstrates. Both religious and secular interest groups were not members of the AFRC nor involved in the deliberations of this organ, but may wield significant influence by lobbying their members within the government who sympathise with the issues they represent.

General Babangida's position within the political and military circles as the Head of the AFRC enable him to control the organ, he was legendary in his manipulative skills against critics, colleagues and opponents, earning him the nickname, the 'Maradona' of Nigeria politics.[90] Christian religious group leaders such as Cardinal Okogie of the CAN, severely criticised Babangida's government policy issues on the membership of the OIC, secularity and the establishment of a national pilgrim's board as oppose to just a Muslims Pilgrims' board[91]

However, it is plausible to suggest that, Islamic religious groups were aware of the power wielded by Babangida within the AFRC, for example, the JNI and the NSCIA used their insider influence strategy to lobby Muslim members within the AFRC to achieve a favourable

[87] U Inamete, Op.cit., pg 140
[88] Ibid.
[89] T Falola, Op.cit., pp 172; pp 111–114.,For example in 1990, the Christians seriously protested the federal government domination by 80% Muslims to Non- Muslims occupying insignificant posts, 27 federal ministers Muslims and 5 Christians. Also the 1989 reshuffling of the Babangida regime meant all ministers were completely Muslims; see also Abegunrin, Op.cit.,
[90] Op.cit O Abegunrin, pp. 133-141, (He used this term to describe Babangida) Babangida) Babangida; http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6169715.stm, 11 December 2006, Accessed,18th October 2009
[91] Op. cit. T Falola, pp 111–112, see CAN, Leadership series in Nigeria, Nos. 28 and 36

policy outcome on OIC membership and pilgrim board issues.[92] AFRC Members also supported and leaned more towards the Babangida's position on policy issues because majority of the members of the AFRC were Muslim.[93] Evidence of this advantage in their common religious background and culture are significant and useful, as it helps to ascertain how religious influences are wielded and applied by religious interest groups during Babangida regime.The personal contact Influential Muslim leaders had with the Presidency and other members of the government were useful to Muslim religious groups. To buttress this closeness and influence he may exert, Adegbite claimed that he performed the 1974 Hajj pilgrimage in the company of the former Head of State the late General Murtala Mohammed (1975-1976), this afforded him the opportunity to discuss various religious issues concerning Muslim interests, especially the OIC membership issue.[94]

It is clear that even in military regimes, interest groups can apply various lobbying strategies to get the ear of the decision maker as evident with the civilian government. Since religious actors must demonstrate that they have the ability to translate *potential ability* into *actual influence* in order to achieve favourable policy outcome, then their ability to exert influence is to some degree dependent on the extent to which they can access and influence those people who make the policy decisions.[95]

Conclusion

This chapter has noted the significant role of religious and other interest groups in government decision-making process in relation to how they attempt to influence policy outcome to reflect their own interest. The concept of the influence production process of interest groups has been used to examine how in particular, religious interest groups influence secular interest politics and to identify how they seek out significant decision makers. In terms of strategies, religious actors apply the insider determinant, which has been effective against both civilian and military regimes in Nigeria.

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[92] Claims made mostly by Christians such as Kenny, Anegbeh, Obozuwa, none of the Muslims interviewed for this research supports this claim

[93] U Inamete, Op.cit., pg 140, see also T Falola, the controversies always surrounding the appointment of Government officials, and F Ajayi 2009

[94] Lateef Adegbite, Interview Comments, NSCIA, Lagos and Abeokuta offices, 20 February and 25 February 2009

[95] Decision Making and Influence, http://nigerianmasses.com/statenewsdetails.asp?id=21482&stateid=Kaduna, Accessed 18 October 2008, see also T Falola, pp 96–97, J Shiklam & I Okonkwo -Nigeria: *We'll Resist Membership in OIC* – CAN, Kaduna, Daily Champion Lagos, April 2, 2008; Is Nigeria a Member of OIC, Punch Newspaper Editorial Board, 11th April 2008; H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pp 254 –255, 1996

However, the evidence is that, at various times, both military and civilian governments have been able to more or less marginalise the role of religious interest groups at the national level. While at the state government level, there is evidence of the impact of religious actors influence, for example, the implementation of Sharia law in 12 Northern states and also the role of both the Catholic and Anglican churches in the political processes in the East.This is very important, because it is not always straight forward to demonstrate consistently the operations and application of religious influences on government policy processes, because on the one hand, it is reasonable to identify a congruence of interests between policy makers and religious actors, but on the other hand, how can we be sure that this is any more than an opportunistic coming together of two sets of actors who identify on common ground that happens to be informed by religious norms, values and precepts.

Overall, since the new democratic dispensation in Nigeria (1999–present), religious interest groups have been more effective in making demands on the government, unlike during military rule, as a result of the sternness and high human right abuses of those governments. This has not only undermined the position of those who traditionally monopolise decision-making, it has also transformed them, so that the exercise of influence and interests frequently cut across formal divisions of responsibility and power. This is a consequence of the lack of clearly defined social, political, religious boundaries and responsibilities between the government and religious actors. From the above analysis we note that, there is relatively little difference between civilian and military governments in this regard and that over time, interest groups, including religious interest groups, have learnt how to engage with a relatively unchanging decision-making structure.

The next two chapters will examine religious actors (the CAN and the NSCIA) identified in this chapter and how they attain their significant role within the political process in Nigeria.

Table 7. President Shagari Government Policy Decision-Making Structures, 1979–1983

Chapter 4. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the role of an important religious interest group in Nigeria, the CAN. This organisation is important because it is a major channel through which Christians in Nigeria express their opinions to government decision makers. The CAN and other interest groups are permanent players in government policy-making process, they keep an eye on government decision process and also attempt to seek legislative outcomes and provide a means of representation for subsets of the citizenry.[1] This implies that the CAN scrutinise government policy issues, especially in relation to religion, thus they are religious actors with huge interest in the government decision-making process and general policy outcome. The questions of politics here are 'Who gets what, when, and how?' and the answers are to be found by studying how religious and other social groups mobilize to influence political institutions.[2]

As a religious interest group,[3] the CAN's organisational involvement in government policy making will be examined. This is very important to this thesis because the role of the CAN will be compared with the role of Muslim religious actors in government decision-making process in subsequent chapters. Given that all interest groups want to participate or play a significant role in decision making, hence addressing issues important to them; it is important to discover how these groups become prominent in the political debate and what factors enable them to succeed attempting to influence a particular policy issue. Asking interest groups how and why they behave in a particular manner on specific issues may not provide an explanation for whose voices get heard by policymakers. Instead, independent assessments of the prominence and participation levels of interest organisations in policymaking should be used in order to infer the factors that promote active involvement.[4]

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[1] JN Victor, *The Spatial Model of Interest Group Lobbying, Interest Group Politics*, 8th edition, University of Pittsburgh, USA, 2009

[2] M Grossman, *The Organization of Factions: Interest Mobilization and the Group Theory of Politics*, University of California, Berkeley, CA, 2006a; see also the works of H Lasswell (1958), Politics: *Who Gets What, When, How*. New York: World Publishing; and DB Truman, (1951), *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. New York: Knopf

[3] C Braun-Poppelaars & M Hanegraaff, in J Haynes & A Hennig, (eds) Refers to 'Religious Interest groups as organisations with varying organisational formats, which interact with policy makers and represent a set of norms and values imposed by supernatural or impersonal powers, the existence of which is taken as axiomatic. Religious Actors in the Public Sphere: Means, Objectives and Effects, London: Routledge, pg 132, 2011

[4] M Grossman, *Institutionalised Pluralism: The Prominence of Interest Organizations in National Policymaking*, Institute of Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley, 01-24-2006b. Accessed 1-11-2011, see also David Knoke, *Political Organizations*, Encyclopaedia of Sociology, edu.learnsoc.org 2010–2011

To achieve this, there needs to be a discussion on how religious interest groups are perceived in Nigeria compared with other countries or regions, especially in the US or Europe, where the role of interest groups and their activities are well defined. For example, as noted by several scholars in Europe, the similarities between religious actors and other interest groups are becoming, or have become, increasingly minimal in terms of their mobilisation and lobby activities, because religious groups have now joined the lobby ranks of Brussels and many other political arenas.[5] In comparison, as discussed earlier, Nigerian interest groups carry out their activities differently, this is as a result of many factors, in particular, the lack of developed and democratic political institutions. Religious organisations and secular groups lobby activities are carried out in a manner that depend mostly on their network of individuals and the presence of influential members who are part of government decision making, which they utilise to influence policy outcomes. They rely on the use of an insider strategy,[6] because it affords them easy access and exchange of ideas with specific policy makers. Such a strategy was employed to influence policy makers who played significant roles in the introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria.[7]

The role religious interest groups play in the political process may improve decision-making processes because by supporting policies that are in line with citizens or their group's preferences, decision makers therefore block policies that solely reflect the interest of the governing elite.[8] As noted in Chapter 3, the significance of religious and secular interest groups in government policy was examined, whereby various groups attempt to break, create, or maintain legislative gridlock by lobbying to change government policy preferences. Knoke claims that the investigation of the behaviour of religio-political organisations occurs at an intersection of sociology, political science and organisations studies.[9] This interdisciplinary perspective offers great potential for a richly informed understanding and a comprehensive explanation of numerous facets of these religious and social actors and their relationships with the larger society and polity in which they are embedded and operate in. Highlight below are four fundamental questions which have dominated research on interest groups generally, and

[5] C Braun-Poppelaars and M Hanegraaff, *Conceptualising Religious Advocacy: Interest Groups and the Process of Public Policy Making*, In J Haynes and A Hennig (eds), Religious Actors in the Public Sphere; Means, Objectives and Effects, Routledge, Oxon, UK, pg 132, 2011
[6] Ibid.
[7] A Anyia, Chapter 7 of this Thesis, 2012
[8] A Dur & D De Bievre, *The Question of Interest Group influence, Journal of Public Policy*, pp 1–12, 27 January 2007.
[9] D Knoke, Op.cit., 2011, Accessed 1 December 2011

also examine how religious interest groups in Nigeria (eg, the CAN) fall within this paradigm described over the last two to three decades:[10]

1. What socio-political conditions encourage the creation of political (in this case religious groups) organisations? (Aims and origin)
2. How are participants recruited and induced to provide crucial resources for political action? (Structure)
3. What mobilization processes enable political organizations to work together most effectively toward collective ends? (Mobilisation strategies)
4. What strategies and tactics exert the greatest impact on public policy makers, decisions? (Lobby and Mobilisation)

Although majority of the empirical research on interest group organizations concentrates on groups in the US and Europe,[11] the evidence in Nigeria is that the development and operation of religious organisations as effective lobby machinery has been slow and their normal processes are applied differently, as a result of the complex, evolving political process and incessant involvement of military juntas in Nigeria's politics. Hertzke argues that as lobbyists for large public constituencies (eg, Christians), religious organisations (eg, the CAN) act as a countervailing force against traditional or secular interest organisations.[12]

Thus, the CAN's organisational lobby and mobilisation capabilities will be analysed here, within these frameworks; drawing on its role and capabilities as a religious interest group and its ability to speak on behalf of its respective religious constituencies on domestic and international political issues. Analysing the organisation's attempts to influence decision makers, lobby actions and their ability to exert influence will help to determine how Christian religious interest group's influence policy formation in government.

In the past 25 years, religious interest groups have engaged in various attempts to influence Christian members of government and these efforts have become far more significant amongst certain Christian groups including the CAN, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and the Pentecostal fellowship of Nigeria; especially within the country's political

[10] Ibid.
[11] Through the various researches by M Grossmann, JN Victor, 2001, 2002; Op. cit. J Haynes & A Hennig (Eds), 2011
[12] A Hertzke. *Representing God in Washington: The role of religious lobbies in the American polity*, Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.1988

processes. Baumgartner and Leech claim that 'most studies on interest groups influence in the US congress, for example, fail to derive convincing conclusions because they do not account for strategic context of issues,' and Victor's research supports this claim by affirming that the only way to explain the strategic context of an issue is to investigate the interest groups, the activities goals and strategic choices such groups make on specific issues.[13] In relation to Nigeria, this implies religious interest groups having memberships that cut across big economic, military and social groupings and large numbers of Nigerians belong to a religious community. Lobbying these large religious communities, especially the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is therefore a by-product for religious groups.[14] These organisations make demands on the government and it is within this focus, for the purpose of this study that the CAN fall into, because most Christians in Nigeria assume that the CAN does not aim to come to power but rather seek to influence those in office, as most interests group attempt to.[15]

In comparison with other countries, for example, in the US, religious interest groups are able to influence legislation and contribute either positively or negatively towards the legislative process; although Meistad claims that they may not be as influential as many secular interest groups,[16] because of various reasons including the lack of access to the same levels of finance. However, in Nigeria this claim is contestable because of the rivalry between Christians and Muslims and the lack of proper and developed democratic infrastructures. In order to determine the level of influence that religious or secular interest groups may or may not wield is not easily perceived. Hence the size, political access to decision makers, levels of finance and their lobbying and mobilisation strategies of the organisation are crucial factors in their efforts to influence policy.

The CAN, as a religious interest group, can be described as an association of Christian individuals, churches and or Christian institutions that attempt to influence public policy[17] via engaging the general public as well as direct communication with the policymakers.[18]

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[13] A Meistad, *Lobbying on Behalf of God: Religious Interest Groups and the No Child Left behind Act of 2001*, MSc Thesis, Depart of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, pg 68, Nov 2003, accessed 24/1/2011; also full details in JN Victor, (Conducts Numerous Research on Interest groups and the USA Congress) '*The Challenge of Evaluating Interest Groups Influence*,(April 18–22) 2001; Op.cit. FR Baumgartner and BL Leech, 1998

[14] Ibid.

[15] HV Milner, *Interest, Institutions and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations*. Princeton University Press, 1997, pg 35, This was consistently asserted by all those interviewed on my visits to Nigeria, such as Barrister Ezekhome, Dele Magbor, Daily Times, March 2007; Interview with H Kukah 2006, Fr. Aniagwu, 2005

[16] A Meistad, Op.cit, November 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011

[17] FR Baumgartner and BL Leech, Op.cit., pp 24–25

[18] T Falola, Op. cit. pp 110–111, (Such as Cardinal Ekandem, first former President of CAN, who fostered the approach of writing memos and sending delegations to meet with the government)

Obviously, the use of various methods of social expressions in relation to a common cause are applied by these religious organisations to get the ear of the decision maker, such as the use of public demonstrations, media, public speaking in places of worship. These methods sometime result in more organised and lasting attempts to influence state policy.[19] It is therefore significant to examine the objectives, structure, strategies and goals of the CAN as a religious interest group against the attributes and description detailed above.

Aims of the CAN

The CAN is a religious organisation whose main aim, as described by various Nigeria authors, is to aggregate the interests of those citizens holding similar preferences (in this case Christians), enabling them to press their demands on government officials more effectively.[20] By articulating their member's demands and pooling the resources of individuals, religious interest groups such as the CAN fashion a louder voice that is not readily dismissed by those in positions charged with public policy making. According to Falola and Enwerem, 'the CAN has emerged as the leading voice for Christians in Nigeria and is the best known Christian organisation in the country. Their activities are well publicised as a result of the effective use of the electronic media'.[21] Public officials and interest groups have mutual interest in delivering policy successes that permit them both to survive to play the influence game again and again.[22] The fragmentation of political power among numerous policy arenas in the Nigeria's federal system offers religious interest groups, in general and various other groups several institutional pressure points, ie, legislatures; executive agencies; regulatory bodies; and courts at the local, state and national levels; through which to raise their demands and promote their preferred solutions onto the public policy agenda for debate and resolution. The duality of interest groups at the interface between the state and its citizenry seeks to ensures that the interest group system exerts a crucial impact on shaping many outcomes of government decision-making political action.[23]

The CAN's constitution defines the association as 'a fellowship of Churches, working together to promote the glory of God by encouraging the growth and unity of the churches

[19] Ioannis Stefanidis, *Pressure Groups and Greek Foreign Policy, 1945–67*, Discussion Paper No. 6, pg 3,. The European Institute, LSE, UK, 2001
[20] T Falola, Op.cit., pp 110--111, For a detailed origin of the CAN, see extensive research carried out by I Enwerem, A Dangerous Awakening, pp 75 –96, A Mbachirin, pp 174–200
[21] Ibid. T Falola, pp 107–108, Interview comments, London, 9 July 2006
[22] D Knoke, Op.cit., 2011, in Browne 1998, pp 226–228
[23] Ibid.

and by helping them to salvation'.[24] Therefore the CAN is safeguarding the interest of Nigeria's Christians,[25] especially against the historical backdrop of a forceful Islamisation policy of the Sardauna in Northern Nigeria,[26] which resulted in Northern Christian leaders coming together in order to vehemently oppose the Sardauna Northernisation agenda.[27] The position of the CAN must be taken into context with the perceived immense social and political influences of the Muslim North in the governance of Nigeria. Thus, the CAN was formed by the leaders of major Christian groups including the Catholic Church, Christian council of Nigeria and the Pentecostal church. The religious and political issues at the fore include: fighting for justice, fostering and protecting Christian interests, the issue of Nigeria joining the OIC, government appointments, religious pilgrimages and drawing attention to the continuous Islamic rhetoric emanating from the Northern Nigeria.[28]

Other aims of the organisation[29] as laid out in the CAN's constitution reflect spiritual and Christian concerns, including:

a. To serve as a basis of response to the unity of the church, as contained in our lord's prayer: 'That they all may be one' (John 17:21). In relation to political activism, this implies the role of the CAN in mobilising its members first as their Christian obligation and service to God.

b. To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member churches can consult together and when necessary, make common statements and take common actions. It speaks on their behalf and represents churches in Nigeria and to the international community. This is achieved through consultative forums and the issuing of memoranda, communiqués and general press statements.[30]

c. To promote understanding among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria through the propagation of the gospel. Mbachirin describes the problems of Nigeria in a

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[24] The Constitution of the Christian Association of Nigeria, 2004, Art, 2, pg 2
[25] H Kukah, Interview comments, Abeokuta, Nigeria, 7 December 2006
[26] These details are documented in the works of T Falola, M Kukah, Ihonvbere & Shaw, *Illusions of Power*; E Osagie, Crippled Giant; Korieh and Nwokeji; in Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria. (S Nolutshungu; noted that Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna championed a Northern Nationalism which combined religious and ethnic chauvinism. He created a pseudo Islamic order, the Usmaniya, in reactionary invocation of the caliphate founder Usman Dan Fodio: in S Nolutshungu, Islam and Nigeria foreign policy in Adeed Dawisha, *Islam and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1986. pg 132)
[27] I Enwerem, Op.cit., pg 77, 1995 (Enwerem is a catholic Priest, whocompleted a detailed study of the CAN, this chapter draws widely from the account of Enwerem and I have relied and crosschecked his account of the CAN with other sources and authors appropriately throughout the process)
[28] S Komolafe, Between Jihad and Crusade: Muslim-Christian Clashes in Nigeria, http://www.gospellightmission.org/abjcentire.shtml, Accessed 20 june 2010, see also H Kukah, Abeokuta, 7 December 2006
[29] The Constitution of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Art.5, 2004
[30] A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pp 199–203

context of socio-economic, political and ethnic antagonisms and argues the competence of the CAN to resolve the issues.[31]

d. To act as a watchman of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.

The CAN was formed in 1976 and from its onset, it set out to influence and play an important role in government, through the mobilisation of its members and the lobbying government officials on issues of National and State concerns, and especially to counter the perceived dominance and threats from Muslims. This is supported by the statement of the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, Rt Rev Peter Jatau, who says, that 'the objectives of the CAN are to provide the forum where Christian leaders will come together to discuss their common problems; how best to get federal and state governments to respect the rights of Christians; and to ensure the claim to secularity so that no particular religious body is favoured against the other by the government'.[32]

In summary, this research notes the role of the political landscape of Nigeria required to mould the activities and the mobilisation efforts of the CAN. The CAN developed and made choices in terms of lobbying activities that its leaders believed were strategically wise, effective in the prevailing social-political situation. They also involved their members in their effort to convince decision makers that the issue or issues they represent are genuinely relevant and of concern.[33]

Origins of the CAN

After the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970), the climate in the 1970s was increasingly favourable to ecumenical interactions among the churches, due to the role that Catholic churches and the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) played in fostering the Federal government policy of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction after the war.[34] The perceived Muslim threat also required Christians to present a unified voice against military rule because of the absence of democratic mechanisms or structures through which they could influence government decision-making and policy outcome.

[31] Ibid.
[32] I Enwerem, Op.cit., pg 78; cited from his interview with Rt Rev Peter Jatau, Kaduna, Nov 20 1990, pg 85
[33] JN Victor, Op.cit., 2009
[34] Ibid. pg 66

The perceived threat of Islamisation from the Muslim-dominated Northern Nigeria was alarming to the Christians and it implored them into taking an anti-Islamic stance, as confirmed in the accounts of the founding fathers of the CAN.[35] Also significant was the actions of Christian groups such as the CCN and the Roman Catholic church, who collaborated on humanitarian assistance projects such as helping and rehabilitating refugees and displaced people of the Eastern region after the war. Also important was the establishment of a teacher-training institute the National Institute of Moral and Religious Education in 1971, (known as TIME).[36] These two Christian bodies also set up the Christian Health Association of Nigeria to coordinate and facilitate the provisions of medical facilities, especially drugs, which were donated to the Christian churches for health care services in Nigeria.[37] These Christian interest groups activities therefore established themselves in the minds of Nigerian Christians as formidable religious interest groups that could genuinely represent their values and interests,[38] and thus resist the threats of Muslim domination.

There are numerous accounts relating to the role various individuals played in the formative years of the CAN, as noted from the comments by political actors and other Christian religious actors interviewed for this research and from the extensive study of the CAN by Enwerem.[39] These accounts significantly highlight the role of Christian religious actors and the readiness of the churches and their leaders to come together to speak with one unified voice for and on behalf of all Christians,[40] and through this unification process, influence and scrutinise government policy outcome. By investigating these accounts, the background issues that this thesis examines can be highlighted and placed into a proper perspective, ie, Nigeria's membership of the OIC and the introduction of Sharia law. Reasons for the formation of the CAN are listed below:

1. **Ecumenical reasons**: Enwerem's account of the origin of the CAN claims that the formation of the association was accidental, that is, it wasn't purposely planned for the association to be formed, as members originally came together only for ecumenical objectives that were apolitical. This view was supported by Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie

[35] I Enwerem, Op.cit.,Various studies abound on the socio-religious and political environment in Nigeria from the 1970s, Ihonvbere & Shaw, *The Illusion Power*, 1998; E Osaghae, *The Crippled Giant*. 1998; F Ajayi, Op.cit, 2009, T Falola & H Kukah; Op.cit., T Falola and P Williams,O Abegunrin, Op. cit.2003

[36] Ibid., I Enwerem, pg 76; see also EM Fashade, Report on the National Institute of Moral and Religious Education (Project TIME); Christianity in Such a Time as This, CO Williams (ed), Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1980, pg 67

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ogbu Kalu, Op.cit., cited in I Enwerem

[39] Ibid. I Enwerem, Pg 75, Because Fr Enwerem is a Catholic priest his CAN studies have been widely referred to by those interviewed as the most accurate.

[40] Ibid.

the former President of the CAN, who saw the formation of the association as the brainchild of the Catholic church and the CCN, purely on ecumenical grounds.[41] Thus Fr Kenny noted that, 'the issue of politics gradually crept into the CAN as the association grew and assumed a more political posture, with the aim of influencing policy issues and outcomes, especially with the OIC issues.[42] Since its formation, the CAN has issued numerous memoranda on various government policies, political appointments, the membership of the OIC and religious clashes among others.[43]

This transformation from a purely ecumenical outlook, to include a political one, resulted objectively from the economic, socio-political and geographic factors associated with post-civil war deprivation; while subjectively, the emergence of an articulate human agency; the availability of an easily recognised and identifiable enemy (Islam); a largely oppressive military government;[44] and the establishment of a link with the state of Israel for Christian pilgrimage purposes (as accorded pilgrimages to Mecca) were also important.

2. **Islamisation reasons**: The account of Dodo, former Secretary of the Benue State branch of the CAN, highlights the Islamisation fears of the Christians, including Muslim control of the civil service in the North and the occupation of strategic political appointments in federal government were a constant source of controversy between the Christians and Muslims.[45] The tension between the two groups was heightened, as a result of the Sardauna's Northernalisation policy; which aimed to unify Northern Muslims via Muslim Interest groups, such as JNI and the Kaduna council of Malams.[46] This assertion by Dodo, is very important because it links the origin of the CAN in an anti-Islamic initiative, to which Christians could come together and stand firm against.

Furthermore, Dodo, Salifu, Enwerem *et al* noted the continued domination of the political power at the centre by the Hausa–Fulani ruling class. Against this background, was the increase and emergence of various Islamic groups sponsored and funded by

[41] Ibid. pg 75, 78, from his interview with Rt Rev Olubunmi Okogie, President CAN, Lagos. 10 December 1990
[42] Fr. J Kenny, Op,cit., Interview comments, 27 October 2009
[43] T Falola; Op.cit., see detail discussion of these in pg 111, pp. 137–193, www.cannigeria.org, Accessed, 5 July 2007
[44] I Enwerem, Op. cit. pg 202
[45] Ibid.; see also H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit. 1996
[46] Ibid.; also in D Ohadike, *Muslim–Christian Conflict and Political Instability in Nigeria; Religion and National Integration in Africa: Islam, Christianity, and Politics in the Sudan and Nigeria.* (Ed) JO Hunwick, Northwestern University Press, pg 104. 1991

Northern Nigeria government,[47] including for example, the emergence of Muslim Student Society, which is affiliated to the World Assembly of Muslim Youth.

From the accounts of Christian leaders regarding the formation of the CAN as described above, the prevailing circumstances and the socio-political and religious environment, especially in Northern Nigeria, implied that gradually a real anti-Islamic feeling was growing among Christians and herein lies the origin of the CAN. Initially it was known as the Northern Christian Association, later metamorphosed into the CAN,[48] a Christian religious interest group seeking to influence government decision making in favour of their group interest.

3. **Outcome:** Significantly, the meeting in August 1976, between the Murtala/Obasanjo government with the CCN and church leaders formed the background account of the origin of the CAN by C.O Williams (an activist for Christian unity in Nigeria and the secretary general of the CCN). He claimed that the origin of the CAN was the outcome of the meeting between Christian leaders and representative of the military government by the Late General Shehu Yar'Adua, the former Chief-of-Staff of Supreme Headquarters to consult and discuss vital issues relating to religion.[49] This was a congregation of Christian leaders representing all major denominations and against the background of this meeting they returned to the Catholic secretariat for a meeting, of which the outcome was the formation and official establishment of the CAN on the 27th August 1976.[50]

In summary, it is clear that the various Christian groups in the country evolved from the early NCA, the Christian Movement in the North, and the CCN to the present day CAN, and that a sense of rivalry with Islam was crucial to formation of the CAN. Secondly, the CAN was formed to counter the perceived threat of Islamisation from the Muslim-dominated Northern Nigeria. Consequently, the association began to monitor policy outcomes and actions of the federal government so as to ensure that the interests of Christians are not underrepresented either internally and externally; for example, by the crisis of Nigeria's OIC membership in the

[47] Ibid. pg 89
[48] Ibid.; I Enwerem's Interview with Dodo, November 5, 1990, Abuja, pg 77
[49] CO Williams, Christianity in Such a Time as This, (ed), Ibadan, Daystar Press, p.85, 1980, The Catholic Secretariat Tafawa Balewa Square Lagos, Library, 4 October 2006; Op. cit. I Enwerem, pg 79
[50] Ibid. I Enwerem, pg 81. (See Enwerem research for the list of the founding members of the Christian Association of Nigeria /the first national officers selected to direct its affairs)

1980s, and the introduction of Sharia law in some Northern states a decade later. Thus, now the objective of the CAN is the continuous fight for the maintenance and assurance of the secularity of Nigeria, ie, the non-adoption of a state religion or the prohibition of the adoption of a state religion by the federal government, as guaranteed by the federal constitution of Nigeria.[51] Also important are the issues generated by the introduction of Sharia law and how the CAN is best able to manage this issue in the future. The CAN, now encourage its members to take part in the country's political process, so that they may attain political power in order to forestall the current Muslim domination of political power.

Composition, Organisation and Administration of the CAN

According to Grossman, religious organisations differ from each other in almost every possible way, especially in their relative prominence, focus and structure. Their differences make each sector of organisations more similar to a non-religious sector of interest groups than to other religious organisations.[52] The CAN and other religious organisations in Nigeria aptly fall into this description The CAN came into existence over 30 years ago and has members and representation across all 36 states of Nigeria, including the federal capital Abuja. Its membership comprises the five major Christian groups in the country, which embraces almost every church group and organisation, which professes to follow Christ[53](Figure 4&5), and this large membership makes it a formidable and significant religious interest group in Nigeria. In the decade following the mid-1980s, the CAN have become well known in Nigeria, as a result of its numerous mobilisation and lobbying activities in a religious and political capacity. It had succeeded in establishing a bureaucratic structure of offices, organisation and well-defined objectives. The constituency have become broader and better defined, owing to the admission of many different churches.[54]

The membership of the CAN is a constituency of churches rather than individuals, and any person or group of persons who proclaim themselves as a Christian should fall into one of the groups listed below, under the umbrella of the CAN.[55]

- The Catholic Church is one of the founding member churches and the most influential group in the CAN, this influence stems from the fact that the church has been

[51] Section 10, Prohibition of State Religion, Constitution of the Federal Constitution of Nigeria
[52] M Grossman, the Organised Representation of American Religious Groups: A Unique Form of Mobilization or Just Interest Group Politics? Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley, 2005
[53] H Kukah,Op.cit., Abeokuta 7 December 2006
[54] T Falola, Op. cit. pg 108
[55] I Enwerem, *The Politicisation of Religion in Modern Nigeria; The Emergence and Politics of CAN*, PhD Thesis, York University, Ontario, 1992, pg 196; also Enwerem's interview with CO Williams

established in Nigeria from the early sixteenth century.[56] Hence the church has administrative and organisational structures in place, it is comparatively well-financed, and can rely on well-educated priests laymen who are both articulate and vastly knowledgeable. These facilities and tools were made readily available for the use of the umbrella organisation

- The CCN, is an umbrella organisation for Protestant churches. This group consist of Anglican, Baptist, Seventh day Adventist churches, etc.
- The Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC). This comprises the Aladura churches,[57] the Celestial Church of Christ and the United African Methodist Church.
- The TEKAN /ECWA Fellowship. These are evangelical churches who trace their genealogy to the Canadian-based Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) or the British-based Sudan United Mission (SUM). Generally these groups are mostly found in Northern Nigeria.
- The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) includes the various charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Prominent amongst these are the Redeemed Christian Church (Adeboye), Deeper Life Ministry (Kumuyi), Church of God Mission (Benson Idahosa), Christ Embassy (Chris Oyakilome) and KICC (Ashimolowo). The Pentecostal churches began appearing in the 1970s and are vocal in character. This group is perceived by most Nigerians as a major force to be reckoned with, as a result of its fast rising membership and access to finance. The PFN is a large group within the CAN and it is modelled around the national structure of the CAN, but to clarify, it is not a rival of the CAN, however, the PFN wields equal amount of influence as other groups within the CAN.

The leaders of the CAN assert and agree that 'with these five groups identified above, the constituency of the new association cover more than 90% of the Christians in the country'.[58]

Lastly, membership of the CAN ensures that all registered members have the organisation's unequivocal support and protection if and when they run into trouble, for example, the CAN can provide legal representation to agitate for compensation where damages to life and property will be negotiated on behalf of victims.[59] As already noted the CAN was originally

[56] I Gambari, *The Role of Religion in National Life, pg 86, in Religion and National Integration in Africa: Islam, Christianity, and Politics in the Sudan and Nigeria.* (Ed) JO Hunwick, Northwestern University Press, 1991, www.cbcn.org/aspscripts/page1

[57] I Enwerem, Op. cit. pg 196, 1992

[58] T Falola, Op. cit. pg 108

[59] Ibid. pg 199; see also S Salifu, Interview in Nigeria's Christian Digest, Vol. 2. No.10, September 1990, pg 19

set up as a religious interest group, but it has gradually grown into an assumed political posture such that most Nigerians perceive the association as wielding enormous political influence. In reality, the CAN has no political power to execute its decisions or actions; however, it does have certain influential individuals and leaders whose actions can sometimes be interpreted to favour the organisations stance on certain issues.

Structure of the CAN

Religious interest groups rarely arise spontaneously, rather their initiation and subsequent existence is dependent on the presence of an effective leadership and resources. The organisational structure of the CAN is at two interrelated levels, the national level and the regional/state level. Prominent in the activities of the association are the national secretariat and the Northern Nigeria state or zones of the CAN. The organisational norms are characterised by a hierarchically structured authority and leadership style. However, sometimes there is room for flexibility and a more consultative nature as noted by Enwerem,[60] because with the organisation, issues are discussed and decisions are reached by consensus. This hierarchical structure results in a powerful executive, enabling the organisation to have a bigger voice in government decision-making. It is expected that the personalities and political influences of national executive may sometimes be employed to resolve particular issues.[61] For example, Cardinal Okogie (former CAN President) said that 'contacts have been established and maintained with influential Christians in government and the army, and these contacts lobby for Christians interests in policy decisions, when, for example, members have been imprisoned for criticising the government and compensation matters arising from religious clashes,'[62] Former Vice-President Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, a Christian and known supporter of the CAN, was sacked for making a public statement that he was unaware of the decision of President Babangida to take Nigeria into the OIC. A situation that was as a result of pressure applied by the CAN on General Babangida to clarify the federal government position.[63]

The way the association operates can give the impression of a 'one-man show' with all the actions and pronouncements emanating from the president of the association. It is however,

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[60] I Enwerem., Op. cit.
[61] II Kukah, Op. cit. Abeokuta, 7 December, 2006
[62] I Enwerem, Op. cit.
[63] T Falola, Op. cit. pg 94–95; see also observation made by M Ezekhome, who claimed that the association wanted their man (Ukiwe) to talk about the situation but did not expect that the President will be bold enough to sack himBarrister, Commentator and Human rights activist in Nigeria. Interview, Lagos 3 February 2007

the general assembly which has the responsibility for discussing issues, and a two-thirds majority is required for a decision to be published or presented to the government.[64] However, even though there is a well-defined, coherent structure of authority within the CAN, in reality it is the few leaders at the top, with the ability to make policy and exert influence, who have much more power than the structure's lower levels.

The two figures below display and describe the organizational structure of the CAN,[65] representing a top-down model of authority, despite this, the association seeks to view itself as democratic and representative of all Nigerian Christians. It is claimed that ideas pass from local and state level, including frontline observations, and data, to the top through established channels of communication and authority. From the national level, layers of authority in descending order are described as follows:[66]

The National Assembly is the highest and most powerful body. It has the final say on all issues, ie, on all matters of spiritual and moral welfare of all Nigerian Christians. This assembly is known and acknowledged as the highest policy-making organ of the association and it comprises representatives from all affiliated churches that make up the CAN.[67] The national President of the CAN is the head of the national assembly, he presides over the meetings of the assembly and the national executive committee (NEC).[68] Above all, he acts on behalf of the organisationan and liaises with the government through public announcements, the media, communiqué and memoranda.[69]

The NEC comprises delegates from all the groups that make up the assembly. In addition to these members, it has a representative from each zone/state branch of the CAN. This composition makes it a fast and effective organ to arrange meetings and execute actions.

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[64] CAN Constitution. 2004 (On some issues the CAN, may not always speak with one voice because of differences amongst member churches, which may become differences between member churches and the CAN leaders. For example, during the crisis on the proliferation of television media with claims of miracles by some member groups since 2000, there were differences of opinion on how to deal with members on such issues some feel it is acceptable for this to be allowed broadcast on the media while others thought it was too extreme)

[65] I Enwerem, Op.cit., 1995 pg 106–107, Also the CAN Constitution

[66] Constitution of CAN, 2004

[67] Enwerem. Op. cit. (See details which shows / including a representative from each state and the federal capital territory (FCT) CAN, national officers, past presidents and general secretaries as honorary members and also the national chairman of the women and youth wings

[68] Ibid pg, 50, 1995

[69] Ibid. pg 109

The President-in-Council is a very important organ, and it comprises the national officers of the association and the leader of each church group. This organ is a close-knit small group that is very powerful and wields enormous influence within the association and outside it. The president of the CAN represents the organisation and in some situations the president act on behalf of the organisation and reports back to the council.[70]

The zonal assembly is the highest organ within in the zones (the CAN subdivides the country into three zones, each with its own nominated officers). This assembly comprises the zonal executive arm, the Zonal officers and one representative from each states branch of the CAN.

The state assembly (SA) is charged with implementing decisions at the states level and also reporting issues of local concerns to the NEC and the zonal executive. It also manages reports and findings from the youth and women's wings of the association at the local and states levels, which are then passed on to the zonal and national organs. The SA is made up of twenty representatives, two representatives each from the local government branch of the CAN, with state officers, past chairmen and secretaries as honorary members. This is present in all the states in Nigeria, including Abuja. As shown in Figure 4, the SA comes directly under the command of the NEC, and it is the duty of the SA to ensure that all directives passed onto it reach the grassroots level.

There is a state executive committee operating in each state and it comprises ten representatives from all the groups constituting the CAN, the state officers of the CAN, and one representative from each local government.

The CAN's lowest organ is the local government executive committee, which is made up of representatives from all the groups in the CAN, local government officers, the women's group, and the Youth wing. This is the grassroots level of the group and it is at the level that majority of information gathering is conducted and passed on upwards to the higher levels through the appointed officers and superiors.

In order to ensure, recognise and guarantee the importance of the input from the SA and the grassroot wings in the decision-making processes of the CAN, a constitutional requirement is

[70] CAN Constitution, article 9 sub sect. 111. pg 5–8, 2004

made for the representation SA, with voting rights, at both the NEC and assembly meetings.[71] However, despite the fact that all the organs described above were established to ensure the smooth and effective running of the association, the decision-making responsibilities of the association is clearly the responsibilities of the senior officers and upper organs of the CAN. For example, it was Cardinal Okogie who was made to defend his comments made in 1990s, against the government on social-political and religious issues affecting the country. He had to clarify if he was speaking for himself or for the CAN as a whole. This was as a result of the perception that his views were totally reflective of the association,[72] as Okogie's utterances were perceived to be a departure from the constructive engagement: dialogue and diplomacy that previous CAN leaders employed when dealing with government.

Lastly, the administration of the organisation and the duties of each group demonstrate a national flow of authority from top to bottom with input from the grassroot level, auxiliary youth and women's wings across the country.[73] This can be illustrated by, as noted by Enwerem, the instance when the views and feelings of the Ibadan branch of the Student Christian Movement of Nigeria SCM, and the senior friends group[74] who wrote to the head and leaders of Christian churches, to register amongst other things their disapproval of what they perceived as an ineffective approach adopted by the church leaders to confront what the groups saw as a step-by-step decision of the Muslims to turn the country into an Islamic country.[75]

[71] CAN Constitution, 1988, Art X
[72] T Falola, Op. cit. pp 129 –135
[73] See full account of their description and effectiveness in I Enwerem, Op. cit.1995
[74] Ibid. pg 108, 116. This is a group of former members of the University-based and CCN-affiliated student Christian Movement, who, after their student days and now as professionals or university teachers, meet in continuation of the aims and ideals of the Movement. Noted are Mrs Alao and Dr Erivwo – who were amongst the founding members of the CAN. Cited in Enwerem, Op. cit. pg 108–109, 1992
[75] Ibid. See the SCM Senior Friends Groups letter, *The Survival of the Church in Nigeria: Urgent effective action required, to the Head of Churches, Church/Christian Leaders*, January 10, 1989

Figure 4. Enwerem's Modified Organisational Chart of the CAN

Figure 5. North Zone CAN Organisational Chart

Administratively, the national office of the CAN is in Lagos,[76] and it also has active / efficient offices in the Northern states CAN, these are more vocal and always in the public eye due the controversies of incessant religious clashes, they are better staffed, especially in the Kaduna office.[77]

The finances to run the association comes from members' contribution, charity, donations from the public and some state governments donation, for example, the donation and contribution of the Rivers State government to the CAN in Port Harcourt during a courtesy visit of the CAN's Salifu, to the Rivers State Governor.[78]Also the CAN receives funding from the Federal government in relation to specific issues in the community like compensation to religious riot victims.[79]

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[76] Initially plans to move CAN's Office to Abuja; Nigeria's capital. Presently it is now at Abuja, 2013.
[77] T Falola, Op. cit. pg 107
[78] B Johnson, News/Sahara reporters, 22 July 2006. http://www.ocnus.net/cgi-bin/exec/view.cgi? Archive=99&num=2535, Accessed 02 July 2006
[79] For exhaustive studies in this area, see T Falola, Op. cit. pg, 109, 1998; see also JH Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood, 1980–2002* (2003). These Tables are from S Komolafe, Op. cit.,Accessed 7 July 2008. Adapted from O Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960–1996* (2000:150–151) General Comments e.g. Fr J Aniagwu,Interview, Lagos, 2006, Prof Bukarambe,(Interview, NIIA. Lagos, 2006, T Falola,Interview London, 2006

Lastly, at the National level, the CAN's day-to-day actions and activities are carried out by the national executive officers such as, the President (who is the most nationally visible representative of the association), Vice-President, General Secretary, Vice-National Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and the Treasurer,[80] supported by the officers at the various state branches and auxiliary wings.

In summary, it is noted that one important way religious interest groups, such as the CAN, interact with religion and politics is through effectively organising its representation and mobilisation strategies. The CAN, generally depend on its members for critical resources and voluntary donations to enable officials to execute the memberships' interests in the long run. Consequently, the organisation's constitutions provide for an array of democratic structures, including competitive elections, membership meetings, referenda, and committee systems to achieve its aims.[81] However, the actual practice of consulting members to formulate collective actions vary widely, and researchers have only begun to examine how the democratic control of political organizations shape their capacities to mobilize their members for collective actions. The CAN's effective leadership and structures allows it to deal with peculiar issues or problems, for example the adoption of Sharia law in the Northern States and incessant Christian and Muslim clashes. In addition, the actions of the fearless CAN's leadership of Cardinal Okogie, Salifu, Tanko and other Christians, who routinely scrutinise government policies, especially in relation to Christians are significant; these actions go some way to explain the regular tension which define contemporary relations between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.[82]

The CAN's Mobilisation and Lobby Strategies

Over the years, the CAN as a religious interest group, has become more vocal on national issues and has repeatedly called the citizens attention to the perceived dominant influence of Muslims on national politics and government policy process in Nigeria. Since the inception of the third Republic of Obasanjo's government (1999–2007) there have been continuous religious clashes between the Christians and Muslims in the country. This imply that the CAN has had to fine tune its approach when dealing with the government decision-making. Falola noted that 'the CAN sees itself as the defender of a secular Nigeria state and politically it has made sure that its voice is the loudest on national policy issues. Falola also noted that

[80] CAN Constitution, Op. cit. 1988, Art XV
[81] D Knoke, Op.cit. 2011, Accessed 1 December 2011
[82] T Falola, Op.cit. pg 114

Cardinal Ekandem (CAN first leader), wrote memoranda, sent delegations and opened many sub-rosa lines of communication with government'.[83] Political influence can depend, in part, on the goals organisations have, thus, religious interest groups such as the CAN, may have less influence in comparison to secular groups because of the priority they attach to educating their members on policy issues. The acts of mobilisation and lobbying of government decision makers by religious interest groups and the level of contact they have with these public officials can significantly influence and impact the group's decisions.[84]

Pat Utomi claimed that, for CAN to be successful, 'the level of political contact the CAN has with government decision makers is very important, who they speak to and their religious backgrounds are crucial to determining political access to influence; they have to fine tune their approach to officials'.[85] Various techniques are deployed by religious and secular interest groups when lobbying public policy makers on specific issues.[86] While other tactics used in developed democracies such as in the US and Europe may include contacting governmental officials (legislative, executive, regulatory), testifying at hearings, presenting research findings and mobilising their mass memberships.[87] This is not the case in Nigeria, where the CAN mostly relies on its Christian members in government and its network of influential individuals to influence government policy. To buttress this point, for example in the US religious and secular interest groups have developed the ability to obtain access to members of parliament thus, enhancing their ability to influence decision-making either way.[88] The assumption in this case is that the religious affiliation of members may be considered an advantage, signifying an insider lobby strategy. However, Kollman posits that large groups often use an outsider strategy to a greater extent than groups with fewer members;[89] in the case of the CAN both strategies are applied.

As already examined in Chapter 3, there are several lobbying strategies religious interest groups and indeed other secular interest groups may apply in order to influence government policy process, ie, insider and outsider strategies. By choosing different strategies and tactics, religious interest groups may have varying success in attempting to influence a particular policy issue.

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[83] T Falola, Op. cit. pg 114, Also interview commemts in London, 9 July 2006.
[84] R Zwier, *The Power and Potential of Religious Interest Groups*, Jcs.oxfordjournals .org, 1991, Accessed 17 January 2011
[85] P Utomi, Presidential candidate, Africa Democratic Party (ADC) in 2007, Interview comment, Lagos, 6 November 2009
[86] D Knoke, Op. cit. see also in FR Baumgartner and B Leech, Op. cit. 1998, pp 147–167
[87] Ibid.
[88] A Meistad, Op. cit. Nov 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011
[89] Ibid.

The CAN does not limit its lobbying strategy to either one of the strategy options, instead it examines the policy issue and socio-political implication of its actions in relation to the policy and then tailors its efforts, picking from each strategy as required. According to Falola, when CAN relates to the government, it deals directly with the senior federal officers and its strategy is to covert socio-political issues into national issues and to present them in this light to the attention of the federal government.[90]The CAN sometimes engages in the application of outsider tactics, with the intended result of influencing public opinion and getting the public on the group's side. This strategy is suitable for a group such as the CAN, because of its large membership and affiliates, coupled with its grassroots links. For example, there was the large turnout during the massive protests organised by Northern CAN in 1990 in Kaduna, Bauchi, Jos and Yola against government policies on various 'anti-Christian' issues, which were highly successful, as well as the Kaduna protest led by the Northern states CAN leader, Archbishop Peter Jatau. [91]

Wright, when discussing American interest groups, outlines the particular functional relationship of members of congress with interest organizations in order to elaborate the mutual benefits of their relationship; he argues that the information needs of legislators force them to rely on interest groups.[92] Again this is not reflective of the relationship between the religious interest groups in government decision-making and policy outcome. It is significant to note that, 'interest group politics has been well compromised and marginalised by strong national and state governments and the endemic corruption in Nigeria's political system.'[93] Wright also reports that interest groups gain influence by establishing better links with their constituents than legislators can achieve directly, and so both parties need each other in order to function and achieve their aims. Therefore the network connections that religious organizations achieve with government decision makers are sometimes dependent on their networks of supporters.[94]

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[90]T Falola, Op.cit., pp 110-111
[91] Ibid
[92] JR Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress: Lobbying, Contributions, and Influence*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996. In M Grossmann, Op.cit., The Organization of Factions 2006a; see also J Wright, *Interest Groups, Congressional Reform, and Party Government in the United States*, Legislative Studies Quarterly 25 (May 2000): 217–235
[93] Amb Peter Anegbeh, Interview, Benin, Comments, 8 and 9 December 2009 and Prof Osita Eze (Director General, NIIA), on various socio-political issues in Nigeria, 4 July 2007
[94] Ibid.

The role of the electronic media is an important tool for success and failure of religious groups and the CAN has effectively used this tool.[95] Falola claims that 'the CAN in Nigeria has learnt how to manipulate the media successfully for the popularisation of its views amongst the millions of Christians'.[96] Modern media technologies, such as the Internet and social media are some of the most recent technological innovations to be pressed into service by the interest groups as aids to mobilisation tactics. However, to mount an effective media campaign, the finance of the religious group is important, and, as Hofrenning noted, because the financial base of the interest group is very important, he argued that an outsider strategy is favoured by mostly resource-poor groups.[97] This implies that groups such as the CAN favour this approach because of its limited financial base in comparison to its Muslim counterparts. This lack of significant finance for its activities constitutes a serious threat to the ability to mobilise effectively. Utomi asserts that CAN is not rich when compared to the NSCIA or other Muslim groups, while an important 'interviewee' contends that due to the vast amount of money the Muslim political leadership is alleged to have stolen from Nigeria's oil wealth over the years, they are able to finance their Muslim organisations secretely.[98] These somehow account for potential explanation for the marginal success rate of the CAN in the policy arena.

Conversely, an insider lobbying strategy can be very effective in terms of influencing legislation, but may lead to the decision makers being accused of religious bias if they are closely associated to a specific religious interest group policy initiative. The benefit of an insider tactic is clear, because of the other services that interest groups may offer to the policy maker, which include the presentation of research and technical information on the policy issue of their interest, as well as contacting officials directly to acquaint them their group's interest and opinion on a specific issue. In the US, where the use of effective lobbying is well recognised and developed, Meistad noted on 'the No Child Left Behind act of 2001'that religious interest groups involved in the lobbying for this act engaged in serious insider lobbying and met with the congressmen directly connected to the legislation.[99]

[95] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 111
[96] Ibid.
[97] D Hofrenning, *Religious Lobbying and American Politics: Religious Faith Meets the Real World of Politics*, 2001, in A Meistad, Op.cit, November 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011
[98] Interview comments on Religious Interest groups – CAN and JNI / NSCIA: P Utomi Lagos, 2010 and Anonymous 2009
[99] A Meistad, Op.cit., pg 94

Lastly, as highlighted above the CAN like other religious interest groups, engage in the combination of both outsider and insider strategies to influence government policy. Because of the underdeveloped, ineffective political systems and unregulated lobbying strategies within the Nigeria political processes, it is difficult for religious and secular interest groups to fine tune their methods of engagement with decision makers especially when compared to groups in the US and Europe. The CAN, in reality, has not been able to demonstrate that it has a wider sphere of influence on government policy issues, a reflection of the perception certain groups such as Muslim groups and other non-Christians have of the CAN. CAN encourages its members to get involve in political discussion and active politics.[100] Religious interest groups in Nigeria may not have professional lobbyist as secular interest groups do, what they rely on mostly are the personal contacts and influence of their respective religious leaders, such as Cardinal Okogie and Pastor Adeboye among others.[101]

Generally, it is plausible to state that the CAN has a strong and important presence within the Nigeria polity, it has a loud voice on major issues and claims to represent Christians from all over the country. However, because the majority of past Nigeria leaders and government are comprised of Muslims and come from Northern Nigeria, then this study claims that Muslims religious actors and organisations tend to have a bigger voice and influence in government decision-making, which is reflective of the decisions made by Nigerian governments of the policies involving the membership of the OIC and the adoption of Sharia law.

The political involvement of religious interest groups has increased recently in Nigeria, especially since the 1999 democracy in Nigeria. The various branches of government have addressed important issues which relate to these groups and this sometimes contribute to public discourse over values and how to apply these values to public policy choices. Religious Interest groups are becoming more professional over time and advancement in Nigeria's democratic institutions is expected to boost their growth and development as prevalent in most Western political systems. It is expected that in the near future, groups such as the CAN will have and maintain lobbying staff in the seat of government to ensure their influence in government policy issues.

[100] The Presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), General Mohamadu Buhari, has picked Pastor Tunde Bakare of the Latter Rain Bible Church and a member of PFN, as his running mate for the April 2011 Presidential election.

[101] For Example President Goodluck Jonathan is noted to attend the Holy Ghost Congresses in 2010 and 2012 led by the Overseer Pastor Adeboye, whom he fondly calls his spiritual father / leader (source; Annonymous), also in the company of late President Yardua met with Adeboye in 2007. www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/national.htm, 17/3/2007, www.nigeriafilms.com, 15/12/2010, Accessed 21/12/2012

In their review of research on organised advocacy, Andrews and Edwards claim that too much emphasis has been placed on interest group mobilisation; they call for more measures of organisational access to policymakers and their influence over policy.[102] Unfortunately, this is easier said than done in a country such as Nigeria where the relationship between certain interest groups, including religious interest groups, and government decision makers is not as clearly defined as it might be,[103]despite Nigeria's constitution and other legislative processes seeking to set the limits and parameters of such relationships. Research on the success of interest organisations in their ability to influence policymaking has focused on the influence strategies selected by organizational leaders, because the influence on policy outcomes is difficult to assess.[104] Attempts to investigate influence have been limited to analyses of specific policy areas such as the membership of the OIC or the introduction of Sharia law, or specific tactics of influence, for example the contributions of Political Action Committee in the US, tactics which are non-existent in Nigeria.[105]

All lobbying methods aim to gain organizational access to policy makers by winning their attention, communicating with contacts about mutual information needs, and reinforcing to their targets the importance of continuing to pay attention to the organization's issues. However, the precise conditions under which diverse lobbying tactics exert demonstrable impacts on policy decisions remain elusive.

Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has sought to examine the socio-political and religious environment in Nigeria which gave birth to the CAN, together with its organisational ability to mount various challenges to government decision-making structures and counter the Muslim interest organisations. This study has noted that despite all of the CAN's excellent structure, organisation, highly-educated officers, maintenance of countrywide influence and media accessibility, the fact remains that the CAN has not been able to influence government decision-making outcome in a consistent successful manner when compared with Muslim groups, a fact that be examined further in chapters 6 and 7.

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[102] M Grossmann. Op.cit., 01-24-2006b. Accessed 1 November 2011; see also A Kenneth and B Edwards, *Advocacy organisations in the U.S Political Process*, Annual Review of Sociology, 30(1): pp 479–506

[103] Observation made during travels to various parts of Nigeria and Interviewing respondents for this study

[104] Ibid.; see also Schlozman, K Lehman & J Tierney, *Organised Interests and American Democracy*, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1986

[105] M Grossmann. Op.cit., 2006b

The attributes of the CAN, its mobilisation lobby strategies and various ways in which they are employed to attempt to influence government policy outcome has been examined. The next chapter will examine the CAN's counterparts, the Muslim religious interest groups in Nigeria and their struggle to dominate government policy.

Chapter 5. Islamic Religious Organisations: The NSCIA

Introduction

This chapter will examine the role of Muslim religious interest groups;[1] how they seek to influence the Nigerian governments and also how they influence government decision making. This study emphasizes the relative importance, influence and successes of Muslims religious interest groups in Nigeria's political processes, as some religious interest groups are naturally more successful in their attempts to influence issues of their concern than others.[2] In this chapter, it is therefore useful to examine the Islamic organisations who claim to represent the religious and socio-political interests of Nigeria's Muslims. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on the role of a mainstream Muslim religious organisation; the NSCIA in relation to government policy issues. Broadly religious organisations interactions with the state are framed from the position they occupy as critical religiuos actors who share a common religious vocabulary that seeks to promote justice and equality through good governance[3] and interactions with policy makers.

In a US studies of interest groups and their relationship between congress or other decision-making organs, Victor[4] noted that the primary challenge to understanding the relationship is methodological. It is empirically difficult to develop a causal model that explains how religious and secular interest group behaviour affects legislative outcomes.[5] The methodological challenge stems from the theoretical problem of modelling a highly interactive process. In the process of policy making, multiple actors (legislators, party leaders, committee leaders, the President, interest groups (including religious interest groups), lobbyists, and the media) all interact with each other, in an attempt to converge on a competitive outcome in a policy space. Therefore, we first require a theory that accounts for such interaction. Second, we require an empirical approach that attempts to capture the complexity of this process.[6] So this chapter will demonstrate that religious interest group's

[1] Muslim religious interest groups are Islamic religion organisations and individuals who share a similar religious values, interest and background in this case Islam, and they work together to protect and promote that interest by attempting to influence government processes

[2] R Fowler, A Hertzke, & L Olson, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*. 2nd Ed. Boulder: Westview Press, pp 61–64, 1999; in op. cit. A Meistad, pg 47, Nov 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011

[3] G Singh, *Religion, Politics and Governance in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania: An Overview*, University of Birmingham, RaD Working Paper 55, 2011

[4] JN Victor, *Connecting Interest Groups and Congress: A New Approach to Understanding Interest Group Success*, Dept. Of Political Science, Washington University in St. Louis, 17 July 2002, Presentation at the 2002 Summer Political Methodological Meeting, American Political Science Association, Seattle, WA, 17 July 2002. Accessed 14 April 2011

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

legislative success can be explained by the activities of the group, their resources and the context of legislation that the group are attempting to influence the outcome of. The NSCIA, as a 'National Muslim organisation (NMO)'[7] seeks to achieve its goals through interaction with government and the state; this will be examined in later chapters, and the analysis used to focus on the issues of Nigeria's OIC membership and the introduction of Sharia law. Therefore, an analytical approach will be developed that begins to account for the complex interactions between Muslim religious interest groups and government decision-making with emphasis on the 'big men' in the political process.

Background Knowledge

As noted in Chapter 3, interest groups are permanent players in government policy-making process.[8] They seek to input on policy and legislative outcomes and provide representation for a particular subset of the citizenry. Yet, while Muslim religious interest groups in Nigeria fall within this description, previous research by scholars on such religious interest groups and their attempt to influence government policy process has not been very productive. Investigating the progress of a particular policy issue or bill in Nigeria will enable us to understand and determine how religious interest groups may or may not influence policy formation and the government decision-making organs.

It is important for us to note that in order to understand these influencing processes, lobbying tactics and associated mobilising institutions vary from one country to another. For example, the US and various European countries have well-established institutionalised lobbying groups, processes and procedures as compared with Nigeria and other African countries.[9] The pluralist interest group system of the US, according to one view, enhances interest group access to political actors and by allowing different groups equal access, through this system, the institutional structures also ensure that specific concentrated interests cannot monopolise

[7] National Muslim organisations (NMO) are Muslim organisations who aims to fill the role of intermediary and interlocutor between the state and the Muslim community (Umma). They are found in countries with either a majority (eg, Niger or Mali) or minority Muslims (eg, Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda) these NMOs, sometime tend to be more quiescent politically than mainstream Christian churches, subservient in their relationship with political rulers and also dependent on the latter's patronage

[8] JN Victor, Op.cit., Spatial Model, 2009. Accessed 11 January 2011

[9] According to The Centre for Responsive Politics, a watchdog group that monitors lobbying and archives public data on lobbying disclosures, interest groups spent $3.27 billion lobbying the U.S. Congress in 2008 (not including campaign contributions or state or local lobbying). This is up from $1.45 billion in 1998, when the data were first recorded (The Centre for Responsive Politics 2009). The amount of money that firms, groups, and individuals spent on lobbying in 2008 is roughly equivalent to the amount of money that all congressional and presidential candidates raised in the 2008 election ($3.2 billion). See more details in JN Victor, The Spatial Model of Interest Group Lobbying, Proposed for Cigler and Loomis, Interest Group Politics, 8th edition University of Pittsburgh, 2009. Accessed 11 January 2011

the policy-making process.[10] In addition, policy-making institutions may increase or decrease the access that religious groups and other secular groups enjoy to policymakers, so the procedure by which groups influence federal government and legislative decision makers are clearly laid down.

In Nigeria, the interaction between religious interest groups and the government decision-making process is a classic example of an African country's 'non institutionalisation' model of lobbying. Implying that on paper, Nigerian religious interest groups give the impression that they are a well-organised effective group with regional-, state- and local-level branches which cater for the needs of their members, a principle which is very significant to how the organisation is run. However, in reality this is not the case, because the important factor is the relationship between the 'big men', who are leaders at the top of the religious group, government officials and other interest group figures, interacting with each other on behalf of their particular organisation. Generally, the relationship between policy outcomes and the role of the interest group is more about the nature of the liaison of each of the key figures with each other.

It is within this context that the NSCIA evolved as a *de facto* form of NMO, serving as the main Muslim organisation that engages with the government on matters of national interest to Muslims in Nigeria. This chapter will make the argument that another Muslim organisation, the JNI had significant influence in several of Nigeria's Northern states. This afforded it the ability to influence the debate for the introduction and implementation of Sharia law (examined in Chapter 7). The NSCIA, on the other hand, has shown more capacity to influence the government policy process at the national level, in relation to various issues, including Nigeria's membership of the OIC.

This chapter mainly focuses on the role of the NSCIA as a leading NMO in Nigeria, a role that is important because of Nigeria's large Muslim population. Like other African countries with Muslim majorities, including Sudan, Senegal, Niger and Mali, the Nigeria government has, since independence, always been in partnership with leading Muslim individuals, focused in NMOs, such as the NSCIA, working to perpetuate an ideology of domination based on a

[10] A Dür & D de Bièvre, Op.cit.,Journal of Public Policy, 1: 1 December. 2007; Also in details, A Sheingate, The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan, Princeton University Press, 2001

desire to reform traditional popular models of Islam.[11] The NSCIA was not established by the Nigerian government and it is independent of the Nigerian state, for this reason Islamic reformers in the NMOs normally seek to repress popular Islam, because they see it as a threat to their various hegemonic positions. That is, the reformers aim to bolster their standing by systematising their group values,[12] thereby concentrating belief in values which are necessary for the domination of one group over others.

The NSCIA, in the same way as its mainstream Christian counterpart (the CAN) aims to fill the role of an intermediary and interlocutor between the government and the Umma (Islamic community). Adegbite asserts that 'the NSCIA claims to serve a dual role: channelling the government's orders and wishes downwards, while officially passing social concerns the other way'.[13] Consequently, the government, in partnership with senior Muslim leaders and 'big men' possess interest in the NMO and seek to create hegemonic rule by exploiting the religious and moral prestige, cultural leadership and ideological persuasiveness of the latter.

While, in some cases, members of such NMOs receive salaries from the government, this is not the case with the NSCIA, because it is self-financed. The organisation receives assistance, Hajj subsidies and donations from the federal and state governments, especially on occasions when they use state money to build and maintain mosques across the country.[14] The government grants public holidays to Nigerians on Muslim and Christian feast days, they sponsor and subsidise the pilgrimages of Muslims and also only allow the teaching of religious education in schools.

The NSCIA has the 'ear of the government',[15] especially through influential members such as the Sultan of Sokoto, because his role is very significant in the maintenance of the political order.[16] Falola, claimed that the NSCIA 'were social in nature' trying to forge a strong Islamic community through educational and social activities such as the sponsorship of Koranic schools and demanding for more secular schools to cater for Muslims.[17]

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[11] J Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics*, Addison Wesley Longman, UK, pp.119–124, 1998; see also J Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, Zed Books, London, pp 122–133, 1996
[12] Ibid.
[13] Dr L Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, Lagos, 25 February 2009
[14] Hajj, http://www.123Muslim.com/hajj/16538-airline-operators-tackle-govt-over-hajj-2011-waivers-nigeria.html, Accessed 7 March 2012
[15] Assertion / obersation made by respondents during my interviews in Nigeria, especially the christains who claims they are marginalised by the Muslims in the political process of Nigeria by the northern Muslims.
[16] Ibid.
[17] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 45, also Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 128

Empirical research addresses whether and how religious representatives act as religious interest groups in influencing policy making in the 'big man' politics of Nigeria.[18] In this respect, NMOs are not different from other religious interest groups in relations to government policy issues. Similar to other interest groups, religious interest groups are concerned with having candidates who support their election into office, especially if the candidates share the same religious background. It is therefore significant that the competition among secular and religious interest groups over the distribution of economic resources is important. Also, if a group in a particular region, for example, in the case of Northern Nigeria, is constantly successful, interest group politics may undermine the legitimacy of electorally accountable decision making.

Thus a normative assessment of the role of interest groups in democracies crucially depends upon how much power interest groups have, and how power is distributed among different groups.[19] So, an understanding of the role of interest groups and especially Muslim religious interest groups in the policy making process is essential for explanations of policy outcomes. The power struggle between different religious groups has been a serious issue of contention between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

The last chapter examined the relative inability of the CAN to channel its influence perspective through to government decision-making processes because they argue that the Nigerian government and political processes were dominated by the Muslim majority. 'They channelled their demands to government in the same manner as other domestic groups through their leaders, electronic media campaigns and demonstrations. [20] Muslim organisations eventually began to deal with and get involved in politics, because they felt politics was the best medium to get government decision makers to address their issues and so influence government policy.[21]

To underline this point, Nolte, Danjibo and Oladeji in their research on the outcome of policy process claims that 'Nigeria politics continues to be dominated by an extensive patronage networks and within these networks are powerful individuals or 'godfathers' that sponsor individuals politicians or their protégée into political office and, in return, exert some

[18] Such as the various RaD reports on *Religion, Politics, Governance and development in Nigeria*, see working paper; 55, 2011, working paper 31, 2009, working paper 64, 2011 and working paper 61, 2011
[19] A Dür & D De Bièvre, Op.cit., 2007
[20] Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, Laogs, Frbruary 2009
[21] H Kukah, Op.cit.,1996

influence over their activities and sometimes even other budgets.'[22] This state of affairs is common in Nigerian politics as a whole, and as earlier perpetrated in the Northern states. Here, the legacy of indirect rule[23] (the British colonial administration sought to use the existing institutions of the Emir, deputies, ulamas, imams etc., as their interlocutors with the Muslim community in order to administer the region effectively) combined with a widespread belief in the worldly and religious authority of the aristocracy has often meant that local traditional rulers, such as the Emir Bayero of Kano and the sultan of Sokoto, for example, have been able to dominate politics as well as propagate and support religious interest groups that are prepared to engage in local politics according to the rules of patronage.

In summary, this and the next two chapters show that the NSCIA has become an important Muslim religious interest group. This chapter also highlights its capacity to influence government policy through the activities of its leaders while representing and promoting Muslims interests throughout Nigeria.[24]

Muslim Religious Interest Group in Nigeria

First, in order to assess the religious representation of Nigeria's Muslim religious interest groups, this chapter will examine information on the two most significant Muslim groups that attempt to influence government decision-making process, the JNI and the NSCIA.

In general, the lobbying strategies interest groups may apply, regardless of the policy issues being dealt with, fall into one of two clear strategies, ie, the insider strategy and the outsider strategy as already noted above.[25] However, the strategies that Interest groups employ vary according to the issue context and the political-administrative environment they face, as well as in organizational resources, such as staff and financial means.[26]

The NSCIA in comparison with other Muslim interest groups engage in both the outsider and insider strategies in order to influence government policy. These strategies were highly successful as noted in Chapter 7, which will discuss the attempts of Muslim religious actors to

[22] I Nolte, N Danjibo & A Oladeji, Op.cit., 2009; see also in R Blench, S Longtau, U Hassan & M Walsh, *The role of traditional rulers in conflict prevention and mediation in Nigeria*, DFID Nigeria report, 9 November 2006. pg 81–82

[23] An emir is the paramount ruler-in-charge of one or more local government areas/territory, common in Northern Nigeria

[24] There are other important Muslim groups and organisations in Nigeria such as the Islamic Society of Nigeria (ISN), Muslim Students of Nigeria (MSN), Nasrul-Lahi-Il-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) and Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) etc. (a typology of groups will be included)

[25] J Haynes & A Hennig, Op.cit., also in RL Hall & AV Deardorff, *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy, American Political Science Review 100 (1):69–84, 2006; in J Haynes & A Hennig (Eds)*

[26] Ibid.

influence the legislative process in the Northern Sharia states. Islam is the religion of the majority of the members of the three arms of government. Its presence is very significant in the legislative processes, for generating pressure on the members to conform to the wishes of religious interest groups.[27]

Similar to the CAN, the ability of Nigeria's Muslim interest groups to obtain access to government officials and the religious representation of members is as significant.[28] This ability has been essential in the measure of their level of political access to those in power and a constant source of controversy between Muslims and Christians. The assumption here is that religious affiliation and background of members be considered an advantage; suggesting that Muslim interest groups use an insider lobbying strategy. However, Kollman posits that large groups often use the outsider strategy to a greater extent than groups with fewer members[29] a tactic that is also common with the CAN and the NSCIA, however these groups they are more successful when they apply both strategies.

Fowler, Hertzke and Olson suggest factors[30] that can contribute to the success of religious interest groups, these factors will be briefly examined in the context of the JNI and the NSCIA, in order to ascertain if these tactics significantly aid these groups level of influence on the policy decision-making process. Also assessed are their strategies for engaging with the government and their capacity to influence policy outcomes.

1) The group's historical traditions and theological beliefs will give an indication of whether or not the group actually enters the political arena. If the group participates in the political arena, this in turn will give an indication on the structure of the group's political agenda. For example, the JNI and NSCIA actively support the state government on all Sharia issues.
2) The group's internal strength and unity is important as the support of the lay members is essential for a religious group to have political impact. Committed members should be willing to participate in the activities of the groups, such as being involved in rallies, writing letters to their members, etc. Effective leadership of the group is important, as well as having the energy and drive to make the members support them. Resources and

[27] Ibid.
[28] A Meistad, Op.cit., November 2003,
[29] Ibid.
[30] R Fowler, A Hertzke & L Olson, Op.cit., pp 61-64, 1999; see also R Fowler and A Hertzke, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995; in Op. cit. A Meistad, Pg 47, Nov 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011

financial resources in particular, are important aspects of the internal strength and unity of these groups

3) The group's strategic location can determine its access to political power. If a group has access to the elite of government, they have more potential to influence than a group that does not. Working with think tanks, law firms, religious actors and foundations that have an in-depth knowledge of the political system is considered valuable access; access to the key institutions of the nation press can also be important.[31] A good example of the importance of strategic location is the fact that the NSCIA headquarters is based in the National Mosque Abuja.

The JNI is a Muslim religious organisation founded in 1961 under the leadership of the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto.[32] It is an important and influential religious organisation that looks after the interests of Muslims in Northern Nigeria especially regarding religious and socio-political issues. Its scope was initially limited to Kaduna and the surrounding areas, but later spread to the rest of Northern Nigeria. Paden, claims that notable and prominent Muslim leaders such as the Sardauna, Sheik Gumi, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, Alhaji Yahaya Kwande, Alhaji Katagun, Alhaji Yayahu, Alhaji Dasuki, Sheik Abou, Sheik Abdul Hafiz, and the Northern emirs made considerable efforts to spread Islam in Nigeria and their various moves resulted in the formation of a national Islamic organisation, the JNI.[33] The JNI headquarters is based at Kaduna, initially at the residence of the prominent Muslim scholar, the late Sheik Gumi, one of the founding fathers of JNI.[34] This movement was dominated by influential Muslim individuals and leaders such as the Sardauna Bello and Sheik Gumi, etc. However, by 1973 as this research indicate, the NSCIA was formed and the JNI was gradually side-lined by the NSCIA.

The JNI was involved in "highlighting the development of different structures that helps to champion Islamic concerns through the establishment and running of schools, hospitals, dispensaries, and also engaging in public enlightenment through seminars, lectures and conferences etc."[35] It is therefore important to examine their relationship with the government

[31] R Fowler and A Hertzke, 1995; R Fowler, A Hertzke & L Olson, 1999 (The New York Times, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal are newspapers that can influence the political agenda. To appear on the front page in any of these can be of great influence in Washington)
[32] Field Research, in the course of this research I found that different dates are stated for the formation of this group, A Mbachirin 1961,H Kukah 1961, J Paden 1961, T Falola has noted 1962 and Sheik Abou remembers 1961
[33] Ibid. J Paden, pg 557
[34] Grand Khadi is the Highest Islamic Judge/most senior law officer of the land
[35] A Mbachirin, Op.cit.,

in terms of the level of influence they may wield on government policy and outcome, through the provision of these services and activities.

An example is the prominent leadership role of the JNI and other influential Muslim organisations in the northern states in successfully mobilising many people to boycott the polio vaccine immunisation programme in 2003 and to force a change in government policy. This campaign was led by the leadership of the JNI, especially Dr Hamed Datti of SCSN.[36]

The idea and purpose of the JNI[37] from the beginning focused 'strictly on religion and the spread of Islam in Nigeria' accordging to Sheikh Gumbi.[38] Kukah claims that the vision of the JNI is the establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria, hence its overwhelming support for Sharia in Northern Nigeria. As a result, the JNI began to engage in the political struggle of the North against the South, assisting in the push to forge a strong Islamic identity in the North.[39] Over time, the JNI has been instrumental in the establishment of Islamic departments in Nigerian Universities, including, the Usman Dan Fodio University Sokoto, Bayero University Kano and Ahmadu Bello Zaria University. These higher institutions have been significant in the strategic education of future Northern political leaders.[40]

Domestically, the JNI lobbies the government on various issues and undertakes national conferences on social, educational and general issues of interests such as election, pilgrimage, birth control, other healthcare issues, and other socio-political issues.[41] For example as noted above, that is, in the lobby strategy of the JNI and SCSN which was strongly againstthe PolioInitiative in the North. Furthermore, it lobbies the federal government to appoint additional Muslims as advisors and ministers so as to further ensure their influences in government decision-making.[42] These political appointments are a constant source of controversy in Nigeria, scrutinised and monitored by both the Muslims and Christians, to ensure that they reflect the religious and ethnic divide of the country, i.e, the proportion of Christians and Muslims in government is reflective of the wider poluation.[43]

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[36]Maryam Yahya, *Polio Vacine, Difficult to swallow; The story of a controversy in Northern Nigeria*, Institute of Development studies, IDS, Uk, working paper261, March 2006, see also Nigeria Polio Vaccine 'Controversy over or Renewd?' in Weekly Trust, 6 March 2004. Accessed 12 July 2008

[37]H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pg 43, 1996;T Falola, Op.cit., pg 105; see also J Paden, *Ahmadu Bello. Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, pg 533

[38]Sheik S Gumbi, Interview comments, Kaduna, 28 February 2008.

[39]T Falola, Op.cit., pg 106

[40] Ibid. pg., 105

[41] Abiodun Raufu, The British Medical Journal, 7 February 2004, 328(7435): 306; Also detail in M Yahya, Op.cit.,

[42] President Yar'adua government has already been accused of only putting Muslims in strategic government posts such as the defence ministry, secretary to the government. Afenifere report in the Daily Sun June 2008

[43]T Falola, Op.cit., pg 111; for example, the composition of Federal govermnet as noted by FalolaSee also the accounts of Femi Ajayi (2009)

The newspapers of Nigeria are filled with numerous claims and counterclaims of the activities and utterances of the CAN's leaders that are considered anti-Islamic by Nigerian Muslims,[44] thus the CAN is considered as a political organisation by the JNI,[45] and a threat to Muslim existence.

Over the years, these controversies helped the JNI to seriously demonstrate its influence and solidarity with the Muslim President Babangida, who in 1986, was under pressure from the CAN, non-Muslims and other civil liberty groups to withdraw Nigeria's membership of the OIC.[46] The JNI in particular mobilised a huge propaganda campaign via the use of organised mass protest[47] in Kafanchan, Katsina and Bauchi, paying for electronic media announcements and rallying the Muslim community to support the government, thereby pressuring the military government not to yield to Christian demands to withdraw from the OIC. The direct outcome of these protests and counter protests was the government publicly acknowledgment for the first time that it would consult with the religious groups in the country, and a committee was set up to review the OIC issue. This committee was led by the government's Lt Col Shagaya and constituted prominent Muslim and Christian leaders.[48]

The finances of religious interest groups are very important as previously noted, because this determines the level of mobilisation they can muster and the support they can garner. In the case of the JNI, the Sardauna Bello NPC government sustained the early group by providing the administrative and financial assistance needed for the organisation's survival. As the head of Northern region, he had at his disposal government fund, in the form of federal government regional allocation, which was readily channelled to propagating Islam and sustaining the JNI.[49] Today, contributions to JNI finances also include voluntary donations from members and supporters. They contribute a minimum monthly fee of at least 100 naira (£0.40). It also receives fees between 500–1000 naira (£2–4.00) from every new member (according to their ability to pay), as well as part of the annual Zakat (alms) payments, which can be made through JNI and general donations. Outside Nigeria, the JNI has forged strong religious and financial links with Arab countries in the Middle East, through its leader the Sardauna, via his

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Chief Ezekhome, Op.cit.,Interview London,2007, Dr Is-haq Akintola, Leader MURIC, Lagos, October 2007
[47] H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pp 111–112, (It should also be noted that these solidarity marches later led to riots in some places mainly in the North)
[48] T Falola, Op.cit., pp 97–98 (The full list of the participants at this meeting)
[49] A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 130

social and educational objectives. He received financial assistance and numerous donations from countries outside for various projects, such as £300,000 from Kuwait government, and a long-term commitment of £50,000 annually from the Saudi Arabian government towards Islamic educational programmes and the building of the Sultan Bello mosque in Kaduna.[50] It is of no doubt that the JNI had massive finances, but with these funds the priority in the immediate period after the JNI was formed was to build as many mosques and schools as possible to spread Islam.

In sum, the failure of the JNI to achieve some of its aims of national representation is easily attributed to the group's Northern regional posture and identity, the fact is that it was a Northern-based Muslim religious movement, lacking the capability and scope to be a national organisation, it had no offices or any form of representatives or mobilisation strategy in Southern Nigeria. Despite this the 'successful introduction and implementation of Sharia law in the North of Nigeria can be attributed to the efforts of the JNI.'[51]

The NSCIA

Unlike the JNI, the NSCIA is the *de facto* National Muslim Organisation (NMO) in Nigeria, it is expected by the country's Muslims to achieve influence, have a clearer national focus and leverage with the government. It was established in 1973, with headquarters in Abuja and also headed by the incumbent Sultan of Sokoto, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar. This group has become the main national organisation for Muslims in Nigeria and is identified by the Federal government as the main contact on all general and specific issues concerning Muslims. *Vice versa*, the Sultan of Sokoto is also duly recognised by the Nigeria government as the head of all Nigerian Muslims. It is important to make the point that in Nigeria, the model of interaction between Muslim religious groups and the government is purely a reflection of Nigeria politics in general. This argument is valid because it implies that government mainly engaged with individual leaders rather than organisations as such, and it is these important Muslim figures who are making decisions on a personal basis rather on institutional relationship.

[50] T Falola, Op.cit., pg 105, NIIA Library, Lagos, Daily Times Newspaper, Lagos, Confirmed by Sheik Abou during my interview and verification of claims in this book, 8–9 Oct 2007, see also, R Blench, S Longtau, U Hassan & M Walsh, *The role of traditional rulers in conflict prevention and mediation in Nigeria*, DFID Nigeria report, 9 November 2006. pg 81–82

[51] Anonymous senior JNI official, conversation with this author, Kaduna, 27 February 2008

Sultan Abubakar is both President General of the NSCIA and the leader of many Islamic groups and communities in Nigeria, which represents up to 70 million Nigerian who constitute the central body the NSCIA.[52]

Although there are other Muslim organisations in the country, it is important to note that the federal and state governments officially recognise and deal directly with the NSCIA.[53] The religious interest group in return aims to influence government policy. Paden claims it has a clear national focus,[54] especially on specific issues such as the controversy over Nigeria's membership of the OIC.

Consequently, the main purpose of the NSCIA according to Kenny is "to cater for the interest of Islam throughout the federation and to serve as the main channel of contact between the Muslim community and the government of Nigeria on Islamic affairs.[55] Regarding the interests of Muslims, Ustaz Ihejieto (senior officer at the national headquarters of the NSCIA) claims that 'all aspects of Islam are first and foremost priority for the organisation',[56] while promoting and safeguarding the interest of Muslims through the efforts of their leader's influence, especially through the role of the Sultan.

The Northern Muslim leaders have often sought to take advantage of the influential role of the NSCIA on issues of both personal (during elections) and state interest. Over the years, the NSCIA has strived, like its Christian counterpart, the CAN, to position itself into significant areas to influence policy. Non-Muslims will readily and easily assume that any occupation of important government posts by Muslims is an indication of Muslim domination of government decision-making process.[57] Ajayi *et al*[58] have examined the religious composition of government political posts and ministerial appointment, in order to ascertain the role of religion and religious interest groups in appointments and subsequent policy process. Table 12

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[52] Constitution of the NSCIA, article 1, pg 2, 1999
[53] Government Interfaith Coalition Seminar against HIV in Nigeria – comprised of mainly leaders of the CAN and the NSCIA, Shehu Yar'adua Centre Abuja, 15–17 Dec 2003
[54] J Paden, Op.cit., pg 33, 2008
[55] J Kenny, Op.cit., Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: pg 345, 1996
[56] Ustaz Ihejieto, Interview at NSCIA Office, Abuja, 28th and 29th February 2008, also Sheik Abou Abdulhafiz, Islamic Scholar and (Claimed) founding member the JNI/ NSCIA, Surulere Lagos, 8 and 9 October 2007
[57] See in details these analyses in F Ajayi; T Falola; H Kukah and T Falola; T Falola and P Williams; Korieh & Nwokeji, Olusanya & Akindele, I Enwerem, A Mbachirin (see all in Bibliography). Nkwachukwu Orji, 'Eat and Give to Your Brother': The Politics of Office Distribution in Nigeria, In-Spire Journal of Law, Politics and Societies (Vol. 3, No. 2 - 2008) Central European University, Budapest – Hungary; T Falola, Islam and politics In Nigeria, on July 29, 2009, http://www.eir.info/?p=1961; A Anyia, Chapter 7 of this thesis discusses the religious composition in detail and a table of all the Sharia states and government appointment
[58] Ibid.

compiled during my study of the Sharia states clearly indicates that individual Muslims are highly important in their role, enjoying possession of *all* key government positions.

This composition is considered very significant to policy outcomes, because known supporters of these religious groups comprise those in the corridors of power, for example permanent secretaries, governors, heads of government parastatals, security heads and the head of state. To identify or align with the NSCIA is considered as a political strategy that is important to the individual's political career,[59] especially as seen by non-Muslims, and in Southern Nigeria. This is because as an NMO, the NSCIA is a significant organisation, membership of which is valued by individual Muslims and not neglected.[60] It is easy for their members in government to sympathise and identify with the group's interests and ideas especially when dealing with political matters of national interest, security and access to the Presidency. Scholars of religion and politics in Nigeria therefore consider the NSCIA as a national Muslim organisation with the capacity to represent Muslim interests and make demands within the Nigerian polity and in the international arena through the organisation's national leaders.[61]

The outcome from the interviews conducted for this thesis demonstrated that the NSCIA is a popular Muslim interest group and is perceived to have a strong political voice in Nigeria[62] through its actions, pronouncements on government policy issues and activities of the group's leadership. The Sultan and the NSCIA are neither affiliated to any political party nor established by the government / are controlled by the state. The two work as effective religious actors who attempt to safeguard general interests of Muslims by influencing and contributing to government policies when invited to do so.

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[59] Dele Magbor, Interview comments Lagos,, 2nd and 3rd October 2006

[60] This is confirmed by the recent meeting initiated by the Sultan of Sokoto through the aegis of the NSCIA/JNI in June 2007, which met at Arewa house in Kaduna to discuss and broker a truce among the aggrieved political leaders from the North especially the leaders of the All Nigeria people's Party's (ANPP) General Buhari, and the Action Congress (AC) Alhaji Abubakar Atiku – who was also Nigeria's former Vice President. To let peace reign and so withdraw their Presidential election petition against the incumbent President Yar'Adua. This meeting called for a swift solution to this acrimony amongst Muslim brothers and especially as they originated from Northern Nigeria

[61] Such as, Sultan Abubakar of Sokoto, Dr Lateef Adegbite, NSCIA; see also, Article describing the role/power of the NSCIA
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2525573.stm Friday, 29 November 2002, also details in T Falola

[62] Interviewees comprised Muslims and Christians, they all made statements to this assertion and view both the NSCIA and the CAN strongly regardless of the opinions of smaller religious interest groups

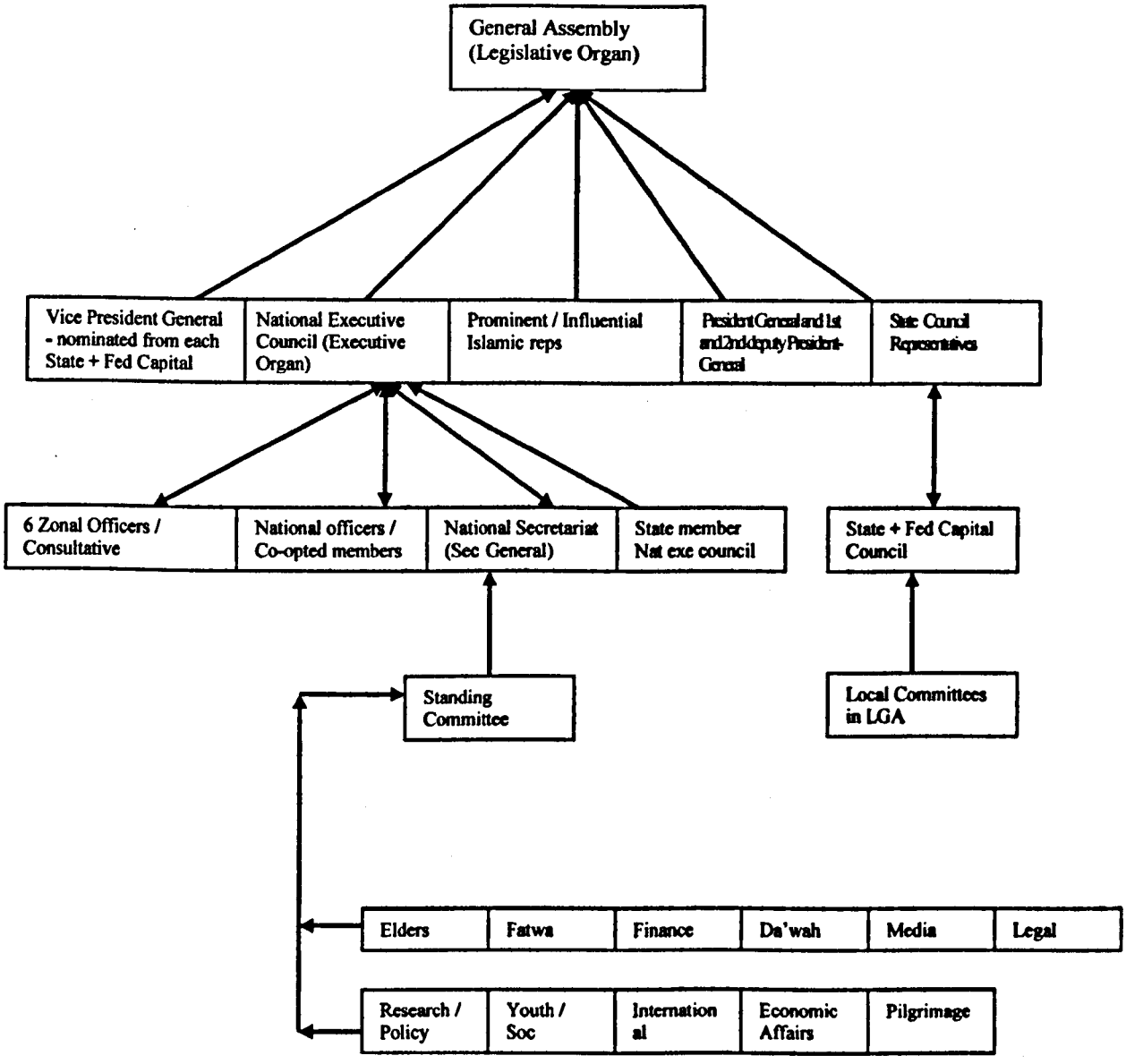
Group Structure

Ordinarily, members of religious organisations and or secular groups must be willing and ready to mobilise as and when necessary, this is especially of precedence when the group has effective leadership.[63] On behalf of the group, the leaders will engage in strategic thinking, form alliances and coalitions, as they also will have to commit to having the energy and drive to make the members support them, thus becoming even more committed to the goals of the group.[64]

The NSCIA structure has the character of a 'modern day' organisation, with clear rules and regulations which are governed by its constitution. As noted above, the constitution of the NSCIA stipulates that the Sultan of Sokoto is the President General, while the Shehu of Borno is the First President General and Second Deputy President General selected by the General Assembly from Southern Nigeria. Each state of the federation then nominates a Vice President General to the General Assembly for a period of 3 years.[65]

[63] R Fowler, A Hertzke, & L Olson, Op.cit.,
[64] Ibid.
[65] Article 15 sections 1, 2 and 3 of the NSCIA Constitution, 1999

Figure 6. The NSCIA Organisational chart



As seen in Figure 6, on paper, the structure of the NSCIA is a top-down model of information dissemination and decision-making. However, the reality is actually different; this research notes that the leaders and top 'big men' of the organisation make decisions on behalf of the members, whatever their opinion on government policy issues,[66] it is these opinions that are considered by their leaders as the point of view of Nigeria's Muslims. The Sultan of Sokoto and Alhaji Adegbite are two of the most prominent officers and influential individuals in the organisation. The highest decision-making organ is the general assembly, which comprises the President General, deputies, national officers nominated by the general assembly, state

[66] I had numerous interviews with Alhaji Adegbite Sec. Gen. of the NSCIA and spent some time with him at Lagos and Abeokuta; this was the outcome of our meetings and observations. He also informed me of his conversations with General Murtala regarding the OIC membership on their trip to Mecca in 1975

council representatives, prominent Islamic scholars and other influential Muslims. This group as shown above constitute the legislative organ and must sit at least once a year.

The NSCIA's strategic location is significant because it offers unparelled access to possessors of significant political power.[67] The headquarters of the NSCIA is based within the national mosque in Abuja (Nigeria's capital and the seat of government). This provides the organisation with easy access to influential government policy makers and other significant political groups. The location of the NSCIA headquarters is also significant for collaboration with think tanks and foundations that know how to manoeuvre their way around and access the political system. It is also valuable that they have potential access to the national elite press[68] and other electronic media. Another crucial point is that a good location of a religious interest group can facilitate easy mobilisation of members when necessary. They use tactics such as protest marches; sit-ins, picketing, and sometimes violence are strategies that religious or secular interest groups can use if their strategic location allows it.

The ability of the NSCIA to influence government decision-making is utterly dependent on Muslim religious actors and a handful of Muslim 'big men', such as the Secretary General Lateef Adegbite, Sheik Orire, Dasuki, the Sultan, Emirs and other Influential Muslims, who have the capacity to get the ear of those in power. For example:

- The head of NSCIA, the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, occupies an influential position in the country, especially as he represents the country's Muslims, around 50% of Nigeria's population.[69] It is his views on national issues regarding religion and politics that are taken as the Muslims' position by the government. He is also the joint-chairman, with CAN leaders, of NIREC, set up in 1999 by the federal government 'to advise the government on religious matters and to serve as a platform for high-level dialogue between the leaders of Nigeria's Christians and Muslims'.[70] The aim was to promote the public good. It is made up of 50 members, 25 Christian and 25 Muslims.[71]

[67] R Fowler, A Hertzke & L Olson, Op.cit.,
[68] Ibid.
[69] Matt Rossenberg, World Muslim population, http://geography.about.com/b/2009/10/08/world-Muslim-population.htm, Accessed 15 March 2011, see also Islamicpopulation.com, Accessed 15 March 2011
[70] Admiral A Aikhomu, Interview comments, London, 17 September 2008
[71] Salisu Dambata, NIREC, Daily Trust Newspaper 22 June 2008, http://allafrica.com/stories/200806230739.html, Accessed 10 September 2009.

- High-level lobbying of the former Head of state, General Murtala Mohammed governments through Alhaji Adegbite of the NCSIA[72]. He said that during the 1974 Hajj pilgrimage, which he performed in the company of General Murtala afforded him the opportunity to discuss and lobby the president on issues especially Nigeria's membership of the OIC.[73]
- Sultan Abubakar is also influential, consulted by members of the powerful Federal National Council of State on religious matters, which is the highest consultative organ of the central government in Nigeria. It comprsies the current national president, all former presidents, senate and house representative leaders, and state governors.. This group has the responsibility to advise the President on all issues of national interest.[74]
- Numerous Muslim festivities as declared by the Sultan are recognised by the Nigeria government as national holidays and are declared work-free days.[75]

Alhaji Adegbite, the Secretary General of the NSCIA, is a popular and influential Muslim lawyer from Abeokuta, Western Nigeria. He is in charge of coordinating the organisation's national activities, direction of its lobbying activities at both the National and State levels, (through his substantial personal network of influences and connections in the corridors of power) and also cooperating with and countering the activities of the CAN when and if necessary.[76]

Through the interviews for this research, with representatives of the Muslim communities in Lagos, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Abuja, I learnt that there are no formal elections into any of the posts described about, whether at zonal, state or local levels.[77] A MURIC spokesman claimed that 'representatives are either selected or nominated by the members of the state council', which comprises the leader of the Muslims in the state: Emirs, traditional rulers, the chief Imam and other notable, influential and popular Muslim scholars within the state and this arrangement is not acceptable to MURIC[78] and many other Muslim organisations.[79] Normally

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[72] Dr Lateef Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, 20 and 25 Febuary 2009.
[73] Ibid.
[74] R Blench, S Longtau, U Hassan & M Walsh, Op.cit., pg 81 –82, 2006; see also, JNI, Directory of Faith Based Organisations in Nigeria, Child Rights Information Bureau, Federal Ministry of Information and National Information, 2006
[75] See Calendar of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Information booklet for these dates – Ministry of Information Abuja
[76] See Alhaji Lateef Adegbite and Rev Onaiyekan, on the building of interfaith coalition against HIV/AIDS National forum in Abuja, Shehu Yar'adua Centre Abuja 15–17 December 2003, Africa News, 31 August 2007
[77] Some of the issues highlighted during the period of this study and comments made by MURIC Leadership.
[78] Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) is a Muslim religious group, actively based in Lagos and in other former Western regions: Oyo, Ogun and Ondo states. Founded in 1993, it comprises of young educated men and women in the universities and other higher institutions and general society. Headed by Dr Akintola, a young influential Muslim cleric. MURIC have

the position of the Sultan of Sokoto, as the head of the NSCIA, is not rotational nor is it an elective post as is the equivalent position in the CAN. This lack of elected positions within the NSCIA has been criticised by other Muslim organisations such as MURIC as furthering the interests of the few individuals at the top; the ruling class and elite from Northern Nigeria, while maintaining the *status quo*.[80]

Conversely, the effectiveness of the JNI is different from that the NSCIA. The former has no formal organisational structures in place to coordinate its activities, but it also is highly dependent on leaders' personal connections, contacts and overall relationships with government personnel. The JNI was indeed structured and organised around its late founder Sardauna Ahmadu Bello.[81] It has been aptly described as a 'one-man' organisation because the Sardauna controlled every aspect of the group, with the help and assistance of his close associates within the NPC, as described by Eze and other Islamic scholars such as Gumbi and Hafiz.[82] The Sardauna was personally involved in the selection of committee members and key governmental officials, and all policy issues and decisions are run past him, thus playing a vital role in the government policy process and influence.[83] Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria (1960–1966) was the deputy leader of the NPC and protégée of the Sardauna leadership[84] a position that was also significant to government policy outcome.

No matter the type of policy, whether specific or general, religious and secular interest groups attempt to influence government policy by getting in contact with target policy makers, they provide these public officials with the relevant information they may need in order to make informed decisions. To do this, they apply strategies relevant to this process and to the

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called on the Sultan to relinquish the post of President General of the NSCIA, so that an independent electable officer who is independent of the control of the government is elected in a democratic manner

[79]Sheik Is-haq, Akintola, interview comments, Leader of MURIC, (For a comprehensive list of other Muslim religious groups includes, Abiodun Alao, Islamic Radicalisation and Violence in Nigeria, pp 26–28, http://www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/ESRC/Nigeria/Overview.pdf, Accessed 15 March 2011) some groups include; Islamic Society of Nigeria (ISN), Muslim Students of Nigeria (MSN), Nasrul-Lahi-Il-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) etc.

[80] Ibid Akintola, Interview, 9 October 2007, He is also director of Islamic studies Lagos state University, See also The Punch Newspaper, 28 September 2007 (The leaders of MURIC visibly upset and note that the laws of the state empowers the Governor of Sokoto State (Section 6 Subsection 26 of the laws of Northern Nigeria) to appoint and equally empowers him to depose the Sultan of Sokoto is totally unacceptable to Muslim groups in Nigeria. The significance of this is such that a powerful religious leader is still subject to the total control of the government through his power to dictate the authority of the Sultan as noted by Is-haq; he further maintained that when the former Sultan, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki was deposed in 1996 by the military governor of the Sokoto state "It was a sad day for all Nigerian Muslims". This implies that the Sultan who is the head of over 70 million Muslims is subject to the whims and caprices of a State Governor

[81] Ibid.

[82]Prof Eze, Op.cit., 2009, also Sheik Gumbi, Op.cit., 27 and 28 February 2008

[83]A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 131

[84]H Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pg 43, 1996

specific policy issue they are interested in. The type of policy issue to be influenced will dictate if it is an insider or outsider strategy.

Muslim Religious Interest Group Strategic Context

The NSCIA engages in both formal and informal lobbying strategies in order to try to influence government policy. Interest group studies, especially as noted in the studies of Victor,[85] demonstrate that by studying the policy progress, one is able to determine how interest groups influence policy formation. For example, the studies of Ostein, on the introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria[86] highlight the sources of influence and agitation during the legislative progress for the various Sharia introduction bills in the Northern states. Ostein also noted the various religious interest groups and actors that were involved in these processes, which amounted to high levels of pressure on law makers to approve these bills.[87] The level of political contact that religious interest groups and other religious actors have with legislators and other government decision makers is important. Who they speak to and their religious backgrounds are also crucial in determining political access to influence.

Thus, the NSCIA tends to be a consensus of high-status individuals in Northern Nigeria, who as a result of the Northern domination of political power in the years since independence, have amassed significant personal wealth and a wide range of interests necessary for group activity, enabling them to influence government policy and also have a firm hold on political power.[88] This bias is, however, considered in terms of the groups political output and role in influencing government policy[89] (ie, which group is most successful or unsuccessful in particular issues and at specific times, for example the OIC and Sharia law issues). Eze, claimed that 'the high levels of influential Muslims in government positions have enabled the Muslims to become better off with considerable political influence within the corridors of power when compared with other non-Muslim interest groups, such as the CAN.[90] Therefore, the weight of influence based on the introduction of Sharia law and the OIC membership case

[85] JN Victor, Convincing Congress: *Understanding interest groups strategies in the U.S. 2003*; in A Meistad, Nov 2003, Accessed 24 January 2011; See also JN Victor,, *How Congressional Parties Affect Lobbying in Congress*, Paper Presented at the 2000 Midwest Political Science Association Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 2000; *The challenge of Evaluating Interest Group Influence in Congress*: April 18–22, 2001 Accessed 25 January 2011

[86] P Ostien (Ed) *Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria 1999–2006: A Sourcebook:* Vol.1-V, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan. Nigeria. 2007

[87] Ibid.

[88] N Orji, Op.cit., *Islam and politics In Nigeria*, on July 29, 2009, http://www.e-ir.info/?p=1961, Accessed 6 July 2009

[89] Interest Groups in Http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/APGOV_Interest_Groups.htm, Accessed 6 July 2009

[90] Prof Eze, Op.cit., Interview, 2007

studies, seriously demonstrates that Muslim religious interest groups have been able to influence policy in these areas to a significant degree.

Framing, as examined in Chapter 4, is an important and appropriate aspect of lobbying tactic, which is relevant to government policy processes in Nigeria. The idea of framing is that interest groups and indeed religious interest groups often lobby like-minded policy makers, government officers, and, in the case of Nigeria during the Sharia law issues since 1999, state legislators, with similar ideas and subsequently frame their issues accordingly.[91] This lobbying tactic is argued to be an important strategy commonly used and preferred by religious interest groups,[92] because in Nigeria as well as in Western countries, religious mingling with political matters is contentious.

However, in choosing appropriate strategies and tactics, religious interest groups will choose the most appropriate strategy that is most suited to the issues of concern at that particular time. Hofrenning noted that because the financial base of religious interest group is very important, an outsider strategy is favoured by these mostly resource-poor groups.[93] By this he means groups with comparatively limited financial resources like the CAN, which is noted for not having as strong a financial base as its Muslim counterpart, the NSCIA.[94] This difference in financial capabilities might help explain the CAN's limited successes in seeking to influence government policy. Apart from financial considerations, the tactics that can be used more directly on specific issues are those used most frequently by Muslim religious interest groups. These groups, as identified in this research, make use of their large membership potential when necessary, in their efforts to influence policy makers and state legislators on specific issues[95] such as those issues concerning the Nigeria's membership of the OIC, the adopted Sharia law, Hajj pilgrimages and building of mosques.

Overall, this thesis highlights that the ability of religious interest groups to influence government decision-making is greater at the state level than at the federal level, and this is evident in the successful introduction of Sharia law at the state level as examined in Chapter 7.

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[91] RL Hall & AV Deardorff, *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy*" American Political Science Review 100 (1):69–84, 2006, in J Haynes & A Hennig (Eds)

[92] RC Lieberman, Op.cit., pp 235-257. 2009. Also in J Haynes & A Hennig, (Eds) op. cit.

[93] D Hofrenning, Religious Lobbying and American Politics, Religious Faith Meets the Real World of Politics" 2001; in A Meistad, Op.cit., November 2003,

[94] Interview comments on Religious Interest groups, CAN and JNI / NSCIA: P Utomi (6 November 2009) and P Anegbeh. 2010

[95] A Meistad, Op.cit.,

No single individual's membership can clearly affect the likelihood that the group will succeed in achieving its goals, yet if it does achieve those goals, every individual in the group represented will share in the benefits, regardless of how active member a member he or she is.

Access to Policy Process

Access to government policy processes and the role of Muslim interest groups influence within these processes is important especially in relation to the role of religion in the determination of policy outcome. Further to the research by Meistad,[96] the level of access will be highlighted from the following perspectives:

- Religion in elections: The fact that the highest office of political power (ie, the Head of State) has comprised mostly Northern Nigerian Muslims since the country's independence is significant to access to power and influence.[97] In Nigeria it is common for politicians of all categories, including the presidential candidates, for example, Buhari and Shagari at various elections, to rely on their religion in electoral campaigns to garner support; by asking the electorates to vote for them because they share the same religion. This practice has influenced the voting behaviour of the different religious groups.[98] All Nigeria's elections to date have been controversial because religion has always played a significant role throughout the process both from the viewpoint of politicians and the electorate.
- As mentioned above, it is common knowledge that religion has always been prominent in Nigerian presidential elections, and the recently concluded April 2011 presidential elections was no exception. Results showed that Buhari (Muslim) dominated the North, while the South was dominated by the Christian President Goodluck Jonathan. This indicates that religion will be an integral part of the executive branch in years to come.[99] More Nigerians are members of a religious denomination than any other voluntary group, and largely they identify with one religion or the other. Consequently those in power, politicians and religious interest groups, look upon religious support as a

[96] Ibid.
[97] Further readings available; VA Isumonah, *The Fear of Ethnic Domination and Electoral Democracy in Nigeria*, Dept of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, www.apsanet.org/.../Victor Adefemi Isumonah Working Paper.pdf; also in M Omotosho, *Electoral Violence and Conflict in Nigeria: The 2007 Elections and the Challenges of Democratisation*, (A section of the paper presented at the 27th Annual Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) Conference at Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria, 16–19 November 2008, Dept of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. N Orji, *'Eat and Give to Your Brother': The Politics of Office Distribution in Nigeria*, Dept of Political Science, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary http://www.in-spire.org/archive/vol3-no2/orji32.pdf
[98] Ibid.
[99] A Meistad, Op.cit., , (See also, J Walz, *'Religion and the American Presidency'* in CE Smith (ed) (2001): *In God we Trust?; Religion and American Political Life*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001)

valuable asset[100] and vice versa. The politicians are aware of the enormous potential that lies in the support of a religious group, and use their own faith and religion as a means to attract support from these groups, especially during elections. Religious interest groups will therefore identify and align with such politicians of the same religion because they are sympathetic to their interests. NMOs, like other secular groups often take advantage of the fact that majority of the citizens are not always interested in politics; this makes it easy for religious leaders to form relationships and contacts with government officials with little constraints about reporting back to their group.[101] However, interest in politics amongst Nigeria's religious interest groups is increasing, because they feel this is the best avenue to be active in government decision-making process; this trend is evident amongst the Christian groups[102] (eg, Pastor Tunde Bakare and Pastor Okotie taking part in the 2011 presidential elections).

Furthermore, religious interest groups are interested in having candidates supportive of them, elected into office. For example in Nigeria, politicians during elections seek the votes of religious groups through contacts with religious leaders and through their support these religious leaders routinely canvass and introduce these politicians to members of the congregation in mosques and churches.[103]

- The politician's religious faith is closely scrutinised and very crucial in Nigeria's politics, as also evidenced in the political process of other countries because the religion of its national leader is always a political issue. For example in some Western countries, it seems that in order to win a major election, the candidate has to show some kind of religious belief. This has been the case in the US, where no candidate has ever won the Presidency without doing so.[104] Also in Nigeria, the presidential candidate's faith is important for several reasons, for example, the faith of General Babangida as a Muslim was very crucial in the OIC membership decision-making process, as sometimes argued by non-Muslims. At a state level too, the implementation of Sharia law has only taken place in some Northern Nigeria states where they have Muslim Governors and a supportive Muslim-dominated state legislature and judiciary. (More details of this and table in Chapter 7)

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ambassador Peter Anegbeh, Op.cit., Interview, 12 March 2011

[102] Tunde Bakare, www.tribune.com.ng/index.../17584-attention-pastor-tunde-bakare, Pastor Tunde Bakare, Sunday.dailytrust.com/index.php? Accessed 11 April 2011

[103] N Obianyo, *Behind the Curtains of State Power: Religious Groups and the Struggle for Ascendency in Nigeria Public Institutions: A capital Appraisal*, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, CODESRIA, 12th General Assembly, Yaoundé, Cameroun, 2008

[104] Ibid., see also D Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of It: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1995

Generally, the NSCIA has been examined as an NMO and that it has a very important presence within the Nigeria polity, most especially in the Muslim community. It has a loud voice on major issues and is represented all over the country; however, because the Nigerian government comprised of leaders who are mostly Muslims, then we may say that Muslim organisations tend to have a bigger voice and influence in government decision making, a fact that is reflected in the policies surrounding membership of the OIC and Sharia law.

In summary, this chapter has sought to examine the socio-political and religious environment in Nigeria, which brought about the NSCIA together with the organisational ability of the NSCIA to mount a challenge against the government and Christian religious groups. The NSCIA comprises influential 'big men' in the society, who are able to influence government policy process in a consistent way, as will be further examined in Chapters 6 and 7, i.e. the OIC and Sharia law respectively.

Conclusion

Generally, the NSCIA, through its changes to the rule of equal representation of the states in the general assembly and the geo-political zoning of national offices has demonstrated the aims of the group to be truly reflective of its members in lobbying for Muslim interest, thereby tackling its credentials as an NMO. The NSCIA claims national character in its composition and general focus, for example, regarding Nigeria's OIC membership controversy, it mobilised Muslims to support President Babangida and used its resources through campaigns and paid adverts to counter negative propaganda surrounding the OIC membership emanating from Cardinal Okogie and the CAN.[105] For example, a major rally and public demonstration was held in support of the OIC and Babangida, on the 2 february 1986, the aftermath was the press release in defence of the OIC and the condemnation of the idea of Nigeria as a Christian state.[106]

At the international level, the NSCIA maintains close links with some Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia and Libya. The NSCIA handled the construction of the Abuja National Mosque and also maintains the Abuja National Mosque Management Board.[107] Actions that

[105]Sheik Akintola, Op.cit., Interview, 2007, See also A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 135
[106]T Falola, Op.cit., pg 169.
[107] J Paden, *Islam and Democratic Federalism in Nigeria*, WWW.CSIS.ORG, Nov 8. March 2002, Accessed 10 October 2008

have endeared it to traditional Muslim leaders, influential Muslims and other followers in the government.

Field research observations show that it Nigeria Muslims expect the NSCIA to seeks to work closely with Muslim office holders in order to maintain their significance inthe government circle, while using their network of influences and positions for lobby purposes within the government decision-making process. This stance has been very instrumental to the introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria and also promotes the political and professional career of people considered to be good Muslims.[108] This imply that Muslim groups have members, or individuals with whom they share common interests in government and as a result Christians and non-Muslims argue that political power and policy making processes in Nigeria have been dominated by Muslims.[109]

However, the emergence of the NSCIA, in terms of real substance when dealing with national issues is still lacking behind the progress of the CAN.[110] On national issues, the NSCIA is more coordinated in its approach, cooperating more with the CAN on socio- religious issues.[111]

As a result of the existence of non-institutionalised, underdeveloped, ineffective, corrupt political system and unregulated lobby strategies within the Nigerian political process, it is difficult for religious and secular interest groups to sharpen their methods of engagement with decision makers when compared with their counterparts in the US and Europe. Religious interest groups in Nigeria do not have properly regulated professional lobbyists as secular interest groups do. They rely mostly on personal contacts and the influence of their respective religious leaders.

Domestically, individuals at the lower levels of the society are less interested in the biddings of the NSCIA and other religious groups, they often tend to show far less interest in policy issues; they leave any issues to their leaders. Nolutshungu claims that they demands for significant Islamic influence on domestic and foreign policy issues, and pay little attention to

[108] Onaiyekan, *Bishop The Challenge of Islamic Expansion in Nigeria: Suggestions for a Christian Response*, IslamoChristana.14 (1988): 225 see also A Mbachirin pg 129
[109] See, for example, the works of F Ajayi (2009); H Kukah and T Falola (1996); P Williams and J Harnischfeger (2008)
[110] Sheik Akintola, Op.cit., 2007
[111] Through its participation in the activities of NIREC as set up by the Federal government and also especially on issues of religious clashes

policy issues and ruling-class values and practices.[112] The policy issues are exclusive to leaders at the top of the organisation.

Lastly, through the formation of the NSCIA, Muslim religious interest groups and other religious actors aid the creation of a Muslim political allegiance to the state (especially during the regimes of Muslim leaders) in a way which is far more complete and systematic than that achieved by the mainstream Christian religious bodies. When religious concerns become issues of local, state or national interests, Muslim religious leaders and actors must be tactful and play a skilful game to appear to be all things to all people, maintaining their relationship with decision makers or state rulers,[113] for favourable policy outcomes.

[112] S Nolutshungu, *Islam and Nigeria foreign policy* in Adeed Dawisha *Islam and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, UK, pg 139, 1986
[113] J Haynes, Op.cit., *Religion and Politics*, pg 123, 1996

Chapter 6. Nigeria and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

This chapter will examine Nigeria's membership of the OIC; the role religious interest groups played in government decision making that led to the country's membership of the organisation, especially with respect to the role of Muslims in this process; and the controversies it generated within Nigeria politics.

Religion, as already noted in this study, is important in Nigeria and the country's population is closely divided between Christians, Muslims and a minority of other religions. Non-Muslims consider the OIC an Islamic organisation. Religious competition therefore, between Christian and Muslims is without doubt the single most significant political issue in Nigeria. Antipathy between the religious communities was fuelled during the 1980s, as many Christians came to believe that the predominantly Muslim North of the country enjoyed a disproportionate share of both political power and economic resources.[1] Tension was exacerbated by President Babangida's secret decision in 1986 to join the OIC, within which Saudi Arabia and Iran, with their contending visions of Islamic society, strive for political dominance. Notwithstanding these controversies, Babangida's motivation for Nigeria's membership were both secular (economic/financial) and 'religious' ('Islamic solidarity'); he probably expected some form of financial aid from governments of rich Middle-Eastern states.[2] Many Christians[3] feared that Nigeria's membership of the OIC would jeopardise the country's secular status and signify the gradual Islamisation of Nigeria.[4] While proponents of OIC membership, ie, the JNI and the NSCIA, argued that membership was natural for Nigeria, because of its large Muslim population. They further claimed that Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth, a Christian organisation is comparable with OIC membership (because it is led by the British monarch, who, legally, must be a protestant Christian). They also pointed out that OIC membership was no more in violation of religious freedoms than were Nigeria's diplomatic relations with the Vatican.[5]

This chapter will therefore explore these issues through an examination of both Christian and Muslim religious interest groups' perspectives, with special emphasis on the Babangida

[1] J Ibrahim, Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria, Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. XXIX, No 1, pp 155 –36, NIIA, Lagos. See also J Haynes, *Religion and politics in Africa*, Zed Books, London, pg 1996, 212–213

[2] J Haynes, Op.cit., pp 212–213, 1996

[3] See the works of M Kukah & T Falola (1996-); T Falola (1998), I Enwerem (1995), F Ajayi (2009), P Williams & T Falola; J Kenny, Islamic Revival in Confrontation with Christians, www.josephkenny.joyeurs.com/YALE2.htm Assessed 10 September 2009

[4] Islamisation of Nigeria in this case is the spreading of Islam and introducing Islamic policies in the country which favours the Muslims and to the disadvantage of other religions

[5] T Falola, Op.cit.,pg 97

regime, because it was during his regime that Nigeria confirmed its full OIC membership status in 1986.

Historical Background: Nigeria and the OIC

The OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations, with a membership of 57 countries.[6] Its main objective is the 'promotion of Islamic solidarity amongst members states', while also acting as the collective voice for the Muslim world, thereby safeguarding and protecting the interests of Muslims worldwide, in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among its various peoples. Non-Muslims describe the OIC as an organisation that is made up of countries whose peoples are mainly followers of Islam.[7]

The involvement of Nigeria in the OIC lies in its historical and Islamic links (via trans-Saharan trade, pilgrimage and social ties) between the politics of Northern Nigeria and the Islamic regimes of North Africa and the Middle East, as fostered by the late Sardauna, Sir Ahmadu Bello,[8] who was one of the most influential Islamic leaders in Africa.[9]

Examination of the domestic politics of the OIC decision-making process during Babangida's regime suggest that is was influenced and supported by influential Muslims from the North through the roles of influential Muslims such as Dasuki, Rilwanu and Gumi etc. Regardless of the arguments against OIC membership, the presence of a large Muslim contingent in Nigeria (about 50% of the 150 million population) signified to Babangida that membership of the OIC would be inherently favourable. Babangida, according to Kenny, was 'encouraged by the support of Muslim religious actors to incorporate his Islamic beliefs and value issues in governance'.[10]

Nigeria's first contact with the OIC was in 1969, when the government sent a delegation of influential Nigerian Islamic figures, led by Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, the former Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria, to attend the OIC meeting solely as observers, emphasising that the delegation did not represent the state of Nigeria as a whole, but its vast Muslim population. A

[6] See Appendix for OIC list
[7] Olukoshi, Op. cit., pg 493, also http://www.fimcivilsociety.org/f/library/OIC_Overview_and_Analysis.pdf. accessed 22 February 2008
[8] See detaill account of the life of the Sir Ahmadu Bello, in J Paden, Op. cit. 1986; J Paden, Op. cit. 1973, Arewa house Archive; P Williams and T Falola, Religious Impact on the State, Chapter 2, Ashgate Publishing, 1995
[9] Olukoshi, Op. cit. pg 493
[10] J Kenny, Op. cit. Interview comments, Ibadan, 27 and 28 October 2009

position that was taken as a result of Nigeria's secular status and the on-going civil war.[11] It was the initial intention of General Gowon (Head of State of Nigeria from 1966–1975) to maintain Nigeria's traditional and deep-rooted ties with their counterparts in other parts of the world.[12] In 1969, General Gowon also clarified in a message to King Hassan of Morocco that Nigeria had no intention of becoming a full-fledged member of the OIC. In support of this, interviews with Adegbite, Secretary General of of the NSCIA and the JNI officers, Ezekhome, Prof Eze of NIIA, and Rev Hassan Kukah (see attached appendix for interview list) confirm and emphasize that 'Gowon maintained Nigeria's OIC observer status'.[13] As a result of the coup and counter coup of 15th January 1966 and the resultant Biafra civil war 1966–1971, in which influential political and religious leaders in Nigeria were killed, there was political instability throughout the country. During this period, OIC relations were highly controversial and non-membership was construed as a wise decision at the time especially by the Christians.[14] Nigeria's position as an observer was retained throughout Gowon's regime and subsequent governments: Murtala/Obasanjo (1975–1979) and Shagari and Buhari (1979–1985).[15]

The activities of the CAN, non-Muslims and Christian observers together with the role of the Muslims on this issue is discussed in the second section of this chapter. It will enable us to investigate the actions of key individuals, the achievement of Muslim religious actors in securing membership of the OIC and the failure of the CAN and other non-Muslims to stop it.

The OIC Pressure

Throughout the second republic of Shehu Shagari (1979–1983), religious interest groups' activities were few and uncommon. The country was recovering from a bloody civil war and the Nigerian political process was experiencing a new democratic order after a long period of military rule. However, this position of religious inactivity changed from the period of President Shagari's government over and the next 15 to 20 years. Nigeria's politicians and religious actors became aware how significant religion was to the people and carefully utilised and manipulated it to gain socio-political advantage. Gradually, religious actors and

[11] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 94, also in Olojede, Trip To Fez, Newswatch Magazine, 22 Febuary 1988, pg 7; A Olukoshi, The Long Road to Fez, an Examination of Nigeria's Decision to Become a Full Member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference' pg. 493; in G Olusanya and RA Akindele, (eds), Op. cit. 1990. Lagos: NIIA Library Accessed Febuary 2009

[12] L Adegbite, Op. cit. Interview, 2009, P Utomi, Interviews Lagos, 6 November 2009, Osita Eze, NIIA, 2007 and 2009

[13] Ibid., M Ezekhome, Interview Lagos, August 2008

[14] Ibid.T Falola, Op. cit. pg 94, pp 137-170, see also D. Olojede, Op. cit. pp.7-8, 1986,Olukoshi, Op. cit. pg 494, Inamete, Op. cit. pg 145,

[15] Ibid. A Olukoshi, pg 488, See also - Newswatch Magazine, 24 Febuary 1986, pp 12–14, NIIA Library archive – Accessed Febuary 2009

politicians optimised the role of religion in Nigeria politics, pushing it into the forefront of Nigeria's socio-political arena.[16]

During the period of Nigeria's observer status in the OIC, ie, pre-1986, scholars and commentators such as Olukoshi, Falola, Paden, Kenny, Gambari, Olusanya and Akindele maintained that consistent pressures towards OIC membership were beginning to develop through personal connections, contacts and private meetings between influential Muslims[17] (see attached Appendix 1), Muslim interest groups and the government. Muslim actors put pressure on government officials, especially the president, to commit to full OIC membership, with Falola claiming that influential Muslims, as described above, were engaged in private lobbying on this issue.[18]

Olukoshi, further substantiated this by asserting that other lobbies came from Islamic governments, such as those of Saudi Arabia, Libya, Morocco and Iran as well as domestic Muslim groups and individuals with extensive social, religious and business ties with the Middle East, for example Chief Moshood Abiola, an influential Nigerian Muslim, all combined to pressurise the government further.[19] Links with these Muslim countries; the satisfaction of the yearning for OIC membership by the Nigeria's Muslims; and most importantly, the anticipated economic benefits combined to encourage Babangida to seek full OIC membership for Nigeria. In January 1986, Nigeria officially became a fully-fledged member of the OIC as its 46th member.[20]

The anticipated political instability associated with the controversy over the membership of the OIC, did not materialise, because the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria had apparently

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[16] Full details in chapter 2 of this thesis

[17] Notable amongst these are Sheik Gumi former Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria and Islamic scholar; The Sultan of Sokoto late Sir Abubakar III, Shehu of Borno; Alhaji Mustapha El-Kanemi, Alhaji Maitama Sule, influential Northern politician, businessman, former Minister and diplomat; Dr Lateef Adegbite, NSCIA; Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki former Sultan of Sokoto; the late Sultan Macido; Justice Abdul Kadir Orire, retired Grand Khadi of the Kwara State Sharia Court and Secretary General of JNI; Chief Moshood Abiola, businessman and President elect of Nigeria; and Alhaji Arisekola Alao, Are Musulumi of Yorubaland and businessman

[18] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 94, also claims confirmed during this meeting Dr Adegbite, that they always implore the use of their private links with members of the government to attempt to change the government stance on the OIC, Interview February 2009

[19] Olukoshi, Op. cit. pg 494, Newswatch, 24 February, 1986, pp 12–14, NIIA, Library Lagos, Feb. 2009; New Nigerian, 16 December 1983; see also Prof O Omoruyi – Presidential Adviser to Babangida and former Director-General of the Centre for Democratic Studies Nigeria: Neither an Islamic nor a Christian country, Wed. 7 March 2001 http://www.biafraland.com/Islamization%20of%20Nigeria.htm, Accessed 17 june 2008, Chief Moshood Abiola, Chairman of International Telephone & Telegraph, ITT. USA; A Multinational Company Nigeria and the Middle-East and had numerous business ventures in the Middle East

[20] As confirmed by Alhaji Kaura, Minister of State, foreign Affairs, *This Day Newspaper*, 14 April 2008, Accessed 10 October 2008

learned to coexist with each other, despite some continued religious clashes between the two groups.

Nigeria's OIC Controversy

The role of key religious actors from the Muslim and Christian groups is important as they are significant as religious influences in the formulation and outcome of specific government policies. Understanding their relationship with government is important to determining the role of religion in the decision-making process that led to the OIC membership during Babangida's regime (1985–1993).

In other words, in order to comprehend the issues surrounding Nigeria's membership, it is important to capture how Muslim religious organisations attempted to influence Nigeria's OIC policy, by identifying the main players whose actions and activities are instrumental within the policy structure and government decision-making circles. In the following section, the OIC controversies will be examined from both Muslim and Christian perspectives and the extent to which religious influences were involved in this context will be ascertained. We would expect to see a number of significant Islamic religious groups in Nigeria seriously working to influence government OIC policy by showing their support for the policy and encouraging policy actors. Any such influence would be because key decision makers in government share the same (Islamic) religious tenets and values as influential Muslim figures as noted above (See attached Appendix 1).

Babangida single-handedly dealt with the OIC policy without consultation with his ministers (especially Christians) and Christian interest groups[21] (especially the CAN). Vice-president Ebitu Ukiwe claimed that the OIC was never discussed in the Babangida's AFRC cabinet meetings and as 'a member and vice-president he would surely be aware of such policy'.[22] In this respect, Babangida clearly fits into the authoritarian style of leadership, which is indicative of military rulers, whereby power is concentrated with the leader.

Inamete noted that the decision-making process associated with Nigeria's OIC membership presents another category of decision-making dynamics.[23] These dynamics were much affected by religious actors through the use of their religious influences on Babangida, which

[21]Inamete, Op. cit., pp 140-141
[22]Ibid., O Eze, Interview, Lagos, 2007.
[23]Inamete, Op. cit., pg 235

directly resulted in Nigeria's OIC full membership.[24] This was not only manifested in non-accountability to the general public on policy issues such as the OIC, but also within the ruling elite itself. Thus operating under a more than usually tight version of the 'need-to-know' principle, Babangida's government reinforced the 'military' trend of previous administrations (ie, Gowon and Murtala/Obasanjo) in limiting strategic decision-making to the very few, in this case Babangida himself and very few members of his cabinet who were Muslims, military officers and other Northern Muslims religious leaders and politicians obviously with a clear manifestation of religious influence.[25] The fact that the OIC issue was a sensitive, controversial and potentially explosive policy issue because of Nigeria's official secular status meant that President Babangida directly took charge of the decision making.[26]

The decision-making structure of the government comprising the AFRC,[27] ministers and high-ranking military officers, was very important during the Babangida government. According to Adegbite, 'the decision-making capacity on the OIC membership issue mainly lay in the hands of the office of the presidency and external pro-OIC lobby groups and that was why we always approached the presidency on this matters',[28] while the role of the Ministry of External Affairs, was restricted to that of a mere advisory organ. [29] In principle, this was a foreign policy issue with serious implications on the domestic realities and current situation in the country and concerned sensitive matters of religion which had the potential to affect the nature of the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the country,[30] as well as Nigeria's secularity.

An important aspect in the relationship between Muslims and Christians was the suggestion and assumption by Nigerian Muslims that OIC membership was a fulfilment of their right to belong, and be represented in, an Islamic international forum that was solely concerned with promoting and safeguarding their interests and economic and socio-political concerns.[31] While the CAN, representing the Christian groups, claimed that the 'secular status' of the

[24] Ibid.
[25] H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pp 152–154, 247–250.
[26] Ibid.; See also in F Ajayi, Op. cit., J Kenny, Op. cit.
[27] AFRC in terms of membership composed mostly military officers and service chiefs of army, navy, air-force, and police. Senior officers of defence/strategic units; the President was the chairman of the group. It was the highest decision-making organ of the junta - see West Africa, 10–16 September 1990, 2434–35 at the NIIA library, February 2009
[28] L Adegbite, Op. cit.,Interview, 2009, Such OIC lobby groups are, the NSCIA / JNI leaders, i.e Sultan Dasuki, Muslim student society of Nigeria, National council of Muslim Youth Organisations of Nigeria etc; see also, Olukoshi, Op. cit., *The Long Road to Fez,* in GO Olusanya and RA Akindele, 1960–1990, NIIA, pp 488–504
[29] U Inamete, Op. cit., pg 145, other include; H Kukah and T Falola, Adefuye, Korieh and Nwokeji, Olukoshi
[30] Olukoshi, Op. cit., pp 488–504
[31] L Adegbite, Op. cit., Interview, 2009, Sheik Akintola, 2007,see also the recent pressure on the Central Bank governor to set up an Islamic bank. 2011

country would be threatened against the provisions of section 10 of Nigeria's Constitution[32] because of Nigeria's affiliation with the OIC, whom they consider and described as an Islamic organisation.[33]

Some OIC issues include the following:

- The CAN's view of the OIC membership was in terms of a gradual Islamisation of Nigeria which they believed, rightly or wrongly, was a move towards the establishment of Nigeria as an Islamic state.[34] Babangida's former deputy, Admiral Aikhomu, sought to play down any socio-religious and political groups influence throughout the OIC controversy. In an interview in 2008, he refuted any claim or link between Nigerian membership of the OIC and a systemic plan to islamise Nigeria by General Babangida. He said "such a claim was ludicrous and just the noise by the Christians" especially from the CAN leaders.[35] He stressed that "Nigeria was too integrated for this to happen and there was no evidence to back the Christians claim to an elaborate Islamisation plan and if Nigeria would be an Islamic state after the OIC membership in 1986, it should by now [2008]".[36]

- There were protests by the CAN, and Pentecostal groups, such as the PFN (a member of the CAN), against the membership of the OIC. For example, Benson Idahosa the popular Pentecostal preacher, threatened to call for a Christian boycott of newspapers favouring Islamisation.[37]

- Various economic and socio-political issues.[38] (These will be examined below.)

- The issues of secrecy and lack of consultation by the Babangida government were the beginning of the controversy, which shadowed and tainted the policy outcome, because

[32] 1999 constitution the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr Eze Onuoha, Religion and the State in Nigeria, International Humanist and Ethical Union, http://www.iheu.org/node/1759, accessed 21 October 2008

[33] M Umar Bunza, *Islamism Vs Secularism: A Religious Struggle in Modern Nigeria*, http://www.jsri.ro/old/html%20version/index/no_2/mukhatarumarbunza_articol12.htm. accessed 21October 2008

[34] See more on this claim in the studies by Hunwick, and also noted by other Nigeria scholars such as O Kalu, F Ajayi, H Kukah, I Enwerem and T Falola and numerous Nigeria commentators; Op.cit. H Kukah & T Falola, pg 151, pg 254; see also J Hunwick, *'An African Case Study of Political Islam: Nigeria' the Annals of American Academy*, AAPPSS, 524, Nov. 1992. pg. 150152, Op.cit. Korieh and Nwokeji (Eds), 2005

[35] Vice President, Aikhomu,interview, London, 2008, and this view is also supported by Mohammed Haruna, Interview London, New Nigerian editor and former Assistant to President Abdulsalami, 11 February 2009

[36] Ibid.

[37] Amadi Sam, *Theological Ambivalence and Democratic Accountability*, 18 October 2004, O Matthews 2004, Pentecostalism, Public Accountability and Governance in Nigeria. Both papers presented for the Pentecostal-Civil Society Dialogue, Lagos, Nigeria. October 18, in http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal/countries/?CountryID=150, Accessed 21 October 2008

[38] H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pp 151–152

OIC membership was very important to Nigerian Muslims and Christians alike. Falola claims that when the news of Nigeria's OIC membership reached the Christian leaders such as Cardinal Okogie of the CAN, they immediately demanded for the government's withdrawal from the organisation.[39] Christian leaders in Nigeria argued the decision to declare full membership of the OIC was the outcome of years of serious Muslim religious groups' pressure on the federal government and key influential Muslims in power.[40] Eze, claimed 'the way this decision was arrived at and implemented showed that, this singular action imply the high levels of influence the Muslims wielded in the government of Babangida'.[41] This also demonstrated the ability of the Muslims to influence government decision makers' actions, through their ability to express attractive and persuasive arguments which drew on common religious norms and values. They may have sought to achieve this by having their 'own' people in government or by sponsoring political candidates who shared the same ideas, values and belief as them.[42]

Due to the sensitivity and controversy surrounding this policy, it was important for Babangida and other key government figures to ensure that strict confidentiality was maintained during the whole process. Such actions imply a lack of proper consultation with all stakeholders, especially Nigerian Christian religious groups and other non-Muslims, including the foreign affairs minister, Christian ministers in the cabinet and foreign policy consultative organs such as NIIA. The CAN and other non-Muslim commentators in Nigeria criticised Babangida for failing to make OIC membership a public debate: by setting up a national forum, conducting a national referendum or establishing a government religious committee to investigate the ramifications of such a policy.[43]

Claims by the CAN, Inamete, Kenny, Ajayi, Kukah and Olukoshi among others that neither the ministry of foreign affairs nor the supposed executive arm of government (the AFRC) were involved in the decision-making process are well-documented.[44] For example, Inamete's

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[39] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 96

[40] Ibid. pp 97–102

[41] Prof Eze, Op. cit., interview, lagos, February 2007, also A Adogame, The *Politicisation of Religion and Religionisation of Politics in Nigeria, in Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria*; Essays in Honour of Ogbu Kalu, (eds) C Korieh and G Nwokeji, University Press of America, 2005, pp 128–129; African Guardian 24 October 1988; Democrat Weekly 16 October 1988; F Ajayi, Op. cit., pp 149–160

[42] Ibid., Eze,2007, during which he claims 'the government did not even set up any of this consultation groups' and he asked the question why should Babangida do, he did not consult his own Vice- President on this same policy matter

[43] Ibid.

[44] L Tella & F Abbas – The only two Nigerian journalists who covered the OIC meeting, in National Concord Newspaper, 24 January 1986, NIIA Library Archive, accessed February 2009, See also Olukoshi, the Road to Fez in Akindele and Olusanya

research on decision making in Nigeria, indicated the dominance of the leader and that the nature of decision making is dependent on the concerns of the overall leader; be they military or civilian.[45]

According to Falola, the declaration of Nigeria's full membership of the OIC turned out to be a 'costly miscalculation' in every way.[46] He claims this issue polarised the whole country along a religious divide more than any other issue in Nigeria's history and provided a catalyst for more pressure on Babangida's government to review its OIC policy.[47] The effectiveness of religious actors using their religious persuasiveness to represent their interest was demonstrated when Babangida assembled a group of prominent and influential Muslims to go to Fez to seek Nigeria's membership of OIC.[48]

These individuals were known close associates of Babangida, on both a professional and personal level, for example Sheikh Ibrahim Dasuki's appointment as Sultan was supported by President Babangida in 1988, who is a personal friend. This indicates high-level closeness between the two men and also implies that the pressure from core Islamic religious groups as well as Islam's supreme leader in the country was significant.[49] Following these OIC controversies, the JNI, the SCS and Nigeria's minister of state for foreign affairs, Alhaji Tijani Kaura, confirmed[50] that Nigeria was now to become a full member of OIC during Babangida's regime in order to reap major economic benefits for Nigeria, which included interest-free loans and financial aid from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) of the OIC. Therefore, the level of support from significant Islamic religious groups was important to Babangida and he successfully took advantage of this significant support, and the next section will examine how they attempted to influence this policy process.

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[45] Inamete, Op. cit., pp 285–295

[46] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 95, also reaffirmed during my interview with him in London, 9 July 2006. A Adogame, Op. cit., pp 128–129

[47] Ibid.

[48] This group comprised of Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, Former Minister for Energy and Mines; Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji – Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning; Abubakar Ahmed - the Governor of Nigeria's Central bank; Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki - the Secretary General of the NSCIA, the late Sultan Abubakar of Sokoto; and Sheik Abubakar Gumi – Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria and Islamic scholar

[49] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 95, Interviews with Sheik Gumbi, Kaduna (2008) and Sheik Akintola,(2005)

[50] Nigeria: Minister clarifies Nigeria's status in OIC, http://allafrica.com/stories/200804141237, Daily Punch, 11 April 2008, http://www.wwrn.org/article.php?idd=28186&sec=33&con=58, also, Daily Champion, 2 April 2008, Accessed 23 April 2009

Nigeria's Muslims and the OIC membership

This section will examine the efforts and actions of Muslim religious groups to influence and support Nigeria's OIC membership. Consequently, it will also examine how significant Muslim religious actors have been instrumental in the manipulation of the commonly shared Islamic religion to influence decision making in this regard, especially government decision makers. The earliest defence of the OIC membership is contained in the address of President Babangida on the 3rd February 1986 to the bi-religious panel set up to study the implications of the membership.[51]

Economic Benefits

General Babangida consistently maintained the desirability of the economic, cultural and technical benefits of Nigeria's OIC membership. He claimed 'Nigeria's business in the OIC is strictly international cooperation, economic development and self-reliance'.[52] By this the president reasoned the country would take advantage of the vast wealth available in the Middle East and seek economic support from 'any reasonable international forum that serves our national interests' such as the OIC.[53] As noted above, one of the main institutions of the OIC is the IDB, and one of its main purposes is to give financial assistance to member states for their economic and social development.[54] Babangida hoped to take advantage of this situation and hence free Nigeria from Western aid, especially from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[55] The JNI, the SCS and the Nigeria's minister of state for foreign affairs, Alhaji Tijani Kaura supported this claim and asserted[56] that the purpose of Nigeria's membership of the OIC was to reap the full economic benefits, such as interest-free loans and financial aid from the IDB. This bank provides interest-free loans primarily for infrastructural projects with socio-economic benefits. The Babangida regime partly witnessed a period of economic recession and the government was faced with a choice of accepting an IMF loan with stringent and tough conditions or the more appealing offer of financial aid from the IDB.

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[51] New Nigeria, 13 February 1986, NIIA Library Accessed February 2009; Op.cit, Olukoshi, pp 488–504

[52] U Inamete, Op. cit., pg 145, J Kenny, http://www.diafrica.org/kenny/YALE2.htm, Olukoshi, Op. cit., pp 497–498, New Nigeria, 13 February 1986, NIIA Library Accessed February 2009; see also Nigeria membership issues in D Westerlund and I Svanberg (eds) *Islam Outside the Arab World*, Palgrave McMillan, Chapter 2, pp 56–77, 1999

[53] Olukoshi, Op. cit., pp 497–498; see also Newswatch 10 and 24 February 1986, NIIA Library Accessed February 2009

[54] IDB, http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=65#idb, Accessed 23 April 2009

[55] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 95 Inamete; see also Prof Omo Omoruyi, Research Fellow, African Studies Center, Boston University Wednesday, March 7, 2001, Boston, MA, USA

[56] Nigeria: Minister clarifies Nigeria's status in OIC, Accessed 23 April 2009

Further to his address to the bi-religious panel in February 1986, he reiterated the advantages of economic development and self-reliance Nigeria hoped to gain through membership.[57] Babangida argued that membership of the OIC put Nigeria in the position to pay off the colossal external debts that the country owed to the West, because of the IDB's interest-free lending conditions. He claims these conditions had been the lure for an overwhelming majority bloc of African members to the IDB,[58] such as Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo and Gambia. This research notes that economic reasons given by Babangida were genuine, especially from the perspectives of the Nigerian economy. However, Babangida's claim became untenable because economic and technological gains expected from the Middle East[59] did not flow into Nigeria. Also the 1980s boom in oil prices meant massive financial gains for Babangida's government which, resulted in them not pressuring the IDB for assistance.

Aluko, political scientist, summed up Babangida's economic gains reasons, he stated that "although the Arab states are rich in oil revenues, most of their money is invested in financial institutions and real estate in the US and Europe and not in Africa. And in the few African countries where they had given financial help, it has been for the promotion of Arabic language and Islam such as the building of Islamic Universities in Niger and Uganda'.[60] During the regime of Babangida less than 1.05% of Arab aid had gone to Africa, not to fellow African members of the Arab league such as Somalia and Sudan"[61] So it is significant to note that, the minister for petroleum Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, a key Muslim figure, attempted to allay the fears of Nigerians by claiming that 'joining the OIC does not make Nigeria an Islamic state as it did not make other African member states such as Cameroon, Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Gabon. For these reasons above, Lukman overwhelmingly supported Babangida.[62] Thus this research notes that Babangida was in a 'no win' situation, had he collected IDB loans, he would have been criticised by the Christians and if he didn't, he was criticised for even attempting to consider this loan, because it was from an organ of the OIC. The main economic benefits of the IDB loan is the interest free condition.[63]

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[57] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 98

[58] F Ajayi, Op. cit., pg 168; Also in the Guardian, *Islam Bank: Nigeria yet to take the leap*, 11 October 1987, pg 9, NIIA, Library Archive, 4 November 2009

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] J Kenny, *Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria:* vol. 26, fasc. 4, pg 352, 1996, http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/cgi, see details in Sunday Sketch, 10 February 1986, Accessed 22 May 2009

[62] Ibid. Also the comments of the JNI Public Relations Officer North Central zone, Malam Umar Zaria Ahmad corroborated Lukman's view in Sukuji Bakoji, Fresh Controversy over Nigeria's Membership of OIC, The Independence 5 April 2008

[63] IDB Development Project all over the world as at 20 October 2009 http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/AZHU-7X33AJ?OpenDocument

Sources of Muslim Support for OIC

Prior to Nigeria's membership of the OIC, prominent and influential Muslims from Northern Nigeria (such as Sultan Abubakar Bello; Sheik Abubakar Gumi, Former Grand Khadi; deposed Sulan Dasuki, former President Shehu Shagari; Northern Emirs; Sheik Gumbi and Dr Adegbite of the NSCIA, etc.) express attractive and persuasive arguments in support of the OIC membership in their attempts to influence the government of the day. The head of state has personal contacts with Muslim leaders, especially during regular Friday prayers, a common Muslims practice.[64] This contact is very significant as this serves as a source of interaction, an opportunity to share ideas and to express opinions on issues drawing on their shared religious norms and values. Another social avenue for these religious actors to meet is during family engagements such as weddings, burials chieftaincy title ceremonies, national holiday ceremonies and federal executive council meetings.[65] The coronation ceremony of the Sultan Abubakar of Sokoto (2006) and the burial ceremony of Mariam Babangida (2009; wife of former president general Babangida) are vivid examples of events where influential Muslims congregate with government decision makers.[66]

Accordingly Dr Adegbite maintained that these influential individuals mentioned above would normally engage with each other through their personal, religious links and contacts in government to get political leaders in government to examine policies from the Muslim point of view. Decisively, he said 'there was always competition for government attention between the CAN and other Muslim organisations especially on the issue of OIC membership'.[67] However, two strong claims from Christians on the influence of significant Islamic religious actors attributes to Falola claims that 'Babangida wanted to win over the powerful Muslim constituency for his own interest', this is so because he was less regarded as a dedicated Muslim by the Northerners especially when compared with former Presidents Shagari and General Buhari. While, J Kenny noted that Babangida only became a practising Muslim while in the army.[68]

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[64] Popular views during interviews after Friday prayer at visits to University of Lagos, Mosque. Alhaji Akeem and Kamoru Busari, lagos, 9 October 2007, These views also supported by sheik Akintola, Gumbi etc. 2008

[65] Ibid

[66] Maryam Babangida, http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5504867-146/Maryam_Babangida_laid_to_rest_.csp, Punch Sunday January 17th 2010; Daily Trust, July 12th 2008,http://allafrica.com/stories/200807120015.html Accessed 18 July 2010

[67] Adegbite, Op. cit., Interview 25 February 2009

[68] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 95, Also J Kenny, Op. cit., 1996,

The interactions between the Sultan of Sokoto and the government is an important source of influence, for example the incumbent Sultan Mohammad Abubakar was formerly a Brigadier General until he became Sultan in October 2006. This is very useful to him because he has developed high-level contacts and links in the military and corridors of power prior to being appointed. Former Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki is a wealthy businessman and former government minister, as well as staunch supporter of President Babangida. Consequently, it is obvious that the President, his closest assistants and the majority of his ministers and advisers share a common allegiance to Islam's supreme leader in Nigeria, ie, the Sultan. Because of this relationship, Babangida association with Sultan Dasuki (1988–1996) is important and was subject to the Sultan's influence and *vice versa*. Presently, Sultan Abubakar as the head of the NSCIA and is supreme Islamic leader, he therefore, has access to the government at all times and regularly consults on Muslim religious issues.[69]

Furthermore, the Islamic religion is the common link between the Sultan, the Ulama[70] and the government in Nigeria. This accounted for the Northern scholar Yusuf Bala Usman assertion that religious leaders in Nigeria make use of their religion, especially Islamic religion, to garner support from the people and their religious leaders, and therefore effectively manipulate the outcome of policies,[71] a viewpoint that supports the claims of non-Muslims.

[69] Sultan Abubakar, Islam and Democracy in Nigeria, http://www.cfr.org/publication/14874/islam_and_democracy_in_nigeria_rush_transcript_federal_news_service.html?breadcrumb=%2Fbios%2F2373%2Fprinceton_n_lyman, Accessed, 9 January 2009

[70] Ulama a community of legal scholars of Islam and the Sharia, these are group of men with religious education and religiously related professions. They express the true content of Islam towards both the people and the rulers

[71] Y Bala Usman, Op. cit., 1987; see also H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pp 49–60,I Enwerem, Op. cit., 1995

Genesis and Appeal of Muslim Support

As already noted, Nigeria's membership of the OIC is an important domestic and foreign policy issue. Influential Muslims, as discussed above made use of their personal association with Babangida and other Muslim members of the government to significantly influence decision making by exerting pressure in an articulate manner and increased ability. This research also noted from early 1980s there were numerous agitations through the media and pressure from prominent and powerful Muslims on Nigeria leaders such as presidents Gowon, Murtala/Obasanjo, Buhari and Shagari to join the OIC. At various times, government leaders were approached by the leadership of Islamic organisations, such NSCIA and the JNI on individual basis. During my meetings with Adegbite, he commended Babangida as the only president who had the courage to 'do the right thing' and join the OIC when compared with the previous and by the grace of Allah Nigeria will always be a memberPresidents.[72]

Consequently, this leads to the question as to why Babangida made this decision towards full membership, while his predecessors failed to do so especially as he had a clear understanding of the implications of such action in a religiously conscious country. Numerous reasons are abound for the actions of Babangida, which Christians argue revolve around economic and personal reasons as discussed above. Nigerian writers such as Kenny and Falola argued that Babangida wanted to win over the powerful Muslim constituency to confirm his loyalty to Islam,[73] thereby bolstering his acceptance amongst the Northern Muslim elite and widening his sphere of influence. Taking Nigeria into the OIC endeared him to the Nigerian Muslim community and this step was seen by Adegbite, Gumbi and Ihejieto as a commitment to his religion; Islam.[74]

Babangida became a popular Muslim Head of state, especially in the North as a result of the OIC matter, as showed by the serious support he enjoyed from Muslim communities in that region.[75] Presently in Nigeria politics, Babangida is an extremely Influential individual and none of the Northern state governors have ever condemned or said anything contrary to

[72]L. Adegbite, Op. cit., Interview, 2009, T Falola, Op. cit., pg 94, see other details on the constituent assembly's Federal Sharia Court of Appeal, pp 68–70

[73] The Catholic Priest and Prof. Mosgr. Joseph Kenny also claimed that the Babangida became a devout Muslim only in the army and from a Muslim background, as it is common knowledge that Babangida married his wife in 1969, in the Catholic Church in Asaba, but the two of them are now Alhaji and Alhaja. And in order to placate the Muslims he had to do something tangible for the Muslims hence his OIC moves. (J Kenny, Op. cit., pg 346) and also General Interview comments – Obozuwa 2005/06; Ezekhome 2008; H Kukah 2007; T Falola, Pg 93

[74]J Kenny, Op. cit., 1996 see also http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/cgi.22 May 2009, J Kenny, Interview Ibadan, 27 and 28 October 2008.

[75]Ibid.

Babangida's OIC policy. He supported and single handedly influenced the enthronement of Sultan Dasuki while he was president.[76]

In Western Nigeria, Muslim religious interest group support for the OIC policy, came from influential Muslim politicians and wealthy businessmen such as Alhaji Arisekola Alao; Are Musulumi of Yorubaland; Dr Olusola Saraki, politician and industrialist; Alhaji Folawiyo, wealthy industrialist; MKO Abiola, politician and industrialist; and Lateef Adegbite of the NSCIA, etc.[77] Secret financial contributions were received from some of these influential Muslim leaders (see above) to pay for a media blitz for support throughout 1986 for Babangida's OIC policy in all parts of the country, under the banner of the NSCIA, JNI and other Muslim organisations.[78] They claimed that his predecessors had been reluctant to make this declaration because of the religious plurality of Nigeria and the inability to predict the outcome of such a policy, especially the reactions of non-Muslims. Kenny suggested that 'Babangida as a true Muslim and bold leader compared to Nigeria's former Muslim leaders he was the only one bold enough to deal with the OIC issue once and for all'.[79]

Significant support also came from highly educated Muslim individuals, institutions and University lecturers from the department of Islamic and Arabic studies of the University of Ibadan,[80] and Muslim organisations such as the Yoruba Muslim Youth Organisation and Nigeria Muslim Council. A major rally which served as public demonstration of support for Babangida's OIC policy was held on the 2nd February 1986; subsequently a press statement was released in which the religious groups defended the OIC membership.[81]

In addition, the Muslim Students Society Ibadan branch, in solidarity and demonstration of a show of support for Babangida, declared that any pressure from the CAN and other non-Muslim groups to withdraw Nigeria from the OIC would be met with the stiffest resistance and could lead to a religious war.[82] This therefore brought a new dimension into the controversy within which Nigerian Christians and Muslims saw the possibility of going to war over this policy; however it never got to that stage.

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[76] J Paden, Op. cit., No. 8, March 2002, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/anotes_0203.pdf, Accessed 1 September 2009; see also, I Nolte, N Danjibo and A Oladeji, Op. cit., 2009

[77] The list of prominent Western Muslims is inexhaustible, but I will limit this to only the few mentioned above, who have been constituent with this research. See Appendix

[78] Anonymous NSCIA member during our conversation at NSCIA office, Abuja, February 2008

[79] J Kenny, Op. cit., Interview,2008

[80] Dr. Wahab, OIC is good for us in the Daily Sketch, 29th Jan 1986, NIIA Library Archive, Febuary 2009

[81] Press Release by Nigeria Muslim Council, National Concord, 3 February 1986, T Falola, Op. cit., Pg 169

[82] Nigeria Tribune Newspaper, 17 February 1986, NIIA library, Lagos

From other areas of the Muslim community, the level of support for Babangida was also enormous, although this was less significant in the Southern and especially Eastern Nigeria, which is predominantly Christian, as noted in Chapter 1. The fact that some Muslim groups called for jihad over the OIC membership issue, is an important point, but the Sultan Dasuki called on all Muslims throughout Nigeria "to embark on a peaceful jihad to ensure that the Christians and their leaders do not take the Muslims right to association with the OIC". He said "it is imperative for all Muslims to resist the campaign by Christians....so therefore all Muslims should rise and demand our full rights not only to be entrenched in the constitution but also to be respected".[83] The NSCIA, the JNI, the Muslim student society, and the Council of Ulama also played their part through their support and were instrumental to general Babangida's OIC decision-making approach. 'They persuaded, supported and stood firm behind the president after the OIC membership pronouncements via various rallies and articles of support in Nigeria media'.[84]

Furthermore, Muslim leaders argued that 'Nigeria's membership of the OIC was to satisfy Muslim aspirations and also to get even with the Christians in the country. This viewpoint was also supported by the argument of Mash and Oyeka, of the Nigeria Muslim Association 'that Nigeria's diplomatic relations with the Vatican, which the Muslims argue is a Christian state, serves as the balance to the membership of the OIC'.[85]

Therefore, the perceived knowledge of support Babangida could generate amongst Muslim religious actors helped him to single handedly make the OIC policy change, this obviously was the important motivation. It must be emphasised that whatever Babangida's actions, they were on the basis of both secular and religious motivations. The support of prominent Muslims and 'Muslim community' facilitated this decision at the cost of both widening the division between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria and encouraging Muslim 'big men' to seek to lobby government policy makers on changes they wanted, thus reducing the capacity of Christian 'big men' to achieve their objectives.

[83] Daily Tribune Newspaper 17th March 1986, NIIA Library Archive, Kofo Abayomi, Lagos, Accessed 3 July 2007
[84] L. Adegbite, Interview, 2009
[85] New Nigeria newspaper, 26th January 1986, National Concord 14th February 1986, Guardian Newspaper 11th February 1986, NIIA Library Archive, Lagos, Accessed 3 July 2007

The group that went to Fez[86] to implement OIC membership were staunch Muslims, experienced politicians and administrators and supporters of Babangida who understood the religious and secular implications of OIC membership. Here we see a direct correlation between the prior knowledge and level of support Babangida had from the Muslim community[87] and policy outcome. In support of this statement, Sheik Gumbi claims 'Babangida enjoyed significant relevant support from the older Northern Muslim senior army officers and religious leaders. Extremely influential Northern Muslim,s[88] such as former military Governors Usman Farouk and Musa Usman,'[89] continuously provided financial assistance to religious interest groups such as the JNI and the NSCIA, allowing them to continue their support for Babangida.[90]

Furthermore, Obozuwa claimed that the pressure / lobby from the Muslim interest group in the 'corridors of power', (eg, Muslim members in the Houses of representative, Senate and ministers whom he dealt with daily) on President Shagari regarding non membership ofthe OIC was enormous during their government (1979–1983). Obozuwa, said he experienced and observed first-hand the significant impact of these religious actors, while serving the Shagari government as a legal adviser: "there were numerous meetings amongst the Gumis, Dasuki, Adegbite, northern leaders, Arisekola, Moshood Abiola etc." (prominent Muslim individuals). Emissaries from Northern rulers such as the Sultan of Sokoto, Kano and Borno met with Shagari on numerous occasions, putting pressure on him on various religious issues.[91] Between 1984 and 1986 the leadership of Generals Buhari and Babangida asked their respective external affairs minsters (Prof Ibrahim Gambari and Prof Bolaji Akinyemi) their opinions on issue of OIC membership; they both replied that Nigeria should maintain the status quo and not join the OIC. Buhari upheld the advice of his minister but his regime did not last long enough for effective scrutiny.[92]

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[86] Fez in Morocco, where the OIC meeting took place

[87].Chief Ezekhome, Obozuwa, also this view is strongly supported by many Nigeria observers and notable contributors. Islamic leaders such as Sheik Gumbi, Kaduna (28 February 2008), and Ustaz Musa Ihejieto, NSCIA – 28 and 29 February 2008, They all maintained that there is no way Gen Babangida would take such a bold step without the backing of these northern emirs and groups such as the JNI

[88] Sheik Gumbi, Op. cit., Interview Kaduna, 28 February 2008

[89] Ibid., These include, Lt Col Hassan Usman Katsina former Governor of Northern region, Col. Nasko – Sokoto, Col Abubakar, Col. Abba Kyari – North central, Lt. Col. Usman Jubril – North Central, Usman Farouk - North Western , Col. Musa Usman – North Central, Alhaji Audu Bako - Kano, Lt. Col. Sani Bello – Kano.... Etc. See List in Sam. O. Iroanusi, Nigerian Current Facts and Records, Sam Iroanusi Publications, Surulere Lagos, Nigeria.2007.

[90]Sheik Gumbi, Op. cit., February 2008

[91]Obozuwa Austin, Interview, London, January 2006, Sheik Gumbi, Op. cit., supports this claim, 2008, Also Adegbite feels that Shagari's government on the OIC issue was too weak to deal with it decisively even though he is a devout Muslim but chose to ignore it

[92] I Gambari, *Theory and Reality in Foreign Policy Making: Nigeria after the Second Republic*, Humanities Press Int. NJ. 1990, See also, Inamte, Op. cit., pg 145, J Kenny Op. cit., Olusanya and Akindele, Op. cit.,

Nigeria's Christians and the OIC Membership

This section will examine the Christian counter arguments to OIC membership and the lack of significant Christian influence to affect their actions. The analysis focuses on the activities of Christian organisations, mainly the CAN, together with and other Christians. It is important to note that Nigerian Christians could not stop the country joining the OIC, regardless of the pressure mounted on the government through the media. This was because the Christians' (especially the CAN's) inability to influence high-ranking Christian members in government as effectively compared to the Muslims, which can be attributed to over 30 years of domination of political power by the northern Muslims and the effective use of Muslim interest group influences.

High-ranking Christian government officials were described by the Christian religious actors as figure heads who had 'no real power in the government',[93] for example, former vice-presidents, Aikhomu and Ebitu Ukiwe. CAN could rely on these individuals, but their lack of serious influencing power put Christian groups at a disadvantage on policy issues, e.g. the OIC.

The lack of influence displayed by Christian highlights that religion is significant in Nigeria's political process, further buttressed by Ajayi, who suggests that this significance extends to the extent that political actors will use religious identity and not merit, to obtain any government position or promotion.[94] The implication of this, from the above is that Christians did not have significant Christian influence in government; hence they did not have any impact on or effectively influence Babangida's OIC policy.

The focus of this section therefore and Christian's main argument is centred on a gradual Islamisation of Nigeria, by firstly becoming a member of the OIC and later introduction of Sharia law. This led the CAN and other commentators such as Aluko, Enwerem, Falola, Kukah and Ajayi to observe that "there is no conceivable way by which full membership of the OIC can be effective without using it to promote, canvass, or impose Islam on Nigeria".[95] The potential financial benefits argument Babangida gave for membership were dismissed.

[93] A Obozuwa, Op. cit., interview, London, January 2006
[94] F Ajayi, Op. cit., pp 148–158
[95] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 97; CAN memorandum no 41, 1986, pg 10. Catholic Secretariat Lagos, Febuary 2009

Christian Reactions and Counter Claims on the OIC Policy

In January 1986, Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie (Former President of the CAN) and other Christian leaders, were first to alert Christians in the country to Nigeria's OIC membership through protests in the media,[96] press releases and memoranda to the government and from the pulpit of their churches. On the national level, the CAN's objections to Nigeria's OIC membership was widely publicised in newspapers throughout 1986, seen to reflect a burgeoning islamisation and desecularisation of Nigeria. Other dissenting voices joined from various Christian groups especially, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and the Pentecostal churches. Christian leaders mobilised their members against the OIC membership effectively using the media, and the OIC issue was the object of Church sermons, rallies and publications throughout 1986.[97]

Christian churches across the country issued statements instructing their members to engage in special prayers, fasting and rallies. Christian writers[98] and religious leaders expressed their concern for the country's stability, especially considering the after effects of the 1966 civil war and the continuous religious North–South divide in addition to pressures of ethnic-religious strife and military rule that are common in Nigeria politics. The CAN argue that membership of the OIC was down to superior Muslim influence[99] in the country and the successful application of that influence. They further argued that the post of the president and foreign minister are strategic in the situation[100] because they are usually involved in the organisation's activities, deliberations and proceedings. It was helpful to the membership cause that the occupants of these posts were Muslims because they can be easily integrated into the working relationship between Nigeria and the OIC. Religious influences come into focus here as it is essential, for example that, the delegation who attended the inaugural OIC meeting had no Christian representatives but all Muslims, which clearly reveals the religious and strategic importance of the OIC. In this regard, many Christians believe that the move was a display of the dominant religious and political power of the Muslims to influence policies favourable to them.[101] Also the Ministry of Petroleum resources, (The backbone of Nigeria's economy), Rilwanu Lukman was assigned as leader of the Nigeria's OIC

[96] Ibid. pg 96; see also Punch Newspaper 25 January 1986; Sunday Times 26 January 1986; CAN Memo to the Presidential Committee on the OIC; Tribune Newspaper 25 February 1987, NIIA Library archive
[97] Ibid.
[98] Such as H Kukah, Op. cit., (Others include, J Paden, Kalu, I Enwerem, Adefuye and T Falola & Pat Williams)
[99] T Falola, Op. cit., pg 96, H Kukah, Pat Williams & T Falola
[100] Ibid. pg 96
[101] CAN, Press release by Bishop Ganaka of the Catholic Bishops Conference Communiqué issued after their meetings, 18–22 February 1986

delegation. The Christians saw this appointment as a Muslim takeover and subsequent control of important government ministries; however, because the Minister is Muslim, he is better positioned to deal with his counterparts in the Middle East, who dominated the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with ease. The immediate former minister, Prof Tam David-West, a Christian, was removed.

Furthermore, the sacking of Ebitu Ukiwe, a high-ranking Christian, member of the AFRC and the former Vice-President to General Babangida,was a shock to CAN and this infuriated the Christian community,[102] confirmed the lack of consultation, involvement or discussion at AFRC meetings which was the highest decision-making organ in the country.[103] The CAN continuously accused Babangida for his lack of consultation with all stake holders over the OIC policy, because it was never tabled as a policy matter at any of the AFRC meetings.[104]

On Nigeria's secularity position, Catholic Bishops conference argued that Nigeria is a multi-religious country and the aim of the OIC is the promotion of Islam, because in the first instance, the OIC is an Islamic organisation, conceived by Muslims to achieve objectives that would promote the cause of Islam. They suggested that OIC membership would be a negation of Nigeria secularity, and if not handled carefully, may lead to a dangerous religious war.[105] The President, the majority of AFRC, and other ministers involved in the country's decision-making process are Muslims, this, the CAN argued, was the source of dominant Muslim influence in government decision making. Hence they interpreted the country's membership of the OIC as nothing less than a declaration of Nigeria as an Islamic state, thus seeing itself as the defender of a secular Nigeria.[106] However, in reality, the disparity in the total numbers of Christians and Muslims in the Babangida's government was less significant[107] asCAN argued and sensitive government positions (such as trade, external affairs, petroleum and industry) were equally shared between the two major religions (Table 8).

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[102] Ibid. Inamete also noted that the ministry of external affairs expressed concerns over the repercussions of membership through its foreign ministers, J Okwara, This Day Newspaper, 15 August 2002, Op.cit. Inamete, J Kenny, I Enwerem, F Ajayi, H Kukah and T Falola

[103] Inamete, Op. cit., pp161-162. See also F Ajayi, Op. cit., pg 166, Enwerem, Op. cit., pg 140

[104] Ibidpg 145, T Falola, Op. cit., pg 95; Olukoshi, Op. cit., pg 488–504, H Kukah & T Falola, Op. cit., pg 151–152, I Enwerem, Op.cit

[105] H Kukah & T Falola, Op. cit., pg 152, CAN memo to the Presidential Committee on the OIC, Nigeria Tribune, 25 February 1987, NIIA, Library archive, February 2009

[106] CAN, Leadership in Nigeria, 27 – Catholic Secretariat office, Tafawa Balewa Lagos, Feb. 2009. also T Falola, Op. cit., pg 114

[107] F Ajayi. Op. cit., pg 158

So, overall, the Christian anti-OIC argument stemmed from the fact that the very designation of the organisation as 'Islamic' makes its activities categorised as religious and Islam is crucial to this development. Some of the aims and activities of the OIC, ie the spread of Islam, supports the Nigerian Christians view point to the extent that if the OIC controversy was not handled sensitively, the implications was that Christian/Muslim relations would further degenerate and may lead to 'religious war' in Nigeria.[108] All the above gave credence to the CAN and non-Muslim claim to an Islamisation agenda, which Muslims dismissed as seriously alarmist. The CAN argued that there was no conceivable way by which full membership of the OIC could be effective without using it to promote, canvass, or impose Islam on Nigeria,[109] as clearly and gradually manifested by the later introduction of the Sharia law in 12 Northern states in Nigeria.

Other socio-political groups (Such as the Civil Liberties Organisation of Nigeria - CLO) monitoring the OIC policy situation drew parallels between Nigeria and Sudan in relations to the problems religion, especially the Islamic religion is causing in Sudan, which has ultimately led to its civil war; a problem they fear is starting up in Nigeria.[110] Such overwhelming support and influence from the Muslim interest groups as well as the fact that Babangida is a Muslim made the arguments' for membership a reasonable policy option. Thus prompting the prominent Nigeria lawyer Chief Ezekhome of the CLO, to assert that 'Babangida single-handedly took Nigeria to the OIC because he had to satisfy his fellow Muslim brothers'.[111] It is further noted that the introduction of Sharia law in the North since 1999 has not expunged the Christians fear of Islamisation. This situation is further exacerbated by the description of the OIC's former secretary general, Habib Chatty of Tunisia: "the OIC seeks to propagate Islam and acquaint the rest of the world with Islam, its issues and aspirations".[112] Habib's statement makes issues bad and stokes up the fear amongst Christians because of the incessant clashes between Muslims and Christians especially in Northern Nigeria.

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[108]M Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pg 152

[109]Omo Omoruyi, *Neither an Islamic nor a Christian Country*, Wed. 7 March 2001, T Falola, Op. cit., pg 97, CAN, Memorandum No. 41. 1986 at the Catholic Secretariat Lagos, February 2009. F Ajayi, pp 167–169 http://www.biafraland.com/Islamization%20of%20Nigeria.htm, Accessed 8 September 2009

[110]T Falola. Op. cit., pg. 97, see also The Punch 25 January 1986; Sunday Times 26 January 1986 at the NIIA Library Lagos, Febuary

[111]Ezekhome, Op. cit., Interview London 2009, F Ajayi, Op. cit., claims the decision to take Nigeria to the OIC was solely Babangida's unilateral decision. pg 166

[112] Nigeria Tribune Newspaper, 7 March 1986, NIIA Library archive Febuary 2009

Furthermore, Cardinal Okogie pointed out that in a pluralistic society such as Nigeria's, membership of the OIC is derogatory to the citizens who are members of other religious communities, because it is tantamount to placing Islam above other religions in the country.[113] Also Seidu Dogo, Secretary General of the CAN, opines that "Nigeria is a secular nation and has no business joining an association of any religious body." Since Nigeria is now a fully-fledged member of the OIC, he argues that "Nigeria should also become a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC)."[114]

Other commentators, such as Adefuye observed that the OIC by its name is a clear indication that it is an Islamic organisation and Nigeria had no business there. This fear of domination by the Muslims, which has always been the issue for Christians in Nigeria and a common area of controversy in domestic politics is perceived and considered as a Muslim 'hidden agenda'.[115] The CAN claims religion plays an important role in government actions and the true reason for David-West's dismissal was his opposition to the OIC membership, and so condemned such dismissals because they were influenced by Muslims.[116] It became clear that David-West, a Christian minister, could not comfortably represent Nigeria in a purely Muslim-dominated forum such as the OIC and or OPEC.[117]

However, the OIC issue has evolved over time. For example, the impact of the OIC in Africa has been significant by providing assistance in the training of Islamic scholar in countries such as Libya. As an organisation, 'there are no evidence to support a threat to Islamise any countries in Africa and indeed Nigeria, this claim by the CAN and other non is baseless and untrue',[118] The fear has subsided and it is baseless for the s to continue to hold on to it.

Lastly, Cardinal Okogie and the Catholic bishops conference of Nigeria issued a national press release asking on Babangida to immediately pull Nigeria out of the OIC, because it was not one the pillars of Islam and in no way was a withdrawal an infringement on Muslims

[113] OIC, http://www.oic.org/oicnew/pagedetail.asp?p_id=52; see also J Kenny at http://www.diafrica.org/kenny/YALE2.htm
[114] Seidu Dogo, Secretary General of CAN in J Shiklam & I Okonkwo, Nigeria: we will resist membership in OIC - CAN. Daily Champion, 2 April 2008; also allAfrican.com: Nigeria: we will resist membership in OIC - CAN
[115] H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pg 151
[116] Inamete, Op. cit., pg 145, 174; J Kenny, T Falola, Op. cit., pg 94–98, Olukoshi, pg 488–504, H Kukah and T Falola, Op. cit., pg 151–152; I Enwerem, see full discussion on the composition of Babangida's cabinet in T Falola, Op. cit.,.
[117] The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent intergovernmental organization, created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10–14, 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. The five Founding Members were later joined by nine other Members: Qatar (1961); Indonesia (1962) – suspended its membership from January 2009; Socialist Peoples Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (1962); United Arab Emirates (1967); Algeria (1969); Nigeria (1971); Ecuador (1973) suspended its membership from December 1992–October 2007; Angola (2007); and Gabon (1975–1994). Members comprised mostly Muslim countries. http://www.opec.org
[118] L. Adegbite, Op. cit., Interview, February 2009

rights in Nigeria.[119] The outcome of these complaints and counter-complaints from both the Christians and Muslims made Babangida to set up a committee in February 1986, to examine the implications of OIC membership, which was headed by Lt Col Shagaya, a federal minister and Christian from Central Nigeria, sitting on this committee where 24 other members representing the interest of the government, Islam and Christians.[120] The significance of this committee is that, for the first time, representatives from the different religious groups came together under one forum to find a solution to a religious issue of national concern/magnitude. It also demonstrated that the CAN, to some extent had some form of soft power on the OIC issue, as it forced Babangida to at the least listen to their protests.[121]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have noted the role of religious actors in seeking to influence the government decision-making process in relation to the OIC membership issue in the 1980s. Babangida's government showed its willingness to take Nigeria into the OIC, even though previous administrations did not deal with this issue, he eventually upgraded Nigeria's status to full membership. Babangida failed to justify his argument on the membership of the OIC with economic gains from the Arab countries, but the influence of Muslims and/or the application of religious influence was successfulin this process, because Babangida was subject to significant Muslim pressures, especially from the Sultan of Sokoto, the NSCIA, the JNI, Islamic clerics and influential Muslim leaders, etc. We noted that, as a Muslim, Islam plays a significant role in Babangida's public and private life and it is clear that influential Muslims sought to capitalise on Babangida's faith when seeking to effect policy change in relation to OIC issue.

Furthermore, these Muslim groups supported Babangida whenever OIC controversies erupted and the general Muslim lobby procedure was strong. Yet it was not strong or coordinated enough to influence OIC policy change in previous governments, especially as Nigeria first had contact with the OIC in 1969 but only attained full membership in 1986. The decision-making structure at the federal level also showed that ultimate power rests with the president to effect any policy change. This chapter has also shown that policy observers in Nigeria concurred to this position and claimed that because of the strong impact the OIC issue had on the country's domestic socio-political dynamics and stability, the power centre of the federal

[119] The Catholic Bishops 1, Conference 18–22 February 1986 subsequent Press release – the Guardian 24 February 1986; Newspaper archive of the Catholic Secretariat office, Tafawa Balewa Lagos, Visit Febuary 2009; see also T Falola, pg 98

[120] See list of committee membership in T Falola, Op. cit., pg 333–334; see also New Nigeria, 13 February 1986, NIIA Library Accessed February 2009

[121] West Africa, 3-9, 1991, 913; and West Africa, 26 August–1 September 1991, 1420, see also Inamete, Op. cit., pg 174

government, as represented by 'Dodan Barracks'[122] in the form of General Babangida, who played a major role on the OIC issue with the full support of significant Muslim and Islamic leaders to ensure its success.[123] From Table 8, we note that the claims of the CAN and non-Muslims that Muslims ministerial representation dominated the government of Babangida cannot be substantiated. However, the most important decision-making organ at this time, the AFRC, had a majority of Muslims 69 members to the Christians 53. This implies that the CAN over-reacted on the OIC issue.

The role of the ministry of external affairs, other complementary ministries and departments were clearly subsidiary in the policy process.[124] It is important to acknowledge the role played by Muslims, in the level of support given to the government, therefore buttressing Muslim influence. The process to introduce and implement OIC membership in Nigeria relied heavily on, and utilised the support of, the Muslim community, coupled with the common interests they share in Islam. This largely stemmed from the Ulama's[125] active involvement in all areas of domestic politics[126] and foreign policy.

The CAN and other non-Muslims actors including Kukah, Seidu and Dogo, etc, have often criticised and reiterated their fear of total Islamic domination as evidence of the 'bigger agenda' by the Muslims, especially with the advent of Sharia law in some Nigerian states.[127] The Nigeria public were not involved in all the processes, thus marginalizing the public from the decision-making process. We also examined the effective Christian opposition and lobby especially from CAN figures, such as Cardinal Okogie and it is noted that they ensured that although Nigeria remained in the OIC, it has not been an easy a ride as Muslim religious actors expected.

Lastly, with Nigeria's membership of the OIC and the implementation of Sharia law in the 12 Northern states under the current democratic governance, we are witnessing an interesting dialogue in Nigeria's public sphere between Islam and democracy, in which religious influence has subtly been utilised effectively.

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[122] Dodan Barracks is a military barracks located in Lagos and was formally the Nigerian army's main garrison in Lagos. It later became the site of many a power struggle between various Military Regimes from 1966–1990. It became the seat of Power of the various Military Governments and served as Residence for various military rulers.

[123] U Inamete, Op. cit., pg 187; also Olukoshi, Op. cit., in GO Olusanya & RA Akindele, pp 488–504, Corroborated by Adegbite, Op. cit., February 2009.

[124] Ibid.,pg. 197

[125] 'Ulama' a community of legal scholars of Islam and the Sharia, these are group of men with religious education and religiously related professions. They express the true content of Islam towards both the people and the rulers.

[126] H Wakili, Op. cit., pg 5

[127] S Akhain, Northern CAN cautious against inclusion of Sharia in constitution, Guardian, 14 July 2008

Table 8. Statistical Data on the Religion of the General Babangida Government, Cabinet and the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), 1986–1990

Chapter 7. Sharia in Northern Nigeria and Religious Influences

Introduction

In this chapter, will examine the role of influential Muslim religious actors[1] in government decision-making and the significance of Sharia law[2] in the current Nigeria's socio-political dispensation, especially in relation to Zamfara state's introduction of Sharia law.[3] In Chapter 1, it was noted that Zamfara and other Northern states are dominated by Islamic ethnic groups, ie, the Hausa–Fulani, who are mainly Muslims and mostly support Islamic law; they argued it reinforces their right to self-determination,[4] and they organise their lives according to the tenets of Islam.[5]

This study therefore will examine the adoption of Sharia law by Zamfara state, because it is reflective of the other Nigeria states that also introduced Sharia, in terms of similar Muslim culture, traditions and socio-political history. Furthermore this chapter will highlight especially the concerns and experiences observed in other areas and states regarding Sharia law which are applicable elsewhere in Nigeria. In this chapter, Muslim religious actors will be examined in order to highlight, examine and substantiate their role in government decision-making, similar to the earlier case of the OIC membership, which demonstrated that the successful outcome was a result of the actions of the Muslim elite and influential Muslim actors. While the Sharia law introduction will show that it was the result of a combination of the pressure asserted by the Ulama[6] (religious leaders) and public demands in the state on the government.

From the onset we must state that, according to Christian groups, the issue of Sharia law introduction goes against provisions set out in section 10 of the Nigerian constitution,[7] while

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[1] Muslim Religious actors in this case includes; Muslim organisations, local /community Muslim groups and individuals.
[2] Sharia, or Islamic law, is a religious set of principles based on the four pillars of Islam: Qu'ran (Islamic Holy text), the Sunna (teachings of the Prophet Mohammed), the Ulama (religious scholars) and the Qiyas (case law). Ismene Zarifis, Rights of Religious Minorities in Nigeria, 10 HUM. RTS. BR. 22, 22 (2002), See also Lauren Vriens, Islam: Governing under Sharia, Council on Foreign Relations, 23 March 2009, http://www.cfr.org/publication/8034/, Sharia in Arabic means 'Path', as ordained by Allah. It is concerned with, guides all aspects of the Muslim individual's life including daily routines, financial dealings, family and religious obligations as derived from the Koran and the Sunna. It was developed several hundred years after the death of Mohamed, his life and ways became a model for all Muslims. These were collected by scholars into what is known as hadith. It is by these hadiths that the Sharia laws are based upon. Some other countries for example practise Sharia law such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan; See also A Fatah Kola Makinde, the Institution of Sharia in Oyo and Osun States of Nigeria, 1890–2005, PhD. Thesis, University of Ibadan, pp 1–15; also David Laitin - The Sharia debate and the origins of Nigeria's Second Republic: Journal of Modern African Studies: (1982), vol. 20, no. 3, pp 411–430
[3] Introduced Sharia on 27 October 1999 followed by eleven other Northern states, in Table 2 and Figure 2
[4] J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 13
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ulama is an Islamic Scholar/leader
[7] A Anyia, Chapter 1 of this Thesis, 2012

the Muslims argue this section on secularity tramples on their human right stipulations of the same constitution. These positions underscore the basis of the controversy between these religious groups since 1999 which dominated the administration of Obasanjo.

The Tables and Figure below highlight some useful demographic data in Nigeria's Sharia States. Table 10 reproduces data compiled by Ostein, who carried out extensive fieldwork in the 'Sharia states' in 2007. Unfortunately information about religious affiliations was not gathered in Nigeria's 2006 census.[8] The purpose of this table is to show data on the distribution of Muslims in Northern Nigeria, which is useful for assessing the mobilisation capabilities of Religious interest groups in the region.

Figure 7: Map of Sharia States in Nigeria

[8] Ibid. Ostein, See the footnotes in pg xx. The last officially accepted census in which such information was gathered was taken in 1952, when the figures were given by the provinces, the colonial forerunners of today's states. Percentages of Muslims according to the 1952 census are shown in column 3. These percentages are probably in most cases too high as applied to the present day. The only other estimates of percentages of Muslims by state that we are aware of are the ones made by the World Christian Database (WCD) in 2002, these percentages, shown in column 5, are probably in most cases too low. Assuming the truth lies somewhere in between, but having no basis for knowing where, we have to simply average the 1952 census and the 2002 WCD percentages column 7 and multiply the averages times the current populations to get the best figures of the numbers of Muslims in the Sharia states today column 8

Table 9. Northern Nigeria Sharia States

Table 10: Northern Nigeria Sharia States and Demographic Data

The introduction of Sharia law in Zamfara state in 1999 occurred in historical context of a wider application of Sharia law in the Northern region and its individual states, which actually had been in place since before Nigeria's independence in 1960. This therefore, is a system of administration that is not particularly novel, but one that has been part of the peoples' understanding. Even though many of the Northern states have had a system of Sharia law in the past, its official adoption was a politically driven imperative and this chapter will examine why it was introduced at the time it was, in the states and who were the main actors and religious or otherwise involved in these processes.

The background to the introduction of Sharia has been viewed with suspicion by non-Muslims. This has increased antagonism between Muslims and non-Muslims in Nigeria because according to Harnischfeger, wherever Sharia law had been introduced and is dominant, non-Muslims are excluded to a large extent from political participation and their social environment is determined by the laws of an alien religion.[9] For example, Sharia was initially administered all over Sudan regardless of other faiths (i.e., Christians and traditionalists in Southern Sudan) prior to the independence of Southern Sudan in 2011.[10]

The presence of Sharia long antedates the 1999 democratic administration era, having been practised in Northern Muslim areas pre- and post-colonial Nigeria, though it was widely discussed throughout the controversial debates at the Nigeria's Constituent Assembly of 1978.[11] Christian and Muslim delegates differed over the proposal to establish a Sharia court of appeal, which the former saw as an attempt to make Nigeria an Islamic state,[12] while the latter argued that such an institution was a fundamental right of Nigerian Muslims.[13] A deadlock ensued and since then the Sharia debate has recurred in future constitutional debates, particularly those of 1989, 1995 and 1998.[14]

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[9] Ibid. pg 15

[10] F Kogelmann, *Sharia Debates and Their Perception by Christians and Muslims in Selected African Countries: Sudan, International,* Comparative and Multidisciplinary Research Project at University of Bayreuth, Funded by Volkswagen Stiftung in 2007

[11] F Ajayi, Op. cit., 2009; T Falola 1998; and J Kenny, *"Shari'a in Nigeria: A Historical Survey", Bulletin on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa* 4, 1, 1986 (Private collection at Major Seminary Ibadan, during my field survey visit)

[12] Full details in U Tar, A Gana Shettima, *Endangered Democracy?, The Struggle over Secularism and its Implications for Politics and Democracy in Nigeria,* Discussion paper 49, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, UPPSALA, 2010

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

As a result of these debates, Sharia was introduced within the secular framework of Nigeria's constitution. While this means that religious ideas and practices are included in state provisions, the latter also impact on religious discourse and practices.[15] In the Sharia states, Christians honoured the invitation to Sharia discussions but declined to contribute on the subject matter. Because the composition of Sharia Committees did not contain any Christians, and any objections by non-Muslims were noted, but easily dismissed or ignored.[16] Muslim religious leaders especially in Northern Nigeria are very important in this socio-political environment because they are backed by a clear Muslim majority. Through this, they dominate government decision making and significantly marginalise non-Muslims, and so continuously influence policy outcome via the state governor, state assemblies and the judiciary. For example, in Zamfara, the Sharia bill originated solely from the executive, the bill was passed smoothly through the legislative processes because the originators of the bill were equally in charge of all government decision making.[17]

This was the case in all other Sharia states; the bill was at no point rejected or had any objections, this was expected because the processes were facilitated by government officials who were all Muslims and also support the introduction of Sharia law.[18] Other Northern state officials from Bauchi, Katsina, Kebbi and Kano visited Zamfara in order to gain first-hand knowledge of how Sharia was structured.[19]

Globally, the view on Sharia law has been mixed in the assessment of its introduction and application in different parts of the world, such as Nigeria, Sudan, Malaysia, Mali, and Iran, as noted in the research of various scholars including, Otto, Last, Miles, Harnischfeger, Paden and Loimeier.[20] The characterizations of Sharia law have ranged from it being labelled a form of militant religious extremism to a legal system that is at best ineffectual and also frequently discriminatory towards the poor and women. According to Kirwin, at one end of the spectrum

[15]Ibid.; see also in Suberu 2002 - Rotimi Suberu, *Religion and institutions: federalism and the management of conflicts over Sharia in Nigeria*, journal of international development, 21, pp547–560, 2009

[16]Ostein, Op. cit.,

[17] See Table 11 compiled during this research 2009

[18] See Table 12 and Figure 9a/9b of this Research, data compiled in 2009 (Also, Alhaji Kamoru (Imam from Egbeda Ogun state South Nigeria) who attended the inauguration ceremonies of Sharia claims that the legislators were happy and truly believe they have done something right for the Muslims, Interview November 2–3 2009, Lagos and Abuja

[19]Ostein, Op. cit., Vol. 1, Chapter 2, v, vi, vii, 2007

[20] M Kirwin, Op. cit., Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.58, February 2009, Accessed 10 October 2010. Suggested readings on the activities of the elites include; Last, Murray, *"La Charia dans le Nord-Nigeria."* Politique Africaine. 79:141–152. 2000; R Loimeier, Nigeria: *The Quest for a Viable Religious Option, Appears in Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed,* (Ed) WFS Miles (Boulder: Lynn Reinner) 2007; W Miles, *Shari'a as Deafricanization: Evidence from Hausaland.* Africa Today: pp 51–75, 2003; J Paden, Muslim *Civic Cultures and Conflict Resolution. The Challenge of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. 2005; J Harnsichfeger, *Shari'a and Control Over Territory: Conflicts Between 'Settlers' and 'Indigenes' in Nigeria.* African Affairs 103/412: 431–452, 2004

some analyses have painted the introduction of Sharia law into Nigeria as the "Talibinazation and/or Islamisation" of the country,[21] such analyses stress the divisive potential of Sharia law and characterizes its implementation as a step on the path to religious conflict on par with that existing in other countries such as Sudan, Iran and Chechnya. This lens shares similarities with Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis and is also a product of the West's increased sensitivity to Islamic extremism in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. However, this approach ignores the perspectives of everyday citizens and the local socio-political conditions they live (ie, security issues), and prefers to regard the implementation of Sharia as an initiative driven by transnational and foreign Islamic forces.[22]

At the other end of the spectrum, in language far less alarmist, other observers such as Last, Miles, Paden, Loimeier and Harnischfeger have characterised Sharia law as a political vehicle created and supported by ruling elite seeking short-term political benefits, and its implementation to justify the reason and outcome of such a policy.[23] This perspective also emphasizes the role and activities that Muslim religious actors played in government decision making, but ignores any contributions of non-Muslims. Figures 8, 9a and 9b (Data from my survey and Afrobarometer), show the acceptance levels by individuals and the perception levels in Non-Sharia states are important as they allow us to gain greater insight into how Nigerians view Sharia law and move beyond anecdotal evidence. The data, drawn from surveys conducted by this author as well as from Afrobarometer,[24] engages a representative sample which allows us to note how different segments of the adult population of Nigeria view Sharia law.[25]

Despite scholarly writings and widespread media coverage on the issue of Sharia in Nigeria and elsewhere as mentioned above, there is still a limited knowledge of how Nigerians view Sharia law and who influenced its adoption. This chapter examines these areas and in particular focuses on the demand for Sharia, which came from two perspectives: (1) Muslim religious leaders (Ulama), and (2) significant popular demand.

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[21] Ibid.; see also Paul Marshall, *Radical Islam in Nigeria: The Talibanization of West Africa*, The Weekly Standard, Volume 007, Issue 30. 2002, NIIA Library, Lagos Nigeria. For a comparative analysis see Op.cit. JM Otto, (Ed), 2010

[22] Ibid.

[23] M Kirwin, Op. cit.

[24] From my Survey in some Sharia states in 2009 as a further extension of Afrobarometer data (To sort these details Asap before submission) (Through my survey I examined significant Sharia issues such as how Individuals views of Sharia has changed over the past 10 years? Is support for Sharia still strong, or as some observers have argued, has support for Sharia law diminished? Second, are individuals in Shari'a states and non-Sharia states monolithic in their views of the effects of Sharia?)

[25] Ibid. see also S Pillaszewicz, *On the Introduction of the Sharia in Northern Nigeria*, Africana Bulletin, Nr 52, Warszawa 2004

- Influential Muslim leaders, both in and outside government put pressure on government decision makers to introduce Sharia law as demonstrated with the case of the OIC in Chapter 6. By insisting on the introduction of Sharia, Northern political leaders were simply manipulating religion for personal goals and in this case, religion is an instrument for acquiring "prebendalist concessions in the distribution of power and wealth".[26] consequently religious fundamentalism can emerge from sentiments of disenfranchisement and political marginalization of the poor and indigenous population, such as the Almajiris[27] in Northern Nigeria. For example, Harnischfeger noted the significant role of religion in the Sharia process, he stressed that a Nigerian senator claimed that as a Muslim, going against the introduction and implementation of Sharia would be committing political suicide and leads to a doomed political career. While others feared violent retaliation and attacks if they criticised Sharia, because it was interpreted as antagonism towards Islam,[28] which all resulted in massive public support from prominent Muslim leaders as this chapter will show.

- Popular demand, pressure from the general Muslim populace and public opinion account for the second important source of demand for Sharia law, especially since the masses of Muslim faithful greeted the proclamation of Sharia in their respective areas or states.[29] Figure 8, shows popular demand for Sharia in 1999 was 98% and 10 years later, in 2009, this research found the figure at 90% which is a decrease, it was still very high. Justice Abdul Orire; leader of the JNI, attributed demand for Sharia to popular demand by the people and Sharia States saw the introduction of Islamic law as a measure to reduce crime and bring security to all its citizens.[30]

Through the investigation of these two sources above, this chapter will examine the role of religious actor influence on the Sharia policy in Zamfara and ascertain if this conforms the two sources of potential pressure detailed above, this will then be related to other Sharia states, especially through the data obtained during this research in some Sharia states in 2009.

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[26] M Kirwin, Op. cit., see also D Abubakar, *Ethno-Religious Identities and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.* African Issues Vol xxix/1&2: 31–36, 2001

[27] The word Almajiris emanated from an Arabic word Almuhajir meaning "immigrant". The name was given to Quranic pupils, who in the present day Northern Nigeria have left their families and town to seek Quran education from a Muslim teacher. Eventually they turn to beggars and are generally seen as a menace to the society. The Northern Muslim forum Arewa youth Mobilisation claims that over 30% of Northern youths are almajiris.

[28] J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 205, 2008; see also, News Magazine, April 10, pg 19, 2000

[29] Ibid. pg 29

[30] JN Ezeilo, M Tawfiq Ladan, *A Afolabi-Akiyode; Shari'a Implementation in Nigeria Issues & Challenges on Women's Rights And Access to Justice* WACOL Published by Women's Aid Collective (WACOL), Enugu/Port Harcourt/Abuja, 2003

It is therefore hypothesised that there is a direct correlation between Muslim religious actors influence and government decision making regarding Sharia law, as in all the Sharia states, implementation strategies were dominated by Islamic scholars, religious leaders and their representatives.[31] This is important to the aim of this thesis because together with the other research detailed in previous chapters, it points to the significant role and superior levels of influence that Muslim groups have over the marginalised non-Muslim groups who profess secularism.

The Emergence and Declaration of Sharia in Zamfara State

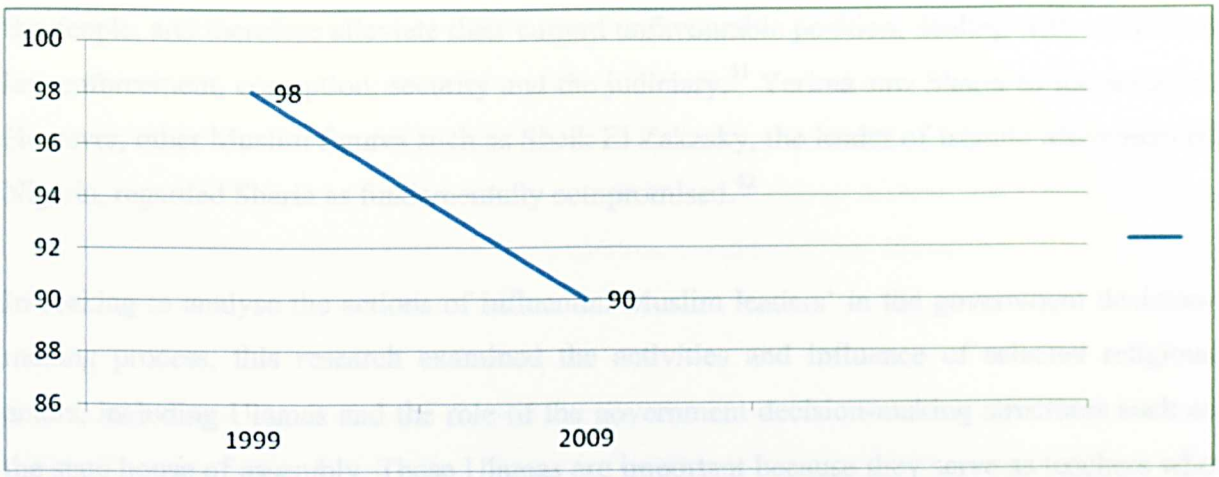
Zamfara state was created out of Sokoto State on 1st October 1996 and has a majority Muslim population of between 84 and 90%, the rest are Christians and those who practise traditional religions.[32] This is a typical proportion of Muslim representation in the Northern Nigeria states as shown in Table 10. This section will examine the introduction of Sharia law and how governor Yerima of Zamfara was able to implement this policy with support from the significant Islamic religious actors in the State and from other Northern states. Investigating this will help to properly scrutinise the role of Muslim religious actors within the government decision-making structure and the policy officers involved in this process.

Governor Yerima was in the forefront of Sharia law demand; during his campaign for governorship of Zamfara state he promised voters he would introduce Sharia law[33] to serve the interest of the Muslim community.[34] He argued that since the majority of the state population were Muslims, it is logical that they follow Islamic law.[35] Muslim support was overwhelming (See Figure 8) as the evidence show a record of over 2 million Muslims who witnessed the Sharia law inauguration, with shouts of *Allahu Akbar* [God is Great].[36] While Fr. Kenny captured the mood of the people he, 'claimed the Muslims were overjoyed with the messages of Sharia and the many benefits they will derive from it as promised by their leader GovernorYerima'.[37] An influential Muslim leader said that 'the introduction of Sharia is what

[31] H Wakili, Op. cit., March 2009
[32] P. Ostien, Op. cit., Vol.1, 200., see also J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg. 17
[33] J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 31
[34] Five Nigerian states consider imposing Islamic law, Internet Accessed17 June 2009, also Carina Tertsakian: Nigeria "Political Sharia"? September, 2004. Vol.16.no.9 Human Right Watch, also http://thepmnews.com/corporate-profile. Accessed 6 June 2009; see also JD Peel, *The Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria:* Three studies (Review Article). Africa, 66(4), pp 607–607, 1996
[35] M Kirwin, Op. cit.,
[36] Ostein, Op. cit., Pg ix
[37] J Kenny, Op. cit., Interview, Ibadan, 28 October 2009

the Muslims have been fighting and waiting for and he is grateful to allah to be alive to see this day and one day the south will have Sharia law too'.[38]

Figure 8. Support for Sharia in Zamfara State



Source: Field work by Albert Anyia. 2009 Number of Respondents = 88

Figure 8 above shows the very high support for Sharia in Zamfara state from the year it was introduced (1999), and further highlights that there still existed a strong and overwhelming support for Sharia in Zamfara state during the period of my survey in 2009.[39] Although the level of support had dropped to 90%, however this represents and shows a highly significant support level for Sharia, perhaps not especially surprising when we consider that the majority of the 3.5 million population of Zamfara are Muslims and the idea of Sharia law is inherent in their religion in the first instance.

While insisting on the importance of the introduction of Sharia law, Northern political leaders were bringing in a new combination of concerns. On the one hand, they were seeking to manipulate religious sentiment for personal political goals and, on the other hand, many were also inspired by genuine religious motives. Accordingly, Harnischfeger observed that, "after decades of economic, moral decline and insecurity, it has become more important for both Muslims and Christians to reconsider their religious values and teachings of their faith because few Nigerians still believe that democracy, human rights and a free market economy are a way out of the present crisis."[40] Given the failure of Western modernisation strategies and their concept of development which led to a dead end in Nigeria, it is reasonable for the

[38]Shiek A Abdulhafis, Interview Surulere, Lagos, 9 October 2007 (may prefer to be anonymous)
[39]Total survey = 600, and then divided into 2 areas of 300 each for the Sharia and non Sharia areas.
[40]J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 31

country's Muslims to revaluate their traditions. So the expectation amongst the general public, especially in the Northern Nigeria, was that the introduction of the Sharia law will carve out a new direction for them and their endeavour to remodel the state and society. This could only be successful through emphasis on the state's responsibility to provide for the basic needs of the people, and therefore alleviate their current unfavourable position; dealing with inefficient law enforcement, corruption, security and the judiciary.[41] Yerima saw Sharia as the solution. However, other Muslim figures such as Sheik El Zakzaky, the leader of Islamic Movement of Nigeria, regarded Sharia as fundamentally compromised.[42]

In seeking to analyse the actions of influential Muslim leaders' in the government decision-making process, this research examined the activities and influence of selected religious actors, including Ulamas and the role of the government decision-making structures such as the state house of assembly. These Ulamas are important because they serve as teachers who have a key role in the community. There are also active councils of Ulama (Made up of all the Ulamas) in Sharia states whose activities have been instrumental at all levels of Sharia implementation as detailed below.

Furthermore, because of the position the Ulama occupy in the community, their status has helped them to attain positions of high significance; thus they wield significant religious power[43].In other countries, for example in Iran and Saudi Arabia the role of religious leaders is unique because they play a direct role in government decision making[44] and are key to this process, especially on matters of the judiciary, education and political process. They possess reasonable monopoly of authority in all aspects of religion and social issues. In Saudi Arabia, the influential Al-Ash-Sheikh family, whose relationship with the ruling royal family is mutual and well-documented further consolidate the political authority of government leadership.[45] To comprehend the consequences of what shall be termed 'religious influences' in the process of Sharia introduction in Zamfara, it is important to note that Governor Yerima's personal religious beliefs played significant role in the introduction of Sharia law.[46]

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[41] C Tertsakian, researcher in the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch, see full report in Human Rights Watch Vol. 16 No. 9 (A) 14, September 2004; See also Sam Amadi *Religion and Secular Constitution: Human Rights and the Challenge of Sharia*

[42] Ibid.; pg 91, see also the News, 12 June, 2000, pg, 25.

[43] Ostien, Op. cit., also the study of J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 31

[44] JM Otto, Op. cit., pp 140-180, 2010. See also, Ron Hassner, War on Sacred Grounds Cornell University Press, pp 143–144, 2009, see also in Middle East Journal, Volume 64, No2, 2010, P Ostien and A Dekker, *Sharia and National Law in Nigeria*, in JM Otto, (ed) pp 553–612, 2010

[45] Ibid.

[46] P Ostien, Op. cit., 2007

This is because he considered it both a personal religious ambition and political triumph for him and his political colleagues in the North to introduce Sharia.[47] Presently, the Nigeria constitution recognises the customary and personal aspects of the Sharia law.[48] Supporters of Sharia argue superiority of the Islamic law over the Nigerian constitution, based on the premise that Sharia law represents the will of God against the Nigeria constitution which is man-made and does not cater for all aspects of Muslim life.[49] These views were echoed for example by the Kano state delegation to the 2005 National Political Reform Conference, demanding constitutional amendments to establish superiority of Islamic law.[50] This position was described and or interpreted as "a dangerous awakening" by Enwerem in the troubled Christian–Muslim relations in Nigeria.[51]

Furthermore, the population of Northern Nigeria is predominantly rural, illiterate and politically marginalised by the elite. [52] The local communities expected that the implementation of Sharia would give them a sense that they are part of the political process as the laws are shaped by their own religious identity.[53] The outcome as expected from Sharia will lead to the administration of better economic and socio-political institutions. To facilitate this, all the officials within the three arms of government (executive, legislature and judiciary) and their subsidiary agencies were Muslims (Table 11).[54]

Over the years, Sharia issues have continued to be very important to Nigerian Muslims, especially among the Northerners, as expressed in, *inter alia*, electronic media, books, seminars, conferences, market places, university campuses and religious gatherings.[55] During the transition from Military to civilian administration, the transition process was sometimes hindered by the efforts of Islamic religious representatives and individuals, as noted during the 1977 and 1988 constituent assemblies, due to controversies over Sharia and the constitution.[56] For example, Northern representatives led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari the leader of the Northern delegation (later President of Nigeria 1979–1983), staged a walkout over Sharia law issues. This, according to Ajayi showed the importance of Sharia issues and its

[47] M Kirwin, Op. cit., 2009
[48] These includes cases involving: family, inheritance, land/private disputes; see also P Ostein and A Dekker in Sharia Incorporated, (Ed) JM Otto, pp 553–613, 2010
[49] Kano Seeks Supremacy of Sharia Over Constitution Daily Trust, March 17, 2005, Op. cit. S Pillaszewicz
[50] Ibid.
[51] I Enwerem, Op. cit., pp 5–7, 1995
[52] M Kirwin, Op. cit., 2009
[53] Ibid.
[54] Data in figure 11 are indicative of the practice in majority of the Sharia states.
[55] F Ajayi, Op. cit., pg 57
[56] Ibid.; also over the establishment of Federal Sharia court of appeal

domination during the constituent assembly debates.[57] It also demonstrates the significant role of the Muslim elite in exerting influence in the processes of Nigeria's new constitution and power structure,[58] in order to safeguard Muslims' interests.

At all levels of government, it is important to clarify that the introduction of Sharia law entail the combination of pressures from various Muslim sources such as, the council of Ulama, influential Muslim politicians and the overwhelming general Muslim population in individual states. It was not surprising that as soon as Zamfara declared the introduction of Sharia law, other Northern states followed suit including; Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto and Yobe States (in Figure 7 and Table 9).

Christian and Other Non-Muslim Perspectives

Christian and non-Muslim opposition to the introduction of Sharia are integral to the main arguments relating to Nigeria's secularity and the Islamisation of Nigeria, especially considering the controversies generated by Nigeria's OIC membership. Jibrin Ibrahim described its introduction in the North as the first step towards the establishment of an Islamic state in the country.[59]

The Nigerian state has always been construed as secular.[60] This is a colonial legacy that has been carried forward to the current era, albeit only in rhetorical terms. Present claims of secularism are nothing but expressions of the imagination within official circles and undermined by the sectarian agenda of those in power.[61] In African countries generally, Muslims and Christians publicly question the legitimacy of the secular postcolonial state, while, at the same time, extend their activities to address social provisions traditionally provided by the state, but which the state is no longer able to guarantee, such as education and health.[62] Religious politics do not affect the state in a coherent or uniform way, instead it has a complex and even contradictory impact on state institutions. On the one hand, the political engagement of religious groups and their provisions of services in the areas where the state

[57] Ibid. F Ajayi, Full details of Constituent assembly issues and Sharia, pp 57–131
[58] M. Kirwin, Op. cit., 2009,
[59] J Ibrahim, Paper for the Conference on "Globalisation, *State Capacity and Self- Determination in Muslim Contexts*", Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, 7–10 March 2002
[60] Chapter 4 of this Thesis, 2012
[61] I Nolte, N Danjibo and A Oladeji, Op. cit., 2009
[62] Ibid., Full reference details in the following (Corten & R Marshall-Fratani (Eds) *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, London, Hurst, 2001; B Soares and R Otayek (Eds) *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 1–24, 2007; See also. U Tar and A Gana Shettima, Op. cit., Discussion paper 49,

has failed to deliver present an ideological and practical challenge to the state.[63] On the other hand, such activities support and supplement state activities in important sectors, and can even be understood as supporting the state. Such arguments paved the way for the implementation of Sharia law in the North, despite Christian writers' arguments that Sharia constitutes a threat to the secular state model.[64] Sunday Mbang, the former CAN president claims that Christian and others views the introduction of Sharia as irresponsible madness,[65] while Wole Soyinka feared Sharia may be the prelude to civil war in Nigeria.[66]

Nigeria's constitution is somewhat ambiguous with regard to the role of religion in the state. As already noted in this thesis, section 10 of the 1999 Constitution, clearly stated the non-adoption of any religion as state religion, while section 38(1) guarantees the right of the individuals to religion and religious practices. Further reference to the demands associated with the controversies over Sharia law in the past, this 1999 version of constitution therefore acknowledges the right of Nigerians to Sharia justice in section 275(1), allowing individual states to have a Sharia court of appeal if they require it.

The Christian opposition to Sharia is focused on the provision of section 10, and therefore claims that Sharia law is unconstitutional because it affects the religious freedom to live without Sharia, they also view its introduction as a challenge to the federal constitution, which is meant to guarantee their own religious freedom.

Other Christian groups have translated the current Sharia situation in the North into the realm of Christianity and demanded the introduction of Christian Canon law in predominantly Christian states.[67] However, the call for secularism may be a primarily rhetorical device to appeal to an international (secular) audience, because on the ground in Nigeria religion and politics readily mix implying both religions conveniently allow religious politics to revolve around the sacred texts and historical practices of their respective faith communities, their constitutions and the provisions of those constitutions.

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[63]Ibid. see also R Love, *Religion, Ideology and Conflict in Africa*, Review of African political economy, 33(110), pp 619–634, 2006

[64]Ibid.; See also in S Ilesanmi, *Constitutional treatment of religion and the politics of human rights in Nigeria*, African affairs, 100, pp 529–554, 2001

[65] Sunday Mbang, Tell Magazine, March 6, 2000, pg 20

[66]J Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 221

[67]Ibid.; see also in C Imo, *Evangelicals, Muslims and Democracy: With particular reference to the declaration of Sharia in Northern Nigeria.* in ranger, Terence (Ed), Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in the Global South, Oxford University Press, pp37–66, 2008

Support for Sharia and the Decision-Making Process

When Sharia law was passed in Zamfara in 1999, it met with no opposition mainly because of the overwhelming Muslim support it had, about 98% as noted above. Religious leaders and the general Muslim populace saw government officers as part of the general Muslim community and they were therefore expected to support Sharia. Thus the relationship between the Ulama/Muslim leaders and the people is important and this section will examine the role of Islam religion in this relationship and its effect on policy outcome. It is plausible to claim that Muslim leaders were able to successfully influence government officers if they share in the same religious background and persuasion, especially when dealing with specific religious policy. In practice this was easy to achieve, because, for example, in Zamfara all government officers were Muslims and as a result, Sharia law passed through the state legislature unanimously (Table 11 shows government officers).The following sections will examine the demand for Sharia law from the perspective of the Muslim religious elite and the general (Muslim) population, respectively.

(i) Sharia Demand and Muslim Religious Leaders ('Elite')

Pressure from the Muslim elite and support for the government were significant to the introduction of Sharia on the whole, especially the activities of various Muslim leaders and Ulama in their role generally in government decision making. For example, Sheik Arisekola Alao (the Aare Musulumi of the Yorubaland – Commandant of all Yoruba Muslims) single-handedly bankrolled seminars, conferences and meetings at Arewa house on Sharia matters at various times leading to the introduction of Sharia, and as a result publicly declared their support for the Governor and Sharia.[68] This was significant because his declaration paved the way for other senior Muslim individuals to show their support without fear of reprisal from the federal government; Harnischfeger claimed that the Muslim elite from the North backed the demand for Sharia unanimously.[69] Accordingly, Adegbite (NSCIA) and Alhaji Busari affirmed that 'the expectations of the people were very high and victory is overwhelming for

[68] F Agu, "*The Birth of Sharia*", The Guardian, 30 October 1999; reprinted in MA Musa *et al.*, (Eds) *The Development of Zamfara State and the Introduction of Sharia Legal System* (Gusau: Office of the Executive Governor, 2002), pp 119–123 were significant (Note – H Ugbolue, B Kalejaiye, *The Godfathers: Sharia*, Tempo (Lagos), 4 March 2000, also http://thepmnews.com/corporate-profile. Accessed 6/6/09, Interview with Sheik Gumbi at Kaduna, More details in Haruna Wakili, (Ibid.), Dr. Adegbite interview Confirmed the support (generosity) of notable Islamic figures, No names given apart from those noted above, and gave his personal support to Sharia, Interview, Nov 2009

[69] Harnischfeger, Op. cit., pg 188–189

Muslims in contrast to democratic elections, such public turn out is rare',[70] the hope is that Sharia would usher in better security and stability to their communities.[71]

From the onset, Sharia discussion in Zamfara had significant pressure and support also coming from other notable groups, such as the council of Ulama and traditional rulers in Zamfara and other Northern states. High-ranking Muslim leaders all over Nigeria also supported the introduction of Sharia law, such as the former presidents Shagari, General Buhari, Sultan Macido of Sokoto, former Sultan Dasuki's entire family and Justice Bashir Sambo, Chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau. Also noted was the support from academics such as A Gwandu, Vice Chancellor of the Uthman Dan Fodio University and prominent representatives of all the Islamic organisations in Nigeria. According to Ostein,[72] they prevailed on Governor Yerima to introduce Sharia in Zamfara state and to facilitate this process, policy officials and all leaders from State Assembly, executive, local government chairmen were all Muslim who came out to overwhelmingly support Sharia law (Table 11 and 12).

[70] L. Adegbite, Op. cit., Interview, Lagos, 4 October 2009
[71] NI Sada, *The Making of the Zamfara and Kano State Sharia Penal Codes*, in P Ostien, 2007
[72] P Ostien, Op. cit., Vol. 1 & 2, 2007

Table 11: Zamfara State Officers and their Religion (2000)

Name and key position of the executive, legislature and judiciary	Religion
Governor Yerima of Zamfara state	Muslim
Deputy Governor	Muslim
Chief Judge of the State	Muslim
All 17 State Commissioners	Muslim
All 24 Members of State Assembly (Legislature)	Muslim
All 14 Local Government Area Chairmen	Muslim
Head of Service	Muslim
Chief of Staff to Executive Governor	Muslim

Source: Field work by Albert Anyia. 2009

From Table 11, it is clear from the composition of these government officers that the passage of Sharia law was smooth and it is clear that non-Muslims have been marginalised throughout the government decision making of Sharia. After the enactment of the first Sharia penal code in Zamfara in January 2000,[73] as noted above, 11 other Northern states followed suit.[74] It is important to note that these other Governors witnessed first-hand the massive support Governor Yerima was enjoying as a result of the Sharia introduction, and themselves saw its introduction into their own states as advantageous for political reasons, especially in pursuit of a second term in office.[75] Kenny supported the claim of political advantage, saying that 'other state governors jumped into the Sharia law issue without even having full knowledge of the Sharia and it was purely to enhance their second term objectives and credentials'.[76] Similarly, evidence shows the overwhelming public support for Sharia in other Northern states (See Figures 8, 9a, 9b and Table 12). As noted above, data from this research demonstrate that from the periods of introduction of Sharia law in a particular state, for example, the survey outcome by Kirwin indicated there was a slight increase in the support from both the low and middle economic groups in the community. These figures as of 2007 were significantly high, accounting for the involvement of influential individual Muslims, state council of Ulama and the JNI from the consultation process to implementation stages of Sharia.[77]

[73] Ibid.
[74] J.Harnischfeger, Op. cit.,
[75] Ibid
[76] J. Kenny, Op. cit., Interview, Ibadan, 28 October 2009
[77] P. Ostien, Op. cit., 2007, also M Kirwin, Op. cit.,

States which had implemented Sharia law, sought the backing and support from traditional leaders as demonstrated from the outpouring of support during the various mobilisations exercises engaged in and led by influential religious leaders such as former Presidents Alhaji Shehu Shagari, General Buhari, Sheik Dasuki, Sheik Orire;[78] government officials involved the council of Ulama; influential Muslim Leaders involved in the selection process of state judges; commissioners and various Sharia implementation committees. The role of Alhaji Ahmed Bello Mahmud, former Zamfara Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice,[79] initially in Zamfara and later other states was significant. He belonged to the kitchen cabinet of the Governor Yerima and was extremely influential in all state government matters. He presented numerous papers on the progress and implementation of Sharia in other states such as Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna and also served as a regular source of reference for any Sharia matters that arose,[80] via the JNI-sponsored forums.[81]

In Kano and Kaduna states, influential Muslims played a significant role in pressuring the governor to introduce Sharia. Imams and other religious actors such as Sheik Gumbi, Sheik Ibrahim Kabo, Chairman for the Sharia commission and the late Sheik Jafar Mahmud of the Islamic Foundation identified similar socio–political issues in Zamfara and their states and they believe in the efficacy of Sharia law.[82] In Kano state, for example, it is important to note the impact of the visit by a group of prominent Ulama to the Governor, Rabiu Kwankwaso, because they came with an already drafted Sharia Penal Code bill of their own, which they had planned to submit to the State legislature if the Governor refused their demand for Sharia. This is obvious significant Muslim pressure on the Governor, which led to the adoption of Sharia law in February 2000.[83] Harnischfeger further claimed that, in some cases, Islamic politicians were pressured by demonstrators, who sometimes used intimidation and violence. During the proclamation of Sharia law, over 1 million Muslims gathered in Kano to expressed ideas about Islamic justice that sounded like threats to the Emirs/politicians.[84]

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[78] Ibid.,H Wakili, Op.cit., pp 3–4, Accessed 5 January 2009
[79] P Ostien, Op.cit., 2007
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid, for example Statement paper presented by Alhaji A Mahmud, at the JNI sponsored seminar on Sharia Law in Jigawa state, 6 july 2000
[82] See also the full account in M Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Longmans, Muffet, 1967; http://www.jsri.ro/old/html%20version/index/no20/mukhatarumarbunza-artico12.htm. Accessed, 21 October 2008 & 01 June 2009; see also M Last. '*La Charia dans le Nord-Nigeria.*' Politique Africaine. pp 141–152, 2000 in http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2003/06/SERVANT/IMG/pdf/079141.pdf, accessed 25 August 2009, Interview with Sheik Gumbi, 2008
[83] Reported in Guardian, 13 December 1999 p. 6; also Ibid. Ostein, *Sharia debates in Africa*; Vol. 1, Chapter 4, part ii, pg 25
[84] Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pg. 33; see also, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, *Sharia debate and the construction of a Muslim identity in Northern Nigeria: a critical perspective*; in J Harnischfeger

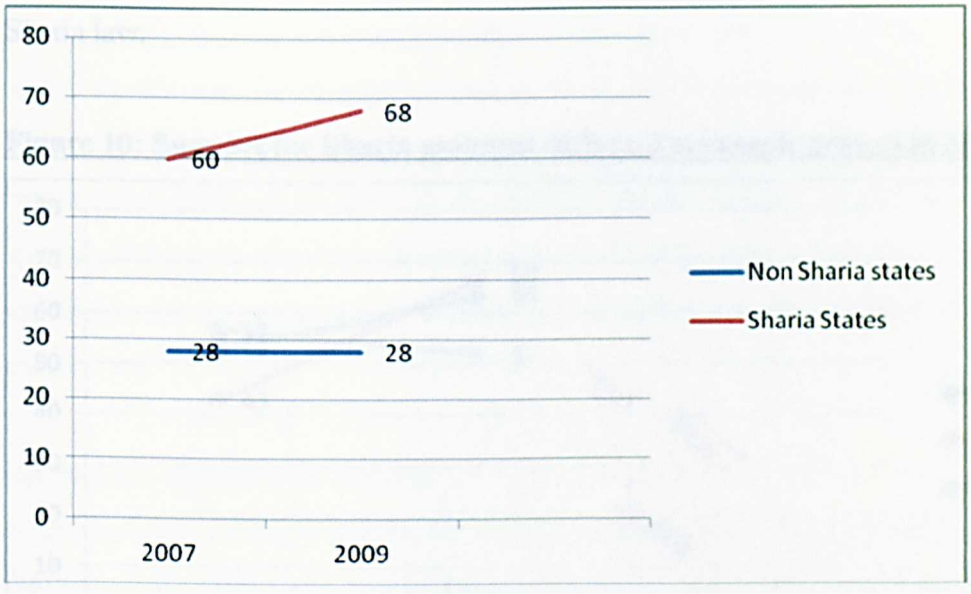
While in Kaduna, due to volatile relationship between the Muslims and Christians, the management for the demand for Sharia was delicate and a violent confrontation loomed in February 2000 between the two religious groups. The Sultan of Sokoto and 18 other Northern Emirs however, visited the Governor to put pressure on him by insisting on the passage of the bill that led to Sharia introduction. This definitely indicated a direct correction between influential Muslim religious pressure and policy outcome.[85]

In Borno state, the situation was similar to other Sharia states with evidence from the interim report of the Sharia implementation committee to the Governor Alhaji Mala Kachalla in March 2001 showing that Ulama and Influential Muslim leaders were consulted and involved over the Sharia policy.[86] Section 3 of their report states that, 'after due consultation with the council of Ulama and other Islamic religious organisations in the state', also subsection 3(b), of the report further claims that the committee visited all the former grand Khadi and Islamic scholars to liaise and consult with them on all Sharia matters.[87] In conclusion, these examples amount to a clear demonstrattion of the role of influential religious leaders and organisations in the Sharia law introduction process.

[85] Ibid. pg 189,;see also D Umar Habila, The *Sharia Issue and Christian and Muslim Relations in Contemporary Nigeria*, Stockholm, pg 16, 2005; J Odey, Sharia and The Rest of Us, Enugu Nigeria, 2000
[86] Ibid. see full details of the consultation process and list all the Grand Khadis and Ulama consulted. Report of the Committee on Application of Sharia in Borno State, submitted to the Governor in April 2000
[87] Ibid. Chapter 2

Figure 9a: Support for Sharia: Sharia and Non-Sharia States

Figure 9b: Support for Sharia: Sharia and Non-Sharia States



Field work for this thesis by Albert Anyia. 2009

No of respondents 2009: 600; 300 from Sharia, 300 Non-Sharia states

The data in Figures 9a and 9b, represent a positive correlation in the level of support for Sharia law in Sharia states (Zamfara, etc) and non-Sharia states (Lagos, etc), as indicated in my survey for this research and suggested by the relevant Afrobarometer survey. This helped me to ascertain and further substantiate the veracity of the earlier study carried out by Afrobarometer.[88] This demonstrates that between 2001 and 2009 in states where Sharia was introduced it still had relatively strong support, while in non-Sharia states between 2001 and 2007 its support has slightly increased and by 2009 when I carried out a similar survey, the

[88]M. Kirwin, Op.cit., 2009, Afrobarometer studies showed up to 2007 and my research indicates the 2009 results

level had not changed' it was constant. These results indicate that the support for Sharia was still strong in 2009, when my research for the thesis finished, and had slightly increased in the states surveyed; while the level of support remained the same in the non-Sharia areas. This result, compared to the outcome of Kirwin's report, showed a slight increase in support in non-Sharia states.[89] However, in contrast to the two datasets (above) the level of support in non-Sharia states was expected to drop significantly because of the controversies surrounding the introduction of Sharia law which were generated in the non-Sharia areas and because of the controversies between the Muslims and Christians in these areas.[90] However, in Sharia state, the implementation of Sharia law has been attributed with tackling some aspects of societal issues (both social and moral).[91] As such, some non-Sharia states may also wish to or be able to enact a seperate legal system (eg, the Canon law), arguing that Sharia has set the precedent and may want to gain from the benefits of an effective legal system to rival the Sharia law.

Figure 10: Support for Sharia amongst different economic groups in Sharia States

[89] Ibid.

[90] For details, see P Ostien, Op. cit., Chapter 2 Part 3, 2007 (Relevantontroversies include; *Human Rights Law Service vs. Attorney-General of Zamfara State and Another*, No. ZMS/GS/M.36/2000, filed in the High Court of Zamfara State early in 2000 by a Lagos-based group (Human Rights Law Service, or Hurilaws [see www.hurilaws.org). The suit challenged Zamfara State's programme of Sharia implementation on many grounds. The High Court quickly ruled that the plaintiff lacked *locus standi* and dismissed it. Three other virtually identical suits were filed at about the same time by individuals resident in Zamfara State, They were all Christians, and were all represented by the same Lagos-based lawyer (Olisa Agbakoba). These were consolidated under the name of *Yunana Shibkau, Dr. E. Shehu and Evangelist D. Ishaya vs. Attorney-General of Zamfara State and Attorney-General of the Federation*, No. ZMS/GS/M.121/2000. After a year's maneuvering they too were dismissed by the High Court for lack of *locus standi* in the plaintiffs (1 February 2001). The dismissal was appealed to the Kaduna Division of the Court of Appeal, No. CA/K/321/2001)

[91] J Harnischfeger, Op.cit., for details,2008, See also P Ostein' s account of Sharia implementation in Bauchi state and the role of CAN in this process, sourcebook: Volume. 11, 1999 –2006

Furthermore, from the Afrobarometer survey as showed in Figure 10 above, it is significant to note that there is a slight increase in the level of support by the lower and middle levels economic groups in the communities for the implementation of the Sharia law. The level of support by the upper economic class had decreased between 2001 and 2007. These data indicate that even though the level had decreased slighgtly it still remained relatively high, with over half of respondents in favour. It therefore supports the claim that the Muslim elite and influential individuals supported Sharia law, confirming data from both this research and Kirwin's report which also shows high acceptance levels.[92] This author believe the slight increase in the support for Sharia and its survival can be attributed to the religiousity and commitment of the people to their religion, Islam.

However, for these religious actors to actively be involved in the decision-making process of state policy, they must have candidates in government, and also be involved in the appointments and nomination of commissioners and advisers. It is also important that for religious influence to be effective, there was a religious link between the government decision makers, and the Muslim elite and the general Muslim populace working in tandem towards a mutual policy outcome. Islamic religion in the Sharia states serves this purpose and because it highlights the common bond through which effective religious–political relationships are maintained.[93]

(ii) Popular Demand for Sharia

From the result of this research data in 2009 (Figures 8,9a,9b and 10), it is evident that Sharia law garnered massive support in Zamfara and other Muslims and religious actors from other Sharia states joined in the demand for Sharia law.[94] The pressure and demand for Sharia came from all segments of the society and widespread support across all sections of the population. These actions led Imams and Ulama across the other Northern Sharia states to agitate and pressure the elected representatives in their respective states to emulate the actions of Yerima in Zamfara.[95] To buttress this point Governor Adamu Muazu of Bauchi claims that in all the Sharia states, the wish of the people to have Sharia prevailed. Adegbite said that 'the

[92] This research had already noted that the scope of the surveys conducted was limited to individuals with some level of education

[93] Alhaji K. Busari , Interview October 2008, January 2009, this view is also supported by Sheik Akintola and Gumbi, interview comments, 27 and 28 February 2008

[94] H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 3–4, March 2009. See also Governors Muazu and Shekarau' unpublished keynote addresses, on The Implementation of Sharia in a Democracy: the Nigerian Experience, International Conference at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, July 7–9, 2004

[95] Ibid.; see also Governors Muazu and Shekarau' unpublished keynote addresses, on The Implementation of Sharia in a Democracy: the Nigerian Experience, International Conference at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, July 7–9, 2004

introduction of Sharia law is the peoples dividend from democracy'.[96] While Governor Shekarau of Kano state, asserted that the implementation of Sharia in North has always been a major aspiration of the Muslim electorate in all the Muslim states.[97]

As noted above in Kano and Kaduna states, there were mass public demonstrations, public demand and other electronic media pronouncement supporting Sharia or campaign against it. Influential Northern Muslim individuals such as Alhaji Ahmadu Chanchangi a businessman, the Emir of Ilorin Alhaji Sulu Gambari, now deposed Emir of Gwandu Alhaji Mustapha Jokolo, supported Sharia because the act merely expresses the wish of their people and also because they believed that all states with Muslims should introduce Sharia, drawing comparisons between Nigeria and Iran and Saudi Arabia.[98] They gave financial support throughout the implementation process and in any state where implementation was mentioned, the presence of the JNI and its leader Justice Orire was highly visible.[99]

In Kano state, which has the second largest number of Muslims in Nigeria, (Table 10) the agitation for Sharia was very serious and was accompanied with threats from the Muslim youths and Ulama, asserting that there will be no peace until Sharia was introduced.[100] This campaign was led by prominent Muslim leaders including Sheik Umar Kano and supported by Sheik Ibrahim Umar Kabo (later Chairman of the Nigerian Council of Ulama and also the Sharia Implementation Advisory Commission [SIAC]).[101] The threat element further put pressure on government officers, thus supporting the claims of this chapter. Sharia implementation in Kano and other states clearly highlights the actions and agitation by Muslim actors, the direct link between the power and influence in general wielded by Northern Muslims over government officials and policy outcome. Furthermore, the mobilisation process in August 1999 towards Sharia brought together various segments of the Muslim community, including the Ulama, Governor and Muslim religious leaders, ie, the Emir Alhaji Ado Bayero, Malam Isyaka Rabiu, Prof. AH Yadudu and Sheikh Isa Waziri, later head of the SIAC.[102] Other mobilisation exercises included public lectures at the school of

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[96] L., Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, Lagos, 20 and 25 February 2009, also in Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pg.39
[97] Ibid.
[98] Sheik Gumbi, Interview and comment on Sharia,2008
[99] Ibid.
[100] Five Nigerian states Consider Imposing Islamic Law in http://www.domini.org/openbook/nigeria19991019.htm, Lagos, Newsroom 19 October 1999. Accessed 14 October 2009
[101] Ibid.
[102] SIAC had about 50 members, some *ex officio* and some appointed by the Governor. It included virtually all the people who mattered in Kano, ranging from renowned Ulama to representatives of the Emirate Council, The Izala Islamic sect, legal practitioners and Islamic scholars

Arabic studies and Aminu Kano College of Islamic legal studies, which obviously amounted to serious pressure on the state governor.[103] These activities reflected significant Muslim support and influence seen later on when approximately 5,000 women mobilised by Women in Islam organisation in Kano marched to Government House to protest against the apparent foot-dragging on Sharia implementation.[104]

It was therefore obvious that the demand for Sharia was a combination of pressure from identified Muslim religious leaders and members of the Muslim elite, as well as popular pressure consistent with all the Northern Sharia states. A public demonstration of the level of people power was displayed in December 1999, when thirteen Islamic organisations led by Alhaji Muhammad Danmadami (retired police officer and influential Muslim leader) visited the Bauchi State House of Assembly to submit, on behalf of the entire Muslims of the state, a written memorandum requesting the House to consider Introducing Sharia in conformity with other Northern states, which was duly accepted by the state assembly.[105] Governor Ahmad Mu'azu later claimed the demand from Muslim population led to Sharia introduction in 2001.[106]

The Ulama influence on the Governor and on government officers in their personal and professional capacities was important, and any politician who opposed Sharia was judged an apostate.[107] Even anti-establishment Muslim politicians such as Alhaji Musa Balarabe, who always spoke against the traditional Islamic establishment asserted that any opposition against Sharia is considered opposition to Islam.[108] Such rhetoric obviously puts pressures on government decision makers to conform and support the introduction of Sharia. This research finds through my field study, that in all the states with Sharia, it is observed that all government policy officers and agencies were entrenched in the hands of Muslims and non-Muslims were grossly marginalised and in the minority (See Table 12, in eight states, there are 100% Muslim domination in all three arms of government and other government agencies. The other remaining four Sharia states had between one and three non Muslims government

[103] Ibid. P Ostien, Vol. IV. 2007
[104] Ibid, see also the Guardian Newspaper 13 December 1999, pg 6, NIIA Archive
[105] Ibid, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, v, vi, vii, 2007, http://www.Sharia-in-africa.net/media/publications/Sharia-implementation-in-northern-nigeria/vol_2_14_chapter_2_supp_bauchi_post_I.pdf, Accessed 18 November 2009, The outcome Alhaji Bappah Haruna Disina, the speaker of the house Hon. Hamza Muhammad Lanzai and the Minority Leader of the House took control and ensured the adoption of Sharia
[106] Ibid,.
[107] J.,Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pg. 33 (The Gov of Gombe, had stones thrown at him by angry youths in Kano state and Imams threatened to declare the governor an apostate, and in Kaduna, the imams instructed Muslims in all the Mosques to curse the Governor every day for his inaction by Abubakar Mohammed, Muslim response, in Tell Mag, 31 July 2000
[108] Ibid. pg 188–189; see also in Tell Mag June 26, pg 18, 2000

officers; this represented less than 3% of key officers). This fact explains and represents an overwhelming exercise of Muslim power, the total marginalisation and domination of non-Muslims in government decision making. This research also finds that the commonality of Islamic background: similar religious values, congregating to pray at the mosque, friendship through marriage and having the same locality of preference has ensured the Muslim domination of power over time.[109]

The evidence show that the pressure and support from these Islamic groups on the governors made the introduction of Sharia less cumbersome, regardless of the minimal opposition from non-Muslims. Bowing to pressure from the general Muslim populace, Influential Muslim leaders and other groups, the Northern state governors attributed that the demand for Sharia came from these major groups.[110]

Religious Influences and Sharia Implementation

Through various information forums held at Arewa house in Kaduna, the activities and support from organisations and individuals such as the JNI, the NSCIA, Islamic Circle, the Izala Islamic sects (Chairman Sheik Abdullahi Umar Dalla-Dalla), the Council of Ulamas, and the Chief Imam of the State, (Sheik Musa Mohamed) were significant because they embarked on various enlightenment campaigns on behalf of the state government.[111] These pulic hearings, campaigns and various mobilisation activites held at all the senatorial districts included for example;

- In all the Sharia states as noted ealier implementation committess were set up and they all undertook various campaigns, including roadshows, to educate, collect information and generally mobilise the people. In Borno and Bauchi states, the Sharia implementation committees with membership from the various religious organistaions above, visited all the local governmentcentres within their states to deliver public hearings and galvanise support for Sharia. For example (a) In Borno state, public hearings were organised in the three senatorial districts, contributions by the Ulama, and other campaign activities such as public speeches and workshops, took place at the Ali Mungono centre on 31 January 2000. (b) Influential religious actors, groups (including JNI and NSCIA) and many 'ordinary' Muslims came together at the first

[109]Ibid. This views were expressed/came up as result of numerous discussion held during interviews for this research and substantiated by Joseph Kenny, Admiral Aikhomu and Dele Magbor
[110] Ibid. P Ostein, Op.cit.,Vol. 1, pp, I–XX, 2007
[111] *Tension rise over Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria*, http://www.domini.org/openbook/nigeria19991223.htm, Assessed 17 May 2009

and second public hearings and symposia on the Sharia implementation at the Mohammed Goni, College of Legal and Islamic studies in Maiduguri. This roadshow was led by Imam Ibrahim Ahmed, the chief Imam of the state and was concluded by the end of February 2000. (c) The committee, listened to, collected information on, and called for oral and written memoranda from members of the public and Muslim leaders(d) Special Programmes created by the Government and Religious organisation (JNI – publicly and NSCIA - secretly) in conjuction with the media houses in order to enlighten the general public on Sharia issues and enforcement. (e) Others include: a roadshow at Jigawa state on the 6 July 2000 where Alhaji Ahmed Bello Mamud, the head of Sharia presented another paper at the JNI sponsored seminar on Sharia and its implementation in Jigawa. Similarly, in June 2000, at Kebbi state, the Sharia implementation committee undertook a 6 week extensive working tour and mobilisation of the four emirare quarters to presnt Sharia to the people.[112]

These organisations and individuals spoke openly at forums, conferences and sponsored and attended meetings; making their services available for state and community matters. To highlight their role in the whole Sharia process, the NSCIA leader Adegbite claims that 'during consultation and implementation their members and also our sister organisation the JNI, gave their expertise in organising this public meeting because we organise public meetings all the time. We also give our expertise and experience through the services of our scholars in islam etc, our members visited all the senatorial districts to ensure everyone is aware and informed.[113] Wakili, for example, confirmed claims that these Sharia agencies had membership drawn from all the Islamic groups, brotherhoods and established consultative committees (Shura committee), which comprised Islamic scholars who they consulted regularly on policy matters.[114]

Islamic groups such as NASFAT, MURIC and YMS (See appendix for details) gave support and assistance towards the implementation of Sharia, through members services to the various Sharia implementation committees, boards and volunteer work; for example and according to Sheik Akintola, our members act as teachers of Islamic law in schools, enforcers of Sharia law, issuing communiqué on socio-political issues, and making media announcements of

[112]P Ostein, Op.cit.,Vol. 11, 2007, For full details of the various implementation committee reports.
[113] Dr. L. Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, Lagos, 25 February 2009, (He informed me that he would have liked to attend these Sharia road shows but due to the various controversies he had to lay low but attended the Sharia declarations in some of the states)
[114]H Wakili; Op.cit., pp 4–5, see also P Ostien, Op.cit., A Sourcebook: Vol. IV, 2007

solidarity.[115] To consolidate implementation, financial grants and assistance of 500 million naira (£2 million) came from Saudi Arabia to underwrite the Sharia programme and the provision of Islamic scholars to help with these processes. This showed the high levels of hard (financial) and soft (personal) power Muslim religious leaders wield in this regard.[116] In order to cordinate Sharia activities, for example, in Zamfara, the Governor appointed a Commissioner for Religious Affairs: Sheik Tukur Sani Jangebe. He was entrusted with the coordination of government policies on religious matters especially Sharia implementation, this position was important and wielded significant influence both inside and outside of government.

In the section below, I will examine the means by which Muslim religious actors can influence policy formulation and outcome. These include;

1. The appointment of Muslim leaders such as the Ulama as commissioners, advisers and special assistants to the Governor, such as in Zamfara where Alhaji Abdullahi Sani Rogo was appointed Commissioner for local government and community development and Sheik Ibrahim Umar Kabo as Chairman of Sharia implementation. According to Wakili, these Ulama were deeply involved in government decision making in the Sharia states.[117] In the case of Kebbi state for example, the Grand Khadi became the state Chief Judge, and the youths in Sokoto publicly demanded for the appointment of a top Muslim Judge to become the chief judge of the state. As noted from Ostien's study, over 98% of the chief judges in the Sharia states were Muslims.[118]
2. In Sokoto, Jigawa and Gombe states, members of the state legislature and all commissioners were political Muslim leaders in their communities. They have all been sponsored into political offices by their various influential religious and traditional leaders, ie, the Imams and Emirs in the community (Table 12).[119] This highlights the involvement of individuals and religious actors in the government who may also pursue specific interests relevant to their group and communities once in power and so influence policy outcome. Islam is the common link between the administration, Ulama

[115] Muslims beliefs, Law and Practice, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/Muslims/portraits/nigeria.html, Shiek Akintola, MURIC, www.muric.net, Accessed 13 July 2006, Various Interview comments / Press releases and Public lectures on the Sharia in February 2003 and 19 December 2006, OIC. 9 April 2008, Religion and Violence, 30 June 2004 etc.
[116] The African Dimension, http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/articles_akinade.htm, Accessed 13 July 2006
[117] H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 5
[118] Ibid.
[119] P Ostein, Op.cit., Chapters 1 and 2, 2007, also H Wakili, Op.cit., pp 3–4

and the people; hence they are all in a cooperative partnership, as each reinforces the other and furthers each other's goals religiously[120].

3. From Table 12 we can see that all policy officers in the Sharia states are Muslims and the population majority they represent are Muslims, it is easy to understand how Islam has played significant role in government policies, either in educating the people or entrenching Sharia doctrine. For example, the government in Kano state directed both the private and government schools to employ at least one instructor of Arabic language, readily supplied from the schools of the Ulama. Previously, only government schools were required to have or employ Arabic teachers.[121]
4. Muslim leaders and the Ulamas led the various government institutions and agencies charged with managing, overseeing and implementing Sharia law, for example in Kano, the Sharia commission, the Zakat and Hubsi commission, the Hisbah board and the Sharia implementation committee.[122] To ensure the success of Sharia and maintain effective influence on the government in this regard, Muslim leaders cooperated with each other, especially because of the different Islamic sects that exist in the North.

Thus, we conclude that there was willingness to build religious and socio-political alliances for the purpose of Sharia implementation. These reflect a significant change in approach to governance and participation. Overall, introduction of Sharia law highlighted an increase in the lobbying power of Muslim religious actors to mobilise support for the government agenda. It is important to note that while the Ulama, influential Muslim leaders and groups have been central players involved in Sharia policy outcome. Islam is the common factor which made the introduction of Sharia effective, publicly and privately, this reinforces the efficacy of the significant role of Muslim religious actors in the North.

In summary, the policy to introduce Sharia was based on the demand from influential Muslim religious leaders, pressure from the people or a combination of the two, as reflected particularly in the first Sharia state of Zamfara. Data gathered from my study showed that the

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[120] A Kougentakis, See full discussion – *How the Influence of Religion makes Foreign Policy of the Bush Administration Revolutionary, and how this has affected our relations with Europe Allies*, College of Undergraduate Research, Electronic Journal, University of Pennsylvania, 27 July 2007, See also, H Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1994, pp 195–202

[121] Newsroom, Nigeria; Five states consider Imposing Sharia Law, 19 October 1999, http://www.domini.org/openbook/nigeria19991019.htm, Accessed 14 October 2009

[122] Governor Shekarau on 3 September 2007 reconstructed the five major Sharia implementation institutions to be led by the following; Prof. M.S. Zahradeen -Sharia Commission, Prof. Ibrahim Umah – Zakat Commission, Sheik Isa Waziri Shura - Consultative Committee, Sheik Ibrahim Abubakar Ramadan – Pilgrims Welfare Board, and Ustaz Ibrahim Maibushira – Hisbah board.

decision-making process in all the Sharia states clearly showed the government is tightly controlled by Muslims and Christians marginalised at all levels of governement, thus demonstrating significant Muslim influence. In most cases Muslims dominate the three arms of government and in some cases overwhelmingly (100% majority see Table 12).[123] These religious actors, through the use of Islam and active participation in the political process, ensured and maintained socio-political and religious significance in government decision-making circles which enabled them to articulate and protect Muslim interests.[124] The fact that the Governor himself is a Muslim is important and he may well have served as a conduit for Muslim interests' therefore ensuring favourable policy outcome. However, we note that because the Sharia Governors bowed to Muslim religious pressure, it was clearly interpreted by some Sharia activists as a triumph of the people's power over elite dominance.[125]

Conclusion

We have seen that during Sharia implementation in selected Northern states, both the Ulama and other influential Muslim actors influenced policy outcomes significantly through their representatives in a combination of religious soft power (commonly shared beliefs and values) and hard power influences (open demonstration, threats to government and staff, finance).[126] Wakili noted that some Ulama and Muslim religious actors were appointed as commissioners, special advisers and assistants to the state governors, which facilitated the Sharia implementation process. Muslims interest groups such as the council of Ulama, the Sharia council and the JNI overwhelmingly dominated government policy processes and were in charge of monitoring and overseeing the implementation of Sharia. These facts imply increased involvement by Muslim leaders in the centre of government and the decision-making structure which is the manifestation of superior Muslim influences.[127]

The role and influence of Muslim actors in Zamfara and other Sharia states were examined and we noted, for example, Governor Yerima realised and utilised the important role of Islam especially in Zamfara where support came from all levels of the community from the grassroots through to higher levels as noted with the overwhelming crowd during his

[123] Presently (2012) the Governor of Kaduna state is a Christian, Sharia is still being practised in the state. In other Sharia states the Governors are Muslims.
[124] H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 5
[125] J Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pg 191
[126] H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 4
[127] Ibid.

inauguration ceremony,[128] which organised on behalf of the state by Muslim religious groups and Ulamas. Through the inaction of the President Obasanjo government, especially throughout Sharia law introduction period, this implied government acknowledgement of the significant role of Muslim religious actors and their influence in the country. There was some federal government action laterr, this involved liaising with influential Muslim leaders through the meeting between the former Vice-President Abubakar Atiku and the Muslim Ulama in March 2000, [129] Christian observers argued that this meeting was an acknowledgement of the superiority, political domination and influence of Muslims.[130] This author suggests that because this meeting included all the influential Ulama in the country, Muslim lobbying was strong on the Sharia policy at all state levels.

Lastly, we showed that the background to the introduction of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria required and utilised the support from the Muslim community, interest groups and elite. The bond of Islam, especially, was largely responsible for the Ulama active involvement in domestic politics.[131] With Sharia implementation in the North under the present democratic governance, it is clear that Nigeria is witnessing an interesting dialogue in its public sphere between Islam and democracy in which religious influences have been utilised effectively.

[128]P Ostein, Op.cit., pg iv

[129] Meeting organised by Atiku Abubakar, at the State House in Abuja, to discuss the Sharia issue in Northern Nigeria. Members invited to the meeting included Malam Faruq Chedi, Sheikh Karibullahi Nasiru Kabara, Sheikh Aminuddeen Abubakar, Sheikh Ahmad Lemu, Justice Bashir Sambo, Malam Abubakar Jibril, Sheikh Sanusi Gumbi, Sheikh Sambo Rigachukun, Malam Ibrahim Sulaiman, Sheikh Sheriff Ibrahim Saleh, Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi and others. We note that it was a gathering of all the major Ulama in Nigeria. At the meeting, Atiku spoke of the likely problems the Sharia implementation may bring to the corporate existence of Nigeria and urged for caution and a gradual approach in introducing the Sharia. in P Ostein, Op.cit., Chapter 4, Part 2 pg 25

[130]J Kenny, Op.cit.,;Interview, Ibadan, 28 November 2009

[131]H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 5

Figure 11: Support for Sharia among Religious Groups

In order to further demonstrate the level of Sharia law support, figure 11 above indicate that from 2001 to 2007 Muslim support for Sharia increased from 53% to 57% while the Christian support also showed an increase as well from 13% to 23%, other groups increase from 9 to 35%.[132] These results were significant because, as expected Muslims will support Sharia law, however the shift in tolerance from both the Christians and other groups demonstrates that maybe Sharia law is not as encumbering for non-Muslims as it was initially envisaged, and the fear of Islamisation of Nigeria has seriously waned and so the tolerance levels may increase. It validates comments such as 'if it is acceptable to the Muslim North then it is no problem for others because it is our right to have Sharia law'.[133]

[132] M. Kirwin, Op.cit., 2009

[133] L. Adegbite, Op.cit., Interview, Lagos, 25 February 2009. AlsoUstaz M Iheigieto, Interview, Abuja, 28 February 2008

Table 12. The 12 Sharia States Key Officers: Executive, Legislature (House of Assembly), Judiciary and their Religion 2009

States	Governor	Deputy Governor	Chief Judge	Head of Service	Secretary of State	Legislature	Commissioners
Zamfara	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Borno	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Bauchi	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Sokoto	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Yobe	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Kebbi	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Gombe	Muslim	Christian	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	N/A
Kaduna	Muslim	Christian	Christian	Muslim	Muslim	N/A	Muslim: 6 Christian:6 N/A: 2
Niger	Muslim	Muslim	N/A	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim: X N/A: 3
Kano	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim: 36 N/A: 4	Muslim: 34 Christian: 1 N/A: 1
Jigawa	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Katsina	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Total Muslim	12	10	10	12	12	Muslim > 98%	Muslim > 80%
Total Christian	0	2	1	0	0	0	7
Total N/A	0	0	1	0	0	2	6

Field work by Albert Anyia; Data compiled in 2009

Chapter 8. Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis investigates the role of religion and selected religious groups in the context of government decision making in Nigeria. In this concluding chapter, I reassert my approach to studying religion and politics both generally and specifically in relation to selected domestic and foreign policy issues. In particular, I comment on the decision making, contributions and controversies involving both selected Christian and Muslim organisations in relation to their role in the governmental policy process. The policy issues examined in this regard are: Nigeria's membership of the OIC and the introduction and embedding of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria.

We have examined how Nigeria is well known and regarded for its religious diversity, cultures and expressions. Since independence five decades ago, religion has consistently played an important role in Nigeria politics, although many issues and disagreements were suppressed during decades of centralized military rule. Nevertheless, as we have seen throughout this research, how religion has become increasingly important in Nigerian politics in recent years, not least because of the political liberalization associated with the return to civilian rule in 1999 and the enhanced degree of autonomy accorded to state governments under the federal system. Overall, since the return to civilian rule, religion has become increasingly significant in both public debate and political mobilization. Williams described religion as 'intricately interwoven with politics in Nigeria'.[1] The overall aim of the thesis therefore is to clarify exactly what role selected religious actors and their leaders play in the context of these specific policy issues and outcomes over time. The bulk of this study assesses the veracity of the various hypotheses and assumptions highlighted in the introductory chapter.

This investigation into government decision making in relation to these two key policy issues (OIC/Sharia) enabled us to understand better the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria. In particular, it helped clarify how key religious actors and individuals have sought to use religion as a tool of influence to achieve specific goals. The key goals of this research are:

[1] P Williams, *Religious groups and the politics of National Development in Nigeria*, Research Review NS, Vol 7, No 1&2, 1991
http://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Institue%20of%20African%20Studies%20Research%20Review/1991v7n1&2/asrv007001&2005.pdf. Accessed 9 September 2010

- To investigate thoroughly the role over time of selected religious actors within the context of Nigeria's policy process, with specific focus on how they sought to influence decision makers in relation to the above policies.
- To investigate key religious interest groups namely, the CAN and the NSCIA, and how, and in what ways, they were able to influence the two important policy areas of Sharia law implementation and OIC membership.

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this study and above, we can conclude that:

- Religion played significant role, particularly in these policy issues with regards to government decision making. This is so because the religion of the decision makers is crucial and important to the outcome of policy, as the membership of the OIC and the introduction of Sharia law clearly demonstrates.
- Muslim religious actors were consistently more effective and successful compared with their Christian counterparts, through the articulation of what I conceptualise as 'religious influences', to persuade relevant policy makers to adopt their preferred policies in relation to the two case study policy issues. This study concludes that the Muslim network together with personal contacts and networks enhanced and promoted favourable policy outcome for their respective Muslim interest groups.

This research's findings reinforce the often-made claim that religion and politics in Nigeria are 'bedfellows',[2] implying that the two cannot be separated. However, numerous studies of this field in Nigeria concentrated their efforts more on the issues of histography of Christianity and Islam, religious violence, development and religious organisations. The purpose here was different: to establish and explain outcomes of the interactions between selected religious actors and government decision makers over time in relation to the two key issues. The following question was posed: what difference, if any, does it make if the government decision makers and selected religious actors share religious allegiance and are these allegiances reflected in the policy outcomes relating to Nigeria's membership of the OIC and the introduction of Sharia law?

Investigating the CAN and the NSCIA highlighted the significant roles and impact of religion on the decision makers within the government policy structure in Nigeria, especially in

[2] T Falola, Op.cit., 1998

relation to the three arms of government in the Northern Sharia states dominated by Muslims (as shown in Chapter 7, see also Tables 11 and 12). This study has argued that the Muslim network and personal contacts and networks enhanced and promoted favourable policy outcome for their respective religious interest groups, most importantly for the Muslim groups.

To buttress the above, my survey findings supports the Afrobarometer briefing report suggesting that support for Sharia both in Sharia and non Sharia states had not waned as previously predicted, [3] and as noted above in Chapter seven, it is still supported by the majority of of people in the north. However it is fundamental to note that Muslims have a religious duty to support Sharia law regardless of the implementation issues it may encounter.

From the above, in order to better understand the increase in religious competition at the federal, state and local levels, this research focused on identifying the religious actors that have contributed to religious groups' political mobilization, how they sought to influence government policy outcomes and participation of religious groups in some of the Sharia and non-Sharia states. These states are located in the North and South of the country respectively; they have different religious and ethno-regional compositions; and also have different historical experiences. As noted by Wakili, the role of the Ulama was highly significant throughout the Sharia process[4] and as highlighted in this study by constructively engaging in the process of governance in various ways. Some Muslim religious leaders and Ulamas were appointed as commissioners, advisers and special assistants to the governors, also totally dominating the three arms of governemnet / institutions and agencies charged with the implementation of Sharia (See Tables 11 & 12). Through a review of relevant documents and semi-structured interviews with representatives of religious groups and political and government officials in these states; this research explored informants' views on state religion relations.[5] At both the central and state levels, the role of religion in relations to the introduction of Sharia law in 12 Northern Nigerian states since 1999 has led to a broad debate about the country's constitution and its interpretations, which both stipulates and guarantees religious freedom and prohibits the adoption of a state religion.[6]

[3] M Kirwin, Op.cit., 2009
[4] H Wakili, Op.cit., pg 4
[5] I Nolte and O Danjibo, Op.cit., 2009
[6] Ibid.

Discussion of Findings

The politics of government decision-making plays a prominent role in my analysis of how religious interest groups and actors influence government policy process and adds to our knowledge about their role in this process especially in relations to Nigeria. To inform its findings, the thesis drew on the role of both secular and religious interest groups' influence on government decision making in Western countries such as the US and European political processes in relation to their lobbying and mobilisation strategies. However, Nigeria defies the various models and approaches seen in both the US and Europe, because of relatively democratically underdeveloped political institutions and the resulting lack of common procedures for dealing with government decision makers. What is prevalent in Nigeria is the continuing significant role of influential individuals in government decision making, and in our context, the role of influential religious leaders such as the Ulama in the case of Sharia implementation in Northern Nigeria.

The history of the US and Europe suggests that normally both secular and religious actors use various strategies to gain the ear of decision makers in their attempts to influence them on policy issues. Through the examination of interest groups in Chapter 3 and in particular drawing on the work of Victor,[7] I found that in the West there are some similarities in approach of such actors to acquire and develop influence in government decision-making processes.

Firstly, legislative policy making involves multiple actors (including legislators, political leaders, the head of state, interest groups, lobbyists and the media) and how they interact with each other in an attempt to converge on a competitive outcome in a policy space.[8] Political scientists such as Haynes, Hennig, Braun-Poppelaars, Hanegraaff and Minkenberg,[9] note that various religious actors play a crucial role in this interaction and multifaceted processes of entering and re-entering the public policy domain, and that they apply various strategies in doing so.

[7] JN Victor, Op.cit., Connecting Interest Groups and Congress: 17 July 2002
[8] Ibid.
[9] See full their Contribution to this debate in J Haynes & A Hennig (Eds), Op.cit., 2011

Secondly, in Europe, especially in the UK and Germany, and within the context of the European parliament, there are strictly enforced rules and procedures that govern the lobby process,[10] similar to the US.

Thirdly, from a comparative perspective examination of the interaction between interest groups and policy makers, I find that the attempts to influence public policy making and outcome involves mobilisation and lobbying strategies common to the US and Europe. It is also noted in this study, such interest groups are permanent players in government policy making and their significant role is continuously scrutinised through their activities, for example, within the congress, state legislatures and elsewhere. These interactive processes are divided into two types: those who support legislation and those against it,[11] and interest groups may apply either an insider and or outsider strategies. An insider strategy involves much closer contact and communication directly with the legislator or policy makers, while the outsider strategy is the attempt to involve the general public in the process through various means such as public opinion and media.

Another common similarity of these interest groups is the possession of certain characteristics that may enhance the success of a policy issue, and this can be explained in terms of the group's activities, size, structure, financial/human resources and the context of legislation they are interested in.

Lastly, both secular and religious interest groups direct and target their lobbying strategies towards the executive and the legislative arms of government because of the significant position they occupy and therefore instrumental role they have in policy outcome. Although government policy officers may desire to make favourable public policy and work with these groups because of other personal objectives such as re-election, maintaining influence and legacy goals.

Turning to Nigeria, as this study has shown, we see both similarities and differences compared to the global situation. In particular, I argue that when faced with specific decision,

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[10] Š Laboutková, *EU institutions and Interest Groups; The Potential for Conflict*, Škoda Auto University, Siim Kallas, Nottingham 2005;
http://www.idec.gr/iier/new/CORRUPTION%20CONFERENCE/EU%20institutions%20and%20interest%20groups%20-%20Laboutkova%20Ing.%20Sarka.pdf. Accessed 1 October 2010

[11] JN Victor, Op.cit., 2002

such as in the case of the OIC membership and Sharia law introduction, the religion and typically religious bias of the decision maker plays an important role in helping choose among alternative policy choices. The evidence from this thesis suggests the establishment of a direct link between government decision making and interest group especially religious groups and actors, and this improves our ability to explain how such religious entities may influence government decision making and policy outcomes. For example, in the Sharia states, we saw how the significant link between the executive and legislative arms of government and influential Muslim leaders was instrumental to the introduction of Sharia law. Government decision-making occurs in an environment with numerous incentives and constraints that influence the policy maker as clarified in Chapter 3 in the case of the OIC, president Babangida; while state governors became the focus point in the states that implemented Sharia law.

Furthermore, my research findings indicate that there is an emerging literature on the significant role of religion in the political process in Nigeria, especially due to the prominence andescalation of religious violence in the country as championed presently by Boko Haram and the awareness of the people to the dividends of democracy. The works of Kukah, Falola, Ajayi, Paden in particularon contemporary religio-political issues in Nigeria are important and my research is related to these issues and has advanced this area of study by invesgating the specific area of religion and decision making. Thus, investigating the specific role of the influential religious organisations over time within the general field of religion and politics in Nigeria

From the above, this study suggest that in some of the Sharia states and especially Zamfara state, evidence shows the tendency by the governor to take a policy risk (i.e., through the introduction ofSharia law) because he believed that this may increase his job approval and popularity, which other Northern Governors observed and felt they could emulate. However, evidence show that the growing acceptance of Sharia law in the north amongst Muslims and non-Muslims is significant and this is also the case amongst Sharia and non-Sharia states. The recent surveys conducted by Afrobarometer as discussed above in chapter seven suggests support for Sharia law increased both cases and my survey conducted in 2009 corroborated these outcomes.

By focusing on the role of religious interest groups (the CAN and the NSCIA) and other significant individual religious actors within the Nigeria decision-making process, the answers to each of these questions become clearer. Generally the government identifies and

deals directly with the CAN and the NSCIA on all religious matters as the two main religious groups apparently representing the people. Because both religious groups are popular religious interest groups in Nigeria, they reflect the fact that Christianity and Islam are followed by over 80% of the Nigeria population.[12] (See attached Table 1)

Thus an effective working relationship between the government and these religious groups may confer some sort of acceptance to those in power. Within this context, it is reasonable to claim or hypothesise that both the CAN and the NSCIA seek to influence key decision makers on specific religious policy issues in order to show to their communities that they are worthy of their support, because of the influence they are able to wield with influential individuals or 'big men'[13] in government at both national and state levels.

As shown in this study, the CAN has all the attributes of a religious interest group and over the years emerged as the main umbrella organisation for all the churches in Nigeria, indeed membership is open to all Christian churches in Nigeria. The structure and organisation of the CAN is strong and follows the national political structure of Nigeria,[14] i.e. adequate representation at national, state and local government levels. This arrangement ensures that the presence of the CAN is felt everywhere in Nigeria and its strategies when dealing with the government included, confrontation, dialogue and lobby. However, the large size of the group may sometimes render the organisation less effective, especially when attempting to present a well-articulated point of view on policy issues due to the differences of opinion (ie, denominational) amongst the various groups of the CAN.[15] For example, it is noted that due to the different denominations and churches that make up CAN, these churches have diverse doctrines, modes of worship, different views on church-state relations andunderstanding of societal realities which obviously implies that their approaches to social, economic and political issues andprocesses may be perceived differently by the different groups within CAN.[16] Basically, there are two forces pulling CAN apart (a) those that want CAN to remain

[12] Ibid. For the religious Identity and Demography of Nigeria see also in O Odumosu & A Simbine, *Religious Organisations, Values and Rivalry in Nigeria: Exploring the Implications for Development and Politics*, Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), RAD Working paper 64, 2011

[13] The term 'Big Men' generally refers to specific individuals in the community who are highly influential, rich and possess political, economic and social power. They are perceived to be significantly influential in the community and in the corridors of power. In Nigeria, the big man may seize power by the bullet or though the ballot but refuses to relinquish when it is time to do so. He may sometimes provide economic assistance and protection to his followers who in return give their overwhelming support to his whims and caprices

[14] Mbachirin. Op.cit., pp 308–312

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid. pg 262

purely ecumenical (religious aims) as originally conceived for the organisation and (b) those that want it to be fully engaged in politics. (political aims).[17]

These groups or churches of the latter view prefer to have complete political involvenment in government / politics. For example, recently the popular pastor, Tunde Bakare, [18] demonstrated this, when he contested as the vice president of the opposition party in the 2011 presidential elections. Yet the Catholic Church leadership did not support this, because its priests do not contest political elections.[19] This definitely implies differences in opinion, strategy and impact in their outlook and approach to political issues. Some will favour a more direct and confrontational approach with the government, which in the past has led non-Christians to label CAN as militants,[20] while dialogue and lobbying may be favoured by others. It is therefore within this dilemma that we locate the underlying reasons for various internal struggle, clashes and lack of agreed strategy in the CAN.

Furthermore, another significant issue that impedes the effectiveness of CAN is the size of the organisation which is described as too large to be effective when compared with other large secular interst groups.[21] For example, according to Mbachirin, the national executive council has around 105 members and the state council has about70 members, thus making its management of affairs and meetings cumbersome and the presentation of well articulated position on issues difficult. Falola, described this as one of the major failures of the CAN: that is, its ineffectiveness in organising robust lobby strategies during the OIC membership debate and through the appointment of Christian individuals whose main responsibilities to the CAN was undermined due to the individual denominational churches commitments, which may hinder or ensure rapid success on specific goals.

On the other hand, my study showed that what the NSCIA lacked in good organisation and structure of the Christians, its members, ie, Muslims (especially Northern Muslims) have instead consistently dominated government decision making and power since Nigeria's independence.[22] I examined the NSCIA as the Muslim religious interest group counterpart of

[17] I Enwerem. Op.cit., Pg.146
[18] General Overseer Latter Rain Assembly Lagos, and Congress for Progressive Change, (CPC),Vice Presidential Candidate in 2011 General elections
[19] Various view shared in discussions during Interviews and discussions at Benin, October 2011
[20] A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg 309
[21] Ibid. pg 316
[22] M Kukah and T Falola, Op.cit., pp 235-237

the CAN and its success in attempts to successfully influence government decision making at all levels. An examination of the history of Nigeria shows that the foundation for the successes of Muslim organisation were laid through the actions, activities and the legacies of past and present Northern Nigeria political leaders such as Ahmadu Bello, Presidents Balewa, Shagari Buhari and Babangida etc. They ensured that political power stayed in Northern Nigeria, and their religious bias played significant role in the perception of their duties and responsibilities first as a Muslim, within the Muslim community and to Nigerians generally. Especially as noted through the activities of the JNI, which was initially representing Northern Nigeria Muslims but it metamorphosed and its activities have been subsumed by the NSCIA. The success of Muslim influence in government decision making ensured that Christians and Southerners complained numerously against Muslim domination of state power and the unwillingness of the Northern elite to let other ethnic groups in Nigeria exercise power.[23]

Thus from my studies, I can now make it clear that the NSCIA is successful, especially in terms of the OIC membership and Sharia law implementation because of its superior Muslim Influence in the seat of government, especially the Presidency.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Nigeria's membership of the OIC generated serious controversies, which led to fears that the country may disintegrate as a result of religious divide in the country between the Christians and Muslims. President Babangida at that time argued or put forward the economic advantages of membership while the Christians, through the CAN and other individuals countered this posture.[24] To the Christians in Southern Nigeria, what was important and unique about the OIC issue lies in its very own interpretation of its name and whatever the arguments and explanations put forward by Muslim leaders, it connotes an Islamic organisation. While the Muslims I interviewed point out blankly to my question on OIC membership that it is a Muslim organisation and the Christians should accept this position.[25] Nevertheless, presently, (2009), Nigeria is still a member of the OIC regardless of the Christian and Muslim controversies generated at that time, which further support the suggestion of this study regarding the continuous superior Muslim influence in government decision making.

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[23] Ibid.
[24] T Falola, Op cit., J Kenny, Op.cit.,
[25] See Appendix for Question sample - (Q - What are your thoughts about Nigeria's membership of the OIC)

In Nigeria, this study has shown that there are no clear-cut boundaries in the application of religious actors lobby strategies. This is unique because religious groups lobby strategies included the application of both insider and outsider strategies on government decision making specifically on the case studies. Significant to this, is the emphasis on the influential individuals in government circles or the 'big man' connection and personal influence and contacts; including the exploitation of personal relationships and as well as lobbying elected representatives and government officials.

Lastly, these strategies are successfully used by interest groups in US and Europe to lobby decision makers and achieve favourable policy outcome. If these strategies are applied correctly, religious lobbying makes politics interesting and more democratic,[26] and religious groups can effectively develop their roles in government policy process if they can play and adhere to these rules of engagement. Generally, support of the CAN and the NSCIA to any government in Nigeria cannot be downplayed because these religious organisations, as they plausibly claim, represent 80 to 90% of the Christian and Muslim constituencies in their relationship with government.[27]

Outcome and Significance of Research

This study has attempted to answer some central research questions: although religion and politics mix in Nigeria, Muslim religious actors are consistently more effective than their Christian counterparts in encouraging policy makers through the articulation of their 'religious influences' on relevant policy issues. However, the importance of this research extends well beyond these Muslim religious influences, the growing role of Muslim groups and the continuous existence of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria makes it essential that Christian religious groups in the non-Sharia states, for example, demand for the establishment of similar political for systems that will rival and counter Sharia.

In Chapter 3, I investigated and adopted a general conceptual framework for interest representation i.e. the influence production process of interest groups.[28] This implies examining interest representation as a cumulative process, right through the initial

[26] Ibid., also in D Hofrenning, *In Washington But not of it: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1995

[27] I Enwerem, Op.cit., 1995; also AMbachirin, 2006;M Kukah, Op.cit., 1989.

[28] C Braun-Poppelaars and M Hanegraaff, in J Haynes & A Hennig, (Eds), Op.cit., pp 130–138.

mobilisation stages, interest group dynamics and strategies to the final policy outcome. In terms of strategies, religious actors apply the insider determinant, which is effective against both civilian and military regimes in Nigeria. At other times, some religious groups and influential individuals would approach government decision making directly especially on issues with religious implications.

However, this research also highlights some of the difficulties these religious groups face when dealing with the government in terms of the unavailability of organised or official government lobbying rules and legislation which with to govern the influence process. Obviously, the lack of an institutional framework through which religious interest groups can work and participate in government decision making so as to achieve a favourable policy outcome is a major hindrance to secular and religious interest groups. For example, especially when the political processes of Nigeria are examined in relatios to the nature of events and the nature of Nigerian society, various economic and social political issues are highlighted.[29] These are due to the problems of corruption, tribalism, nepotism, religion / ethnicity issues, the high level of government fraud and bribery, in both public and private lives of the citizenry, especially in this regard within all levels of government in Nigeria. Furthermore Mbachirin has identified the lack of respect for the rule of law, the constitution, the disregard and inexistence of a system of structured articulation of public opinion within the political process, long periods of the military government dictatorship and military politicians in civilian unforms who act just like dictators and are presently dominating influential government positions Nigeria. These have stifled the growth and voice of interest groups generally, especially in this case religious interest groups in Nigeria) Knowing these inadequacies in the political processes provides a starting point for finding new approaches for interest groups generally. This thesis adds to the growing body of literature on religion and politics in Nigeria, especially the role of significant religious actors in government decision making. Thus leading to the specific findings of this study in relations to the two key issue areas that were assessed: OIC membership and Sharia law.

[29]A Mbachirin, Op.cit., pg. 304

The OIC Membership

In the context of the OIC membership, we saw that firstly, Nigeria's membership generated serious controversies between Muslims and Christians in general and both religious groups claimed serious argument for and against Nigeria's membership. Significantly, President Babangida always argued and justified his reasons for the membership purely on economic grounds. What is evident is the ability of the Muslims to utilise or take advantage of their superior Muslim networks, Muslim individuals in government positions, and influential individual members of the Muslim elite and their religious influences to garner support and justify Nigeria's membership. This study notes that everyone involved in the OIC decision making were Muslims. Whereas the inability of Christian religious groups to exert influence on government policy making was clear to all. Above all, the government introduced and implemented policies favourable to the Muslims (full OIC membership), regardless of the agitations from their Christian counterpart, because it is they who dominated the government seat of power, ie, government decision making at the national level. However, Babangida's claims of an economic motive for OIC membership were highly criticised by the Christians and events rendered his argument unsustainable. Apart from the interest-free loans from the IDB, Nigeria has not significantly gained anything serious from its economic package.[30]

Secondly, it is important to note that from 1986, while the OIC membership controversy was both on-going and prominent, Nigeria's leadership was under the military junta of General Babangida. Generally military regimes are well known to be undemocratic and not keen to promote democratic institutions or have an endearing political process. This implies a general lack of even quasi-democratic institutions or any formal institutional framework for interest group (including religious group like the CAN) activities to operate within, especially with respect to lobbying and mobilisation strategies on specific issues. Despite the superiority of the military, government decision making were not clearly defined when power is entrusted in the hands of a few military leaders. Personal bias and other factors play significant role in the life of the policy maker. In this case, President Babangida, a Muslim, surrounded himself with influential Muslim individuals in the country and clearly had overwhelming power and military authority to back up decisions. This can partly explain the failure of Christians and the CAN to articulate effectively their objection to this policy, despite the fact that they had effective structures and network all over the country. In the aftermath of the OIC issue,

[30] J Kenny, Op.cit., Interview, Ibadan 29 October 2009

Christian ministers in his government were sacked, notable amongst these was Vice-President Ebitu Ukiwe, who was Babangida's deputy at the time. He was dismissed for his criticisms both on OIC membership. While Christians also critised him for not 'doing enough, his lack of involvement and acting as a stooge to the northern military leaders', as a Christian, especially on crucial government decision making issues while in power.[31] It is noted that the Christian role may have been more effective in a democratic political setting because non-Muslims would have to be included in such consultation process in order to show that due processes were adhered to.

The Implementation of Sharia Law

Firstly, regarding the implementation of Sharia law, this thesis has identified and examined the significant role of influential Muslims in the creation of the NSCIA and the development of Sharia law especially in relations to the religious influences on the Governors of the Northern states, state legislatures and executive which were significantly dominated, in some cases completely, by Muslims. This thesis found evidence that suggested that due to the superior significant role of influential Muslim elite and support from majority of Muslims; the introduction of Sharia law in the Northern states was both a smooth process and was conducted with negligible hindrance from non-Muslims.

The overwhelming support from the general population was significant to the adoption of Sharia law as demonstrated in Chapter 7, and as shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10. Also from surveys carried out for this research in 2009, compared with the result of other research conducted in 2007 that after the introduction of Sharia law, the level of support for it has dipped slightly but is still high and significant in 2009. The evidence from studies carried out by Afrobarometer in 2000,[32] indicated that support for Sharia was high, but following the on-going Sharia debate and associated controversies in the country, it was envisaged that by 2009, when my survey was conducted, the level of support would have fallen drastically. This research suggests that this was not the case and the level of acceptance was equally high. This is because: (i) It is claimed by the government and religious leaders that Sharia law is helping to tackle various social and moral vices which were against the Koran and close to the heart of its strict adherents, such as prostitution, drinking in public places and theft.[33] (ii)

[31] Anonymous source, employee of the Ministry of foreign affairs, Abuja, November 2009
[32] Details of this survey in Chapter 7, M., Kirwin., Op. cit.,
[33] J Harnischfeger, Op.cit., pp 19–36, See also extensive discussion on Sharia in P Ostien and A Dekker, Sharia and National Law, in J.,M Otto, (Ed), Op.cit., pp 553–609

The Christian tolerance of the introduction of Sharia law, so long as its implementation does not infringe on their constitutional rights.

Secondly, another major finding of this thesis highlighted the role of the three arms of government (executive, legislature and the judiciary) in all the states where Sharia was introduced in relation to Islamic religious leaders and Ulama. It was shown that these three arms of government were dominated by a Muslim majority, which made the decision-making process easy. It is also important that over 95% of government officers were Muslims and in some cases 100% such as in Zamfara, Sokoto and Yobe states. This is important and significant to my thesis because it established the direct link between the religion (Islam) practised by the decision maker and the outcome of policy, especially in this case of the implementation of Sharia law, supporting the hypothesis that religion is significant to the outcome of policy over time. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the fact that in some of the Muslim-dominated states, influential religious leaders, the Ulama etc., indeed became important players in the Nigeria's contemporary political arena. This thesis further demonstrates that the struggle to get Sharia law implemented were largely responsible for the active involvement of the Ulama in current democratic politics.[34]

Thirdly, my research have found that amongst the Christians, the acceptance level of Sharia has not diminished since it was introduced in 1999. Survey and interview comments in the non-Sharia states, especially Lagos, Edo and Abuja, whose populations are equally divided between the Christians and Muslims, expressed the idea, especially by Christians, of a system similar to the Muslims of the North. Few advocated a form of a government based on the 'Christian law',[35] instead preferring a law that emulates some of the successes noted in some of the Northern Sharia states in relations to moral and social issues. Socially, for example, Ambassador Anegbeh claims that Sharia law have 'significantly helped the North to prevent the incessant rate of the kidnappings presently common in most areas of the Southern Nigeria'. He opined that this will not be the case in the South if the Christians had a political system in place similar to the Sharia law in the North.[36] Thus, the implication of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria showed that as long as it has been introduced and implemented in some of these states, it suggests that the constitution has been widely accepted as having a non-secular

[34]H Wakili, Op.cit., 2009

[35] This is borne out of responses by Muslims in Edo state to Question on the introduction Sharia law in some Northern states, over 70% of my respondents claim the South should be allowed to have their own 'Christian system governed by Christian law' like the Muslims

[36]Ambassador Peter Anegbeh, Nigeria's ambassador to Indonesia, Phone interview 4 July 2010

nature, on the other hand it also demonstrates the importance of the text (of the constitution) for religious debate in Nigeria remains undisputed.[37]

The fourth important observation from this study is that Sharia law was first introduced in Zamfara in 1999; and to date (2009 – period this study ends) it has managed to maintain some levels of acceptance and stability, gaining grassroot support and legitimacy in the states where it was introduced. Significantly noted is the fact that no Sharia state governor has been successfully removed by its people or the federal government for introducing Sharia law. Presently, I can also safely conclude that so long as Nigeria is in the current democratic political dispensation and Sharia law is practised in the states where they are operational, Sharia law has come to stay and it will be political suicide for any Northern state Governor to attempt to overturn Sharia law in their state, especially with the presence of Boko Haram.

Lastly, it is important to mention Boko Haram at this stage, this thesis has noted that even though, the group and its activities has not been the focus of this study as such, the current importance of Boko Haram in Nigeria is such that I feel it necessary to provide a comment on their activities. We can understand Boko Haram to literally mean 'Western education is sacrilege" ie, the group is against Westernisation or anything outside Islam. One of the groups aim is to Islamise Northern Nigeria, indeed the whole of Nigeria, thus rejecting the idea of Nigeria's secularity. It is a militant Islamic group that is prominent in the North and was founded between 2000 and 2001 by late Mohammed Yusuf;[38] the group emerged during the constant violence that split Nigeria along ethnic and religious lines. Recently it had intensified brutal attacks in most Northern states killing hundreds of ordinary men, women, children; attacking Christians, churches, public officials and institutions. At least 1000 to 2000 people have been killed by Boko Haram in separate attacks since the group was formed and this figure is increasing.[39] It is significant to note that there have been attacks by this group even in some Sharia states, and their activities in Northern Nigeria have nothing to do with the introduction or implementation of Sharia law. This is because their key targets are Christians, their churches and other outsider political institutions (eg, the United Nations building, which was bombed in 2011).

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[37] I Nolte, N Danjibo & A Oladeji, Op.cit., 2009

[38] CJ Radin, The threat of Boko Haram for Nigeria, Africa, and beyond http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/04/the_threat_of_boko_haram_for_n.php#ixzz1uiUSwFL7 23 April 2012, accessed 1 May 2012

[39] The Nation Newspaper, Nigeria, Boko Haram bombs the media, Nigeria, 4 May 2012, also in The Guardian Newspaper, Boko Haram vows to fight until Nigeria establishes Sharia law, 27 January 2012

However, these bombings and activities of Boko Haram could be interpreted as an indication of the failure of the state and its responsibilities to the peoples of Nigeria, who have been pushed to the extreme levels of suffering and poverty. Regardless of the reasons given by the group for their actions, it is glaring to all and also it is evident in Nigeria that many people daily discuss the high levels of government corruption, stealing of oil revenue, inefficiency, believed to be common in Nigeria at all levels. As a result many 'ordinary' people have lost faith in both governance and leadership. They believe that government has failed and there is no future for the people now or in the foreseeable future for both the young and old in the country unless something drastic happens. Most Nigerians however believe silently that these ethnic groups / armed vigilantes forming in the South East (Bakassi boys), the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) in the West, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) crisis in the South south and now the Boko Haram issue in Northern Nigeria may altogether trigger the demise of the country through such events similar to the Arab spring[40] which led to violent protest and changes in government or in the case of Nigeria may lead to another civil war as noted in Syria presently. Boko Haram is upping the ante within the present political situation in Nigeria.

Summary

In conclusion, a focus on two important questions (the significant of the roles of the CAN and the NSCIA in OIC membership and Sharia law implementation policies) provided an opportunity to extend this analysis into the future. First, how and when do influential individuals and religious interest groups influence government decision-making? Considerable qualitative research has documented the influence of these groups in many countries such as in the US, yet it is very difficult to quantify their influence, especially in countries like Nigeria, *vis-à-vis* the relative influence from public opinion versus elite pressure on government policy outcome. The findings of this research suggest that religious groups could be important participants in a national dialogue about the country's future and all religious groups must be given the opportunity to engage with the state, and with each other, on an equal basis. The relationship between the state and religious organisations are often unequal and depend on individual group becoming involved in politics. As noted above,

[40] G Blight, S Pullham, P Torpey, Arab spring: an interactive timeline of Middle East protest, the gaudian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline, 5 January 2012, Accessed 10 March 2012

there is no template for formal and structured interaction[41] between religious interest groups and government decision making in Nigeria, as applicable in other Western countries. Consequently, this has helped the political elites and influential individuals to wield power and exploit privileges within the corridors of government.

[41]Ibid.

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Appendix A - Some Other Notable Influential Muslims Relevant to this study

1. The Sultan of Sokoto late Sir Abubakar III, Late Sultan Macido and the Present Sultan Abubakar, National President of the National Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs
2. Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Mustapha El-Kanemi, Deputy National Vice President of the National Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs
3. Sheik Abubakar Gumi former Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria and Islamic leader, scholar co-founder of numerous Islamic organisations such as the Jamaat nasr al-Islam
4. Justice Abdul Kadir Orire retired Grand Khadi of the Kwara State Sharia Court and Sec-Gen of JNI.
5. Malam Yahaya Gusau a co-founder of the JNI and former federal Minister
6. Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, Deposed former Sultan of Sokoto, first former Sec Gen of NSCIA, wealthy businessman
7. Alhaji Sambo Dasuki, Retired Army Officer, Head of Nigeria Security, Print and Mint.
8. Alhaji Maitama Sule, influential Northern politician, Former Presidential candidate, businessman, former Minister and diplomat and Nigeria's UN Representative,
9. Chief Moshood Abiola, 1993 President elect of Nigeria and wealthy businessman.
10. Alhaji Arisekola Alao, Are Musulumi of Yorubaland and businessman
11. Dr Rilwanu Lukman, Minister of Petroleum (two terms), politician, businessman and the leader of Nigeria delegation to Fez - Formalising Nigeria's membership of the OIC.
12. Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji, former Finance Minister and cousin to deposed Sultan Dasuki
13. Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, Turakin Ilorin, eminent philanthropist, Surgeon, politician, industrialist and influential Muslim leader
14. Sheik Ibrahim Abubakar Ramadan, chairman of Jamaat Mosque, Kano State Pilgrims board, member JNI executive, Council of Ulama, Kano Sharia implementation committee, Teacher, Preacher
15. Sheik Jafar Mahmud Adam, Islamic Scholar and Preacher, Chief Imam of Dorayi Juma'at Mosque, Kano.

Appendix B Semi Structured Interview

Name of Interviewer –

Date -

Good day, I am (Introductions)

Firstly, I thank you for seeing me today. The purpose of this interview is to obtain in-depth information on religion actors, religion and politics in Nigeria Your comments of course will remain confidential and may or may not be included in my thesis.

I intend to discuss some religion and politics issues relevant to my research with you, i.e.

- The significant role of religious organisations in Nigeria policy process especially CAN and NSCIA.
- Specific policies such as the controversy surrounding the OIC membership of Nigeria and the introduction of Sharia law.

1. How will you describe Islam and Christian religion's role direct or indirect on government decision making in Nigeria. Any examples or evidence to illustrate these influences and why.
2. Which religious organisations do you consider influential in Nigeria and why? (Apply appropriately - If CAN and NSCIA mentioned - for Non, Continue)
3. How have they been influential?
4. Who are the main religious actors, (On either side i.e. the government / religious organisations, (Appropriate) you are one of my main focus for this thesis and I am especially interested in any regular / specific acts that you have faced or are aware of regarding the role of CAN, NSCIA and other Influential religious individuals attempts to influence government policy process.
5. Did you have any form of direct contact, responsibilities or encounter whatsoever no matter how minimal it is with these organisations i.e. CAN and NSCIA. These Organisations such as CAN will see you as a sympathizer to their objectives being a Christian or Muslim (Appropriate).
6. Were you approached by these religious groups at anytime for support due to your position – public or private? (Appropriate - Aikhomu, Adegbite, Anegbeh, Sheik Gumbi, etc)

OIC

1. What do you know or think are the reasons for Nigeria's membership of the OIC. What are your thoughts on the decision making process, the influences involved either religious or political
2. Do you agree or disagree that membership of the OIC was the result of the core Muslim influences on the decision-making process of Nigeria
3. How will they do this if Yes, or No, why?
4. Should Nigeria continue its membership of the OIC and why
5. Please explain, where and how these decisions were made in respect to policy outcome, i.e. OIC and Sharia (Note: Maybe probe his Excellency, senior staff and religious leaders.etc.)
6. Have you had or what concerns do you have, regarding attempts to influence government decision-making by religious groups and influential individual. How will they do this, especially the CAN, NSCIA or JNI in relation to the OIC and Sharia
7. In Nigeria, religious leaders and actors are sometimes described as disguised politicians; what is their role in government decision-making.

Sharia Survey Questions

Good day, I am carrying out a survey for Mr Albert Anyia a PhD student from London Metropolitan University. I do not represent the government or any political party. We are conducting a survey on the views of Nigerians on the introduction of Sharia law, its implementation and acceptance. I will like to ask you some questions and discuss briefly. Every person in the state / area has an equal chance of being included in this study. So all information you give will be kept anonymous and confidential. You have been chosen randomly. (Use this introduction for the survey on Sharia in the Sharia states / non Sharia areas)

1. Which of these statements is closest to your view (a) is it acceptable for the different parts of the country to have different legal systems, e.g. Sharia. (b) Nigeria is a secular state and it should have one legal system for all.
2. Into which economic group will you describe yourself and income, (a) high, (b) middle (c) low (d) N/A
3. Do you support or oppose the Sharia law in your state (a) Yes (b) No
4. Why? (prompt) Reduce crime, Tackle Government corruption, will of God.
5. Do you still want to be governed according to the Sharia law (a) Yes (b) No (Sharia areas)
6. Do you support a similar Christian legal system for states, (a) Yes (b) No – (Non-Sharia)

Thank You