Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Africa, with its rich history and diverse cultures, has witnessed the expansion of various religious traditions because the continent has vibrant trade networks and cultural exchanges. Thus, as goods, ideas, and people traversed across the continent, religious beliefs and traditions were also shared and adopted[1]. Trade routes facilitated the spread of religious ideas, with merchants and travellers introducing new faiths and practices to different regions[2]. The movement of people across Africa played a significant role in the expansion of religions and traditions.

As different ethnic groups migrated and settled in new areas, they brought along their religious beliefs and cultural practices, influencing the local populations. Over time, these traditions became interwoven with the fabric of the communities, leading to their expansion and adaptation[3]. The expansion of religions in Africa was often influenced by political and imperial powers. Colonialism and the arrival of European powers in Africa, during the 19th and 20th centuries, brought with them Christianity[4]. These external forces played a key role in spreading Christianity across the continent. Similarly, the spread of Islam was also facilitated by political and military conquests, such as the Arab-Muslim expansion across North Africa[5].

Christianity was established in West Africa, including Nigeria, through a combination of colonial efforts, missionary activities, and indigenous conversions. The arrival of European powers in the 15th century marked the beginning of Christianity's introduction to the region. European colonial powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch, British, and French, played a pivotal role in spreading Christianity in West Africa[6]. These colonial powers brought with them Christian missionaries who

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sought to convert the indigenous populations to their faith. Missionaries built churches, established schools, and preached the Gospel, aiming to convert Africans to Christianity.

In Nigeria specifically, Christian missions gained momentum during the 19th century[7]. British missionaries, in particular, were influential in spreading Christianity across the country. Missionary societies, such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Methodist Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, established missions and schools, focusing on evangelization and education[8]. Meanwhile, both Christianity and Islam are considered to be the most recognized religions in Nigeria. Islam was introduced to Nigeria through trans-Saharan trade routes and cultural exchanges.

The expansion of Islam into Nigeria was facilitated by Muslim traders and scholars who travelled across the Sahara Desert, establishing connections with local communities. The Kanem-Bornu Empire, located in present-day North-eastern Nigeria, played a significant role in the early spread of Islam in the region[9]. Muslim merchants and scholars from North Africa and the Middle East travelled to Kanem-Bornu, bringing Islamic teachings and practices with them. The rulers of the empire embraced Islam, which further promoted its spread among the population[10].

Christianity and Islam have both become integral parts of the Nigerian society, reflecting the country's religious diversity. Christianity is predominantly practised in the southern regions, while Islam has a significant presence in the northern parts of Nigeria. These religions have shaped religious, cultural, and social norms, providing frameworks for belief, moral values, and community engagement[11]. While there are occasional interreligious tensions, both Christianity and Islam have played significant roles in fostering unity, promoting education, and contributing to Nigeria's rich cultural tapestry[12].

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The interaction and coexistence of these two major religions have significantly shaped Nigeria's history, politics, and social dynamics, illustrating the country's diverse religious landscape. South-eastern Nigeria, specifically Igboland, is frequently characterized as a predominantly Christian area. Prior to 1990, conversions to Islam among the Igbo resulted from a complex interaction of internal and external factors, often with indistinct boundaries. The factors encompass a sincere spiritual pursuit and belief in Islam as the correct path to God; acknowledgement of Islam as a universal faith; perceived divine guidance through dreams and revelations; interfaith marriages; and the aspiration for integration into existing Muslim financial and political networks, intensified by the political and economic marginalization of the Igbo after the Nigeria–Biafra War.

In any society, fundamentalism often arises as a response to perceived threats or challenges to the core beliefs and values of a particular ideology or religion. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining traditional practices, scriptures, and moral codes as a means of preserving the integrity and authenticity of the belief system[15]. Fundamentalists may view any deviation from these core principles as a compromise or dilution of their faith or ideology.

This rigid adherence to fundamental principles can lead to a rejection of pluralism, tolerance, and compromise, as fundamentalists tend to view their beliefs as absolute and non-negotiable. It is important to note that fundamentalism can manifest in various religious, political, or ideological contexts and does not necessarily imply extremism or violence[16]. While some fundamentalist movements may engage in radical actions to defend or promote their beliefs, others may focus on internal community practices and the preservation of their traditions without resorting to violence.

Fundamentalism, in this context, refers to a rigid and literal compliance to the fundamental principles and doctrines of a religious, political, or ideological belief system. It typically involves

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a rejection of modern or progressive interpretation and a desire to return to what is perceived as the original or pure form of the belief system. Religious fundamentalism is a complex social phenomenon that has gained significant attention in recent years[17].

Socio-economic factors play a significant role in the rise of religious fundamentalism. South-eastern Nigeria has faced numerous socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and economic disparities. These conditions have created a fertile ground for the spread of fundamentalist ideologies, as individuals seek stability, purpose, and a sense of belonging.

In times of economic hardship, religious institutions often provide social support networks, economic opportunities, and a sense of community[18]. Religious fundamentalist groups leverage these vulnerabilities to attract followers by offering promises of prosperity, moral guidance, and solutions to social problems. They provide a sense of security and hope, particularly to marginalized communities who feel left behind by the economic system[19].

The intercultural dynamics of South-eastern Nigeria contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism. The region's diverse cultural and religious landscape create opportunities for both interfaith dialogue and inter-religious tensions. While interfaith initiatives promote peaceful coexistence, clashes among different religious groups often result from the clash of cultural values and beliefs. In an attempt to protect their cultural and religious heritage, some individuals turn to religious fundamentalism as a means of asserting their identity[20].

This study aims to provide an intercultural perspective on the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria. South-eastern Nigeria is a region known for its cultural diversity, with various ethnic groups and religious affiliations coexisting. However, the region has witnessed a

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growing trend of religious fundamentalism, particularly within Christianity and Islam. This study seeks to explore the background factors contributing to this rise, while also considering intercultural dynamics, historical context, socio-economic factors, and political influences. By examining these factors, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are many distinct ethnic and linguistic communities in Nigeria. Many different cultural and religious communities call this place home. Nigeria is home to a wide variety of ethnic groups, but the Yoruba, the Igbo, and the Hausa/the Fulani are the largest and can be found in the country's Western, Eastern, and Northern areas, respectively. People of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Nigeria have a similar religious tradition. South-eastern Nigeria is known for its diverse ethnic and religious composition. The coexistence of multiple religious beliefs and cultural practices creates opportunities for intercultural dialogue and understanding.

The Southeastern region of the nation has consistently been characterized as primarily Christian. A scholar posits that the historical trajectory of the Nigerian state has been marked by various actions, inactions, and contradictions that persistently echo contemporary realities and the challenges tied to political and socioeconomic implications. Ethno-religious crises constitute a significant aspect of the urban challenges faced in Nigeria. Religious fundamentalism in Nigeria has undoubtedly taken on a destructive dimension, resulting in a significant issue of normlessness. The repercussions of fundamentalist dynamism have engendered scepticism and insecurity among Nigerians, manifesting not only within groups but also between them, across the nation. The rising wave of religious fundamentalism positions Nigeria in a predicament characterised by normlessness or anomie, shaped by the prevailing influence of foreign cultures and civilisations,

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including Arab/Islamic and Western/Christian norms and traditions. The rise of religious fundamentalism, from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria, presents a significant problem in the region.

This phenomenon is characterized by the growing influence and prevalence of rigid religious beliefs and practices, often accompanied by intolerance and exclusionary attitudes towards other faiths and cultural traditions. The emergence of fundamentalism poses numerous challenges to social cohesion, religious harmony, and intercultural understanding.

One major consequence is the erosion of the region's long-standing cultural diversity and pluralism, as fundamentalist ideologies tend to reject or marginalize alternative beliefs and practices. This threatens the intercultural fabric of South-eastern Nigeria and undermines the region's rich heritage of coexistence and mutual respect. Moreover, religious fundamentalism can contribute to social tension, conflict, and even violence, as extremist elements seek to impose their views on others or engage in acts of religious intolerance. Addressing the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that promotes intercultural dialogue, education, and respect for diversity. This is the gap the research intends to fill.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria with a view to understand the underlying factors, dynamics, and implications of the increasing trend of religious fundamentalism in the region. The objective of the study is to:

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i. examine how intercultural interactions and religious diversity influence the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria;
ii. discuss the role of socio-economic factors in the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria;
iii. identify the main factors contributing to the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria

and how they intersect with intercultural perspectives, and

iv. examine the extent to which political and external influences contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, and how do they interact with intercultural dynamics.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What are the main factors contributing to the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria?
ii. How do intercultural interactions and religious diversity influence the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria?
iii. What role do socio-economic factors play in the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, and how do they intersect with intercultural perspectives?
iv. To what extent do political and external influences contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, and how do they interact with intercultural dynamics?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study on the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria holds significant importance for several reasons. Firstly, understanding the factors

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contributing to the rise of religious fundamentalism in this region is crucial for addressing the social, cultural, and political challenges associated with it.

By gaining insights into the root causes and dynamics of this phenomenon, policymakers, community leaders, and religious institutions can develop informed strategies to promote religious tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and social harmony.

Secondly, studying the interplay between intercultural perspectives and religious fundamentalism provides a nuanced understanding of how diverse cultures and religions interact and influence one another. This knowledge can foster a greater appreciation for cultural diversity, help counter stereotypes and biases, and encourage mutual understanding and respect among different religious groups. Furthermore, the findings of the study will contribute to academic scholarship by expanding the knowledge base on the relationship between religion, culture and society. It will also provide insights into the complexities of religious fundamentalism and its impact on intercultural dynamics, thereby enriching the academic discourse on religious studies, sociology, and intercultural studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study on the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria encompasses an exploration of the underlying factors, dynamics, and implications of religious fundamentalism within the region. It involves analysing the interplay between intercultural interactions, religious diversity, socio-economic factors, ethnic tensions, political influences, and external influences. However, this study is limited to three states in South-

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eastern Nigeria namely Anambra, Enugu and Imo States. The scope of the study will be limited to a period of 8 years, that is, from 2015 to 2022.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Fundamentalism: Fundamentalism is an ideology or movement characterized by rigorous observance of core principles and doctrines of a specific belief system, whether it be religious, political, or ideological. It often involves a literal interpretation of sacred texts or foundational documents and a resistance to modern or progressive interpretations. Fundamentalists typically view their beliefs as absolute and non-negotiable, rejecting alternative viewpoints and advocating for the preservation of traditional practices and values. They may see themselves as defenders of their faith or ideology against perceived threats or compromises.

Intercultural Relations: Intercultural relations refer to interactions, exchanges, and relationships between people or groups from different cultural backgrounds. It involves the recognition, understanding, and appreciation of cultural diversity, as well as the ability to communicate and engage with individuals from different cultures in a respectful and inclusive manner. Intercultural relations encompass various aspects, including language, customs, traditions, values, and beliefs. It involves navigating and bridging cultural differences, promoting mutual understanding, and fostering cooperation and collaboration across cultures. Intercultural relations can occur at both individual and societal levels, influencing interactions in various contexts such as education, business, politics, and social settings.

Religion: Religion refers to a system of beliefs, practices, and values that guide individuals and communities in understanding the sacred and the ultimate meaning of life. It often involves rituals, moral codes, and worship, providing a framework for spirituality, ethics, and a sense of purpose.

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Religion plays a vital role in fostering a sense of community and social cohesion. It brings people together through shared rituals, worship, and values, promoting a sense of belonging and solidarity.

Religious Fundamentalism: Religious fundamentalism refers to a strict and literal interpretation of religious doctrines and beliefs, often accompanied by an unwavering adherence to traditional practices and values. It is characterized by the belief that religious teachings are infallible and must be strictly followed without any compromise or deviation. Religious fundamentalists typically view their faith as the only true and valid interpretation, rejecting alternative viewpoints or interpretations within their own religion and often displaying intolerance towards other religions or beliefs

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Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Religion

Religion, a complex and pervasive aspect of human culture, encompasses diverse belief systems and practices that seek to address fundamental questions about existence, purpose, and the divine. It serves as a framework for understanding the supernatural, moral guidance, and communal identity. Rooted in the human need for meaning and connection, religions often involve rituals, scriptures, and moral codes[1]. The notion exhibits significant variation across the globe, incorporating prominent world religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, alongside numerous indigenous belief systems. In offering comfort and fostering a sense of belonging, religion has simultaneously served as a catalyst for discord across historical contexts. The definition remains ambiguous, as it is intricately linked with cultural, historical, and personal dimensions.

The task of defining religion presents a significant challenge within the realm of contemporary religious studies. Indeed, at present, a widely recognized definition of religion is scarcely found

among academics. Any endeavour to delineate religion necessitates the preservation of certain elements while excluding others. The challenge of establishing a clear definition has only intensified in light of our understanding that there exists an almost boundless array of religions, each presenting worldviews that significantly diverge from one another and, at times, even stand in opposition to one another.

A diverse array of definitions has been proposed by religious scholars. One could argue that religion represents a multifaceted and varied cultural phenomenon, such that any attempt to condense it into a singular definition would either inadequately reflect its true essence or result in a misrepresentation. Some do not define religion, arguing that the definition one begins with often influences the course of research in decisive ways. Others put forward definitions but fall short of universal acceptance.

Yet religion has always played a significant role in human life and probably always will. Hence, one needs to know what religion is and what its fundamental components are. This means that considering the challenge of defining religion is an essential precondition for studying religion[5]. In this conceptual review, the research will briefly examine the concept of 'religion', the problem of defining religion, major types of definitions with a critique of the definition of religion and its functional definition by essential elements. Thus, we conclude by arguing that a complementary approach to the definition of religion might be more suited to a complex subject like 'religion' than a compartmentalized approach.

Many people falsely assume that 'religion' is a simple term whose 'essence' can be easily apprehended. The concept 'religion' is modern, and its use dates back to the 16th century, and it is a creation of Western scholars. It is sometimes used interchangeably with 'faith' to indicate a

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belief system that has a communitarian aspect. In dictionaries, ‘religion’ is often defined as a specific system of belief, worship or conduct that prescribes certain responses to the existence and nature of God or some supernatural power or transcendent reality[6].

The origin of the term ‘religion’ is uncertain. Some scholars claim that it is derived from the Latin religion ‘attach’ or ‘conserve’ or ‘moral bond’. A known scholar on this concept explained that it comes from *relegere* ‘to re-read’ to mean ‘carefully consider things related to the cult of the gods’[7]. A Christian author of the fourth century, sees its origin in the religare ‘connect’ or ‘join’ to refer to the bond of piety which binds one to God. The interpretation of the term 'religion' has evolved significantly over the past five hundred years. During the 16th century, it signified the organisational existence of the Christian Church. The religious observances of non-Christians were regarded as either idolatrous or mere trends.8. A Spanish Jesuit employed the term 'religion' to signify 'a belief system that culminates in ceremonial behaviour.'

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In the 18th century, an author in his Dictionary of the English Language employed the term 'religion' to signify 'virtue'. The inaugural edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica utilized the term ‘religion’ as a replacement for ‘theology’. Certain academics have employed the term ‘religion’ to signify ‘piety’. During the Romantic period, spanning the 18th and 19th centuries, the term ‘religion’ evolved to signify individual perspectives and became closely associated with the concept of ‘faith’. With the rise in recognition of various faiths from the late 18th century onward, the term 'religion' began to signify a classification wherein different belief systems were regarded as equal constituents. Currently, numerous academics tend to employ the term 'tradition' in place of what is generally perceived as 'religion.' Consequently, they refer to the Christian tradition, the Buddhist tradition, the Islamic tradition, and the Judaic tradition.

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The word ‘religion’ can have different shades of meaning across diverse cultural contexts. Hence, the use of cross-cultural concepts can become advantageous because of their remarkable power to make the nuances clearer, richer, and more accurate in languages other than European[13]. For example, some alternative concepts for religion in non-European cultures are dharma (teaching, law), darsana (worldview), marga (way) in Sanskrit and chiao (teaching) and tao (way) in Chinese[14].

Some scholars consider religion as a species of the genus ‘world views’ which includes also secular ideologies (like Atheism, Communism, Existentialism, Humanism, Marxism, Maoism, etc.). To them, those systems, which are conventionally and traditionally called religions, are only one species of the worldviews, and the rest could be called non-religious worldviews[15]. Some scholars have claimed that there is no such thing as “religion” in and of itself, only culture and its many manifestations and that certain facets of culture have been arbitrarily chosen, categorized and given the name “religion”[16]. To them ‘religion’ exists merely in the minds of scholars studying culture and has no independent existence of its own.

There are scholars who argue that the term ‘religion’ should be used in the plural because all religions are particular and there exists no religion in the abstract. An author posits that “Perhaps there is no such thing as religion in general all that we meet are particular religions”[17]. However, there are others who admit a plurality of religions but also see certain common elements among them which make it possible to use the term ‘religion’ in the singular. For instance, the Jesuit holds that there are some common and universal phenomena which unite the different religions, and therefore the term can be used in the singular[18].

A scholar adds that religion is infinite in nature and in the different manifestations of religion one should discover the universal element, namely, ‘religion’. He says: “in the religions, you are to

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discover religion"[19]. There are other scholars; however, who maintain that 'religion' is a univocal term and can be predicated to any experience of the transcendent or something analogous to it in any culture. These conflicting views about 'religion' only reveal that it is a very complex concept and there are no easy answers as to what does and does not qualify as 'religion'[20].

There are people who think that religion is all very simple and obvious, but they merely betray a superficial and simplistic familiarity with the concept. They fail to capture its multifaceted aspects and the difficulty in articulating what it really is. This has even led some scholars to drop the word 'religion' altogether. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a scholar, for instance, uses the term 'faith' instead of 'religion'. Thus, he speaks of 'the Christian faith', 'the Jewish faith', 'the Buddhist faith', and 'the Hindu faith'[21].

The definition of religion is a subject of on-going debate, reflecting the diverse manifestations of belief systems across cultures and time. While the provided introduction captures the essence of religion, as a multifaceted phenomenon addressing existential questions, it may be critiqued for its Western-centric perspective[22]. The emphasis on major world religions might overlook indigenous and folk traditions, potentially reinforcing a hierarchical view of religious legitimacy.

Furthermore, the term "pervasiveness" might be seen as an overgeneralization, as religious adherence varies significantly globally, with secularism gaining prominence in some societies. The mention of religion as a source of conflict is accurate, yet it could be balanced by acknowledging its role in fostering community, morality, and social cohesion[23]. Regarding proliferation, the introduction implies continuity in the prevalence of religious beliefs. However, in certain parts of the world, there is a discernible trend towards secularization, challenging the assumption of an unabated proliferation of religious adherence. Itis essential to recognize the

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dynamic nature of religious landscapes, acknowledging shifts and transformations influenced by globalization, technological advancements, and evolving societal values[24].

Another author articulated the notion of religion as a cohesive framework of beliefs and practices pertaining to sacred entities, beliefs and practices that converge into a singular community referred to as a church, encompassing all individuals who subscribe to them. A renowned scholar in psychology characterized religion as a manifestation of wish fulfillment. Nonetheless, contemporary psychology acknowledges that religion may significantly influence an individual's life and experiences, potentially enhancing health and well-being. Research indicates that religious practices may contribute to the cultivation of healthy habits, the regulation of behaviours, and the comprehension of emotions—all of which are significant determinants of health. A recent survey reveals that 47% of adults in the United States hold a form of religious affiliation. Psychologists have put forth various theories to explain the reasons behind individuals' belief in religion. Some scholars have posited that religious belief constitutes a form of pathological wish fulfillment, whereas other researchers have suggested that the inherent functioning of the human brain frequently predisposes individuals to such beliefs.

The human intellect seeks patterns, purpose, and significance, which may elucidate the reasons individuals gravitate towards religion to shape their belief systems[29]. The influences of parenting and culture significantly contribute to an individual's affiliation with the religion in which they were nurtured. The intrinsic human need for belonging, coupled with the aspiration for social connection, further fuels the yearning to be integrated into a collective greater than oneself.

2.1.2 The Problem of Defining Religion

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On the question of defining religion, scholars can be broadly divided into two categories, namely, those who deny the possibility of defining religion, and those who advocate its possibility. The former group claims, for instance, that the definitions of religion put forward in the past have been repeatedly ignored by succeeding generations as inadequate. So, it is better to learn from experience and accept that religion is not definable. From a linguistic point of view, the quest for a conceptual definition of religion is to be dismissed, because religion makes sense only in the context of our ordinary language. All that we know are particular religions and this means that there is no single essence to religion, and hence no unified definition of religion is possible[31].

An author states that each definition of religion incorporates a specific theory about a religion, which inevitably rules out certain phenomena as not truly religious[32]. This view begs the question and implies an implicit theory of what religion actually is.

There can be as many definitions of religion as there are disciplines, people's interpretations of the term "religion" can vary, while insiders' and outsiders' perspectives on religion can differ. There are no boundaries to the study of religion, so it is impossible to define it precisely and set it apart from secular ideologies that aren't usually considered as being equal with traditional religions[33].

Another author claims that defining religion amounts to replacing one ineffable with another, to the substitution of the incomprehensible for the unknown[34]. An author maintains that all religions are constantly in evolution and none of them is static. They change, branch off, and transform, sometimes almost beyond recognition[35]. Consequently, this constantly changing character of

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religion adds to the problems of defining religion. Hence, the attempt to formulate a universally accepted definition of religion may not be easy, if not impossible. But those who advocate the possibility of defining religion recognize the diversity and corrigibility of defining religion and its plurality[36].

Definitions are intended to be instruments that give our conceptual world of experience scope and accuracy, as well as order and discipline. Therefore, it is possible to define religion by considering a few universal traits or fundamental components. Furthermore, even though it can be challenging to define religion, the methodology of the study of religion requires that at least a rough definition be developed because one should be aware of the characteristics of the subject being studied or what constitutes religion[37]. For the sake of clarity and to help those who study religion, we must therefore define "religion."

Some scholars have attempted defining religion in the past; this shows that it is possible to define it, which may come with different degrees of acceptance. Furthermore, the fact that scholars have previously attempted to define religion only serves to demonstrate that it is a concept that can be defined, albeit to varying degrees of acceptance. For instance, a a famous scholar provided 48 definitions of religion with his critical comments on each, to indicate that the attempt to define religion is an enterprise that is practically useless[38]. But some scholars have argued that Leuba has shown that we can actually define religion at least in 48 ways with a greater or lesser success.

Today any scholar of religion knows that there is almost an infinite variety of definitions of religion available in books of philosophy, theology, history of religions, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and jurisprudence[39]. Defining religion is, therefore, possible. Religion can fulfil a diverse array of functions. Religion serves as a profound source of solace and direction. It can

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serve as a foundation for ethical convictions and actions. It may also foster a sense of belonging and continuity with cultural heritage. Certain studies indicate that it could have implications for health[40].

2.1.3 Types of Definitions

There are different approaches to the definition of religion, and they are generally called by such names as, essential-intuitive definition, lexical definition, functional definition, and real definition.

2.1.3.1 The Essential-intuitive Definitions

Proponents of the essential-intuitive definitions of religion are, in fact, abstaining from presenting a definitive characterization. They adhere to the policy of recognizing religion based on observable characteristics. This approach is commonly employed without critically examining the foundational questions surrounding the definition, operating under the assumption that the term 'religion' is straightforward and unequivocal; that there is a shared understanding of its meaning, and that the reality or essence it denotes is readily recognisable.

Should the issue of definition emerge (which frequently it does not), it typically surfaces at the conclusion of the research or at the culmination of an individual's professional journey. However, detractors contend that the concept of 'religion' is an exceedingly intricate phenomenon that cannot be adequately addressed through mere 'intuitive' approaches. Furthermore, the examination of religion constitutes an intellectual endeavour that necessitates the elucidation of fundamental concepts such as 'religion.'

2.1.3.2 The Lexical Definitions

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Lexical definitions describe how words have been used historically. This is what dictionaries provide[43]. Lexical definitions provide us evidence of how a term has been used at a given time by a person or group. But they can be ambiguous since the past usage of a word can differ in a present context[44]. This is especially evident from the use of the word 'religion' in the course of history.

2.1.3.3 The Functional Definitions

Functional definitions, which are semi-arbitrary definitions, specify how a given term is used in a finite context[45]. They are called functional in terms of their place in the social, psychological or any other particular system. They address the impact of religion on an individual, on society, or on both. They omit the central claims about ultimate truth that religion makes. The functional definitions lack truth-value because they are nominal in nature. It is not appropriate to verify the definition's accuracy through data analysis, as it is a decision to use a word in a particular context. However, functional definitions eliminate word ambiguity, which increases study precision[46].

2.1.3.4 The Real Definitions

The real definitions are those that try to capture the essence of reality. They are also called definition by 'content' or 'essence' or 'substance' (hence substantive definition). The quest for essence represents an endeavour to establish an identity amidst the diverse utilisations of a term. Religion constitutes a significant concept, and the fundamental nature of religion lies in the shared characteristics among various faiths. A genuine definition transcends mere binary classification of true or false and is typically derived as a conclusion following a comprehensive investigation. Nonetheless, the challenge associated with real definitions revolves around the perspective of the definer regarding the 'essential nature' of a given entity. In the following discussion, we will

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examine the advantages and disadvantages of functional and real definitions, as these are the types of definitions we commonly encounter.

2.1.4 Some Conditions for Defining Religion

Over the centuries, scholars have offered numerous definitions of religion, but in practice none of them is satisfactory. In some cases, the definitions are too narrow and describe religion in terms of the religious beliefs of the author, or those of their culture, and tend to exclude the religious beliefs of other cultures. Many definitions focus too narrowly and highlight only some selected aspects of religion, and consequently they tend to exclude those religions that do not fit well in their scheme. In other cases, the definitions are too broad and embrace a penumbra of worldviews, which are clearly secular and at times even opposed to religion[49].

To arrive at a good definition of religion, there is need to keep in mind certain conditions. First, the definition ought to be devoid of standards that are influenced by culture. Stated differently, we cannot define two or three cultures exclusively based on their religious systems; for instance, defining religion, in terms of reference to supernatural beings (or entities) who are responsible in the creation of the universe and for its continuing operation. If we define religion in this way, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism and others, with good claims to be 'religions', can never be regarded as religions as they do not speak of a God per se who is the creator and maintainer of the universe.[50]

Certain definitions of religion pose the risk of imposing preconceived ideological limitations, thereby obstructing alternative avenues of exploration. An illustration of this concept can be found in Emile Durkheim's characteriszation of religion as 'an eminently social thing'51.

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In certain instances, some authors' perspective posits that religious realities are manifestations of human attributes. A scholar has posited that religion functions as a manipulative instrument that primarily caters to human power interests. Karl Marx defines religion as 'opium of the people'. Another scholar describes s religion as a 'universal obsession neurosis of humanity, while another famous scholar views religion as mind viruses. [52]. Since religion is a complex and diverse cultural phenomenon, a definition of it has to be applicable to all cultures and widely accepted. At the same time, it must be narrow enough not to be placed in par with such secular ideologies as Marxism, Communism, Nazism, Existentialism, Atheism, Humanism, etc., which are often in conflict with traditional religions[53].

With religion being an existential reality, a definition of religion needs to be aware of the limitations imposed by plurality and context. This context suggests familiarity with various religions in their concrete, historical manifestations. To be plural means to take cultural differences in religion into account. Therefore, in order for a definition of religion to be considered good, it must be both broad and narrow enough to apply to any culture while maintaining the ability to distinguish between what constitutes "religion" and "non-religion"[54]. A definition ought to be formed free from preexisting limitations, whether they be personal or ideological. A good definition should show how religion provides meaning to people's lives and influences society as a whole.

Ultimately, a definition ought to address the aspects of religion that hold true despite the changes that religions experience. In other words, a good definition should contain the universal or essential elements found in every religion[55].

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If we maintain that we need to define religion, we are faced with a classical dilemma: should the definition come before or after the examination of the religious data? Some academics assert that it is impossible to distinguish between religion and non-religion unless we first specify religion and define what we are searching for.

We must, therefore, begin with a basic understanding of "religion", or else we may find ourselves studying subjects unrelated to religion, such as theology, culture, psychology, sociology, anthropology, or something else entirely. Some scholars argue that defining the topic beforehand runs the risk of causing bias in the data or, at the absolute least, of omitting some relevant data that were inadvertently left out in the first place. As a result, they contend that one can define religion after studying the relevant data[56]. Max Weber was one scholar who argued that if we attempt to define religion at all, it must be done at the conclusion of the study.

An Italian philosopher of religion holds a similar view[57] as he proposes a way out of this dilemma. Here the definition of religion can be divided into two categories, each serving a special function and only a function. This research seeks to call them 'preliminary definitions' and 'final definitions'[58]. It could start with a few elementary preliminary definitions for determining the subject matter of the study, and conclude with some 'final definitions', either by refining some of the existing definitions or by creating new ones altogether.

The preliminary definitions should be several. It is best done by referring to the definitions of some known scholars of religion over a wide time frame, from different disciplines, and from cross cultural contexts, and then briefly criticise them from one's own experience and knowledge of religions, in order to discover the positive and negative elements in them[59].

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At this stage it is also important that different categories of definitions are provided, such as, essential-intuitive, lexical, functional, substantive, etc. At the final stage too, it is good to examine more than one 'final definition' of religion so that one is made aware that no definition is absolute, and that each definition is open to further refinement. The plurality of definitions at the final stage will also allow one to choose from several options, according to one's preference or discard them altogether for a new definition of one's own formulation, because as Peter Berger posits, "definitions are matters of taste and thus fall under the maxim de gustibus"[60].

2.1.5 Assessment of the Functional Meaning of Religion

A functional meaning of religion, as we have seen, is one that is based on the supposed impact or functions of religion in the life of individuals or on society, or both. Those who advocate for the functional definition argue that both theistic and non-theistic belief systems, as well as cultures that acknowledge a supernatural order, can benefit from its application, and to those which make no such recognition[61]. They further claim that a functional definition is capable of explaining historical discontinuity and change in religion, which is superior to any description by essential elements. They also insist that it can be empirically verified, so that it can be proven true or false[62].

A classic functionalistic explanation of religion, for instance, is a scholar's description of faith as 'an eminently social thing' because of its integrative or socializing power in the society. Another instance is Max Weber's interpretation of religion as 'source of social action'. But these definitions are reductionist because they do not accept that religion is a valid reality in its own right. Instead they see it as a function of a social process that should be reduced to sociological explanations. Besides, both scholars reject any reference to a supernatural order[63].

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As other religious sociologists have accurately pointed out, even in situations where religion serves as an integrative factor and source of social action in certain communities, it is wrong to presume that the existence of religion in general is explained by such a function.

Another example of a functional definition is the description of religion as a 'symbolic framework'[64]. Here, the author uses symbols to refer to that which synthesises the character and quality of life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood. But in essence, this description emphasizes only the ethical, cultural, pragmatic and empirical aspects of religion and omits any reference to the supernatural. The scholar forgets the fact that some symbolic expressions can also be religious acts that point to a transcendental reality or supernatural order, by virtue of the intentionality of the subject. In fact, the primary purpose of the symbols used in religion is to point to transcendental realities as there is no possibility of direct access to them[65].

A psychologist who approached religion from the functional point of view paid attention to the effects of religion on human beings rather than the reality of its referents. In fact, unlike other scholars, he considered religion as a necessary component of mental health. But he did not care to ask whether the referents of religion really existed, rather he merely noted the effect of the experience the objects of religion have on people. There are some definitions of religion which emphasise the ability of religion to provide an answer to certain simple inquiries of life and address its issues, whether apparent or real. These definitions typically take either an existential or psychological approach to religion, or both. This perspective on religion is based on the fundamental idea that human beings face specific basic life challenges (such as sickness, suffering, death, injustice, natural calamities, etc.), which cannot be escaped.

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They cause exasperation, dissatisfaction, and in order to make life bearable, people need to find a solution for anxiety. Many see religion as a strategy for resolving fundamental issues of human existence[66]. This perspective can be considered as a functional way of conceiving religion. But this 'meaning providing aspect' does not exhaust the nature and purpose of religion, although it can be considered as one of the elements of it. The functional definition of religion has other disadvantages. A functionalistic definition of religion posits that religion, or a particular religion, is merely a social or psychological construct, or has anthropological or cultural functions which it performs[67]. A definition of religion which considers solely its functions inherently tends towards reductionism. A functional definition explains what religion does (or can do), for society, individuals or both, and claims to have explained what religion is all about. Religion, which is a multifaceted reality, cannot, however, be reduced to some functions alone, and a functional definition cannot pretend to be the sole explanation of religion[68].

Another problem with the functional definitions is that the essential transcendence of the object intended by religious acts (transcendent intentionality) is totally ignored by functional definitions, and consequently religion is reduced to culture, sociology, anthropology, psychology or something similar.

The functional definitions, being empirical in nature, totally sidestep the ontological question of reference to transcendental realities, which are so fundamental in religion. Unless the functional definitions take into account the irreducible element of transcendence in religion, the reductionist tendency cannot be overcome[69].

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An author has observed that in the 19th century it was common to have definitions of religion which implied a reductionist philosophy of religion, and he called this method 'assassination through definition'[70]. According to the proponents of the functional definitions, religion is defined as anything that fulfills a prescribed function. Such a definition does not permit any clear boundary separating religion from non-religion. A typical case of this is a scholar's definition of religion as 'ultimate concern'. Anything can be an ultimate concern for a person or society. It does not mean that every 'ultimate concern' is religion. Therefore, no purely functional definition of religion can be considered as a satisfactory definition of religion[71].

2.1.6 Assessment of Definition of Religion by Essential Elements

Another definition of religion, which we frequently encounter, is the definition involving supposed 'essential elements' or 'common content' or 'substance'. Some theorists strongly prefer this way of defining religion and consider it as closely resembling the common-sense approach[72]. A definition by essential elements is concerned with what religion is. In order to discover the common content or essential elements of religion, one has to employ the method of cross-cultural comparison, analysis, analogy, induction, deduction and intuition. The purpose is to identify and separate the 'essence' of religion from the 'accidents'.

A definition by essential elements (which he calls 'substantive definition'), generally includes only such meanings and meaning complexes that refer to traditional transcendent entities like God, gods, supernatural entities as well as the worlds[73]. Some examples include religious interpretations that connect supernatural or superhuman beings, some authors' explanations by reference to 'holy', another author's definition by reference to 'sacred', Gerardus van der Leeuw's definition by reference to 'power', etc.

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In recent years, however, several scholars have objected to the use of the above terms, since they consider them vague, and cannot be empirically verified[74]. The distinction between 'essential' and the 'accident' is central to the definition by content or substance, and precisely around this issue conflicts have taken place. Some scholars argue that determining what 'essence' is and what is 'accident' already implies an evaluation. Then, there are others who argue that there is no such thing as common content in religions[75].

For example, a scholar explained that there is no common core or essence in religions. He explains: "Let us look first at Christianity and then at Buddhism, a good contrast of styles and contents. One cannot expect a single core of content in the religions"[76]. Another author also holds a similar view and argues that there is no essence to religion and that what we call religion is a heterogeneous collection of practices, which are so different from one another.[77]

Hence the search for a common essence will not be useful, and consequently no single definition of religion in terms of essence will be possible. However, it is to be remembered that the use of analogy is important in identifying the essential elements of religions. If we take certain key concepts of religion as univocal, certainly we may not find anything common among them.

Perhaps, the scholars who refuse to see any common element in religions are studying the religious data using a methodology where there is no place for analogy. Yet, if we apply analogy as part of the methodology of the study of religion, it may not be difficult to discover certain common elements in them[78].

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Another problem with the scholars who object to definition by essential elements is that their study of religion remains at the level of the phenomena, and they fail to make a philosophical reflection on the phenomenological data. This is once again a methodological deficiency. Unless the phenomenological data is subject to philosophical reflection, through rigorous use of comparison, analysis, deduction, induction, and intellectual intuition, one cannot discover any common element in religions. For instance, religions may refer to a transcendent reality using different names, such as Brahman, Trinity, Nirvana, Emptiness, State of isolation, etc. When we analyse these concepts from a philosophical perspective, it is not difficult to conclude that they all refer to a transcendent reality, understood analogically[79].

Those who study religion must admit that not all the essential elements of religions are empirically verifiable, though some of them can be, such as rituals, myths, narratives, institutions, religious authority, religious community, ethical code, ability of religion to help people cope with life, etc. But at the same time religious symbols and ritual acts have intentionality that point to certain transcendent realties, and which are beyond the grasp of those who employ the empirical method. Certain essential elements of religion can be reached only through a philosophical reflection on the religious data. Such an approach is justified because the study of religion belongs to humanities and not to science proper, where the method employed is empirical[80].

Strictly speaking, the study of religion does not fall within the field of science. Science has nothing to say about assertions that are beyond the empirical. No one can prove scientifically that the supernatural beings or transcendental states about which religious people speak. The concept of speaking does not, in fact, have a tangible existence.

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As non-empirical entities, their existence cannot be validated or invalidated through methods of science. Given that religion, by any rational definition, encompasses non-empirical components, it is evidently unsuitable for the application of the scientific method.[81]. Hence, there is no priori reason to deny the validity of the definition of religion by essential elements.

2.1.7 Historical Overview of Religious Practices in Nigeria Prior to Christianity and Islam

Contemporary academic research acknowledges that the belief in a Supreme Being and the originator of all existence is almost ubiquitous in conventional African societies. Africans, especially Nigerians, have knowledge of the concept of God prior to the arrival of the presence of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. Indeed, an occurrence took place with the autochthonous faith system practised by the indigenous population. The veracity of the matter is that these alien faiths did not emerge in Nigeria without any pre-existing conditions. Signs of pre-existing culture and ideologies of the aborigines, which may be traced back to their religious beliefs, were present.

Prehistoric religions emerged in response to the enigmatic and inexplicable aspects of some occurrences and facets of human existence. Prehistoric people likely understood supernatural phenomena and attributed them to supernatural forces of greater magnitude than themselves.

This led people to intentionally and subconsciously focus their indigenous religious practises on crucial aspects of their lives, such as overcoming anxieties and guaranteeing collective survival and prosperity[82].

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This likely accounts for the practise of historical people performing libation through the use of wine and laying other items such as food, jewellery, and tools in cemeteries so as to establish a strong connection between the departed and the spiritual realm[83].

Nigerian traditional religion is considered to be the most valuable legacy passed down by the ancestors of Nigeria to their descendants. The African Traditional Religion, often known as the traditional religion, was the most common religion in Nigerian history. The Traditional Religions in Africa encompass the religious beliefs and practices specific to the African people. Itis a customary native practice originating from Africa. It might be referred to as the indigenous religion of Africa due to its African origins and predominant practice among Africans[84]. There is a widely held belief that the indigenous religion of Africans is not confined to a certain geographical area. It is claimed that this phenomenon is not limited to Africa and among Africans, rather it is supposed to be inclusive of all racial groups worldwide.

“Africa" specifically denotes the geographical region where ATR (African Traditional Religion) has significant influence. The indigenous religion, which predates the arrival of Christianity and Islam, has been practised by Nigerians for a significant period. African people have embraced this religion in every part of their lives[85]. Regarding the religiosity of Nigerians, particularly the Igbo people, a professor affirms that the Igbo individual is very devout and lacks the ability to exist without religion. They engage in religious practices diligently, including eating, drinking, and even sneezing. Religion is an integral aspect of one's whole existence.

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This interpretation aligns with the intended meaning of another author's statement, which suggests that the presence of an African individual is closely tied to their religious beliefs. Africans, notably Nigerians, are characterised by their strong inclination towards religious beliefs and practices[86]. This traditional religion has significantly influenced Nigerians politically, socially, and in economic activities[87].

2.1.8 Some Factors that Contributed to the Spread of Religion in Nigeria

Religion has a prominent position among the main faiths in Nigeria. The entry into Nigeria is believed to have occurred in three distinct periods. Christianity is said to have emerged in Nigeria around the 15th Century, marking its first phase of introduction. Warri as well as Benin in the Niger Delta area were the initial towns to witness the existence of missionaries in the region, as shown by several historical records. The Portuguese Roman Catholic Mission, invited by Oba Uzolua in 1485, and subsequently by Oba Esigie in 1514, was the oldest recorded Christian mission in Nigeria, namely in Benin[88].

Historical evidence indicates that the original effort to introduce Christianity in Benin was unsuccessful due to the unwavering adherence of the Benin Kings to their own faith. There is evidence to suggest that there were other Benin shortcomings throughout the fifteen Century, of which the aforementioned is one example. In the 16th Century, the second endeavour was somewhat successful as the Oba and many of his chiefs willingly underwent baptism and embraced the Christian faith, although with certain modifications to suit their own beliefs and practices[89]. Subsequently, Christian churches were constructed, but regrettably, it seemed that the Benin Mission was limited to the royal court.

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Subsequently, there is a documented proof that a number of Augustinian monks, Spanish Capuchins, and Missionaries from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fidei took part in the Benin and Warri Missions[90]. Their efforts had mixed results, with both favourable and unfavourable outcomes on each occasion. The extent to which this Benin mission grew is unknown. However, the presence of crucifixes, damaged statues of saints, and other Catholic symbols found in the Benin royal court years later strongly suggests that the Benin missionary activity had been successful[91].

Christianity is said to have spread into Nigeria during the second phase, namely via Western Nigeria. In 1841, Lagos had transformed into a well-known slave port, with King Kosoko playing a prominent role in promoting the trade. Indications suggest that genuine missionary efforts in Yoruba land began after his expulsion by the British rule. The Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Mission (C.M.S) were among the first missions to spread Christianity in Yoruba territory. They were led by Catechist Henry Townsend and Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman, respectively, between 1842-1847. A prominent scholar was the first Yoruba individual to undergo conversion to Christianity while residing in Sierra Leone, after being liberated from slavery[91]. He played a crucial role in spreading the gospel to his local community.

In 1846, the Calabar Mission was launched, spearheaded by the Scottish Presbyterian Mission, with the primary objective of spreading the Christian faith among the Efik people. The first convert from a Creek town was baptized by a pastor, who was among the first settlers in Calabar and were missionaries, after having been in Ethiopia. Subsequent to the initiation of missionary efforts in Calabar, further missionaries like Mary Slessor were involved. The ruler of the Creek town was King Eyo[92].

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Integrity had a significant role in facilitating the establishment of religion in Calabar by missionaries. The Church of Presbyterians expanded to different regions and erstwhile the Eastern area from Calabar. Christian Missions were primarily introduced to Eastern Nigeria via two basic approaches. The first trajectory extended from the Lagos region in Western Nigeria, whereas the subsequent trajectory led straight to the eastern part of the nation via a seaport. For the sake of clarity, he neglected to specify the particular Sea Port[93]. He affirms that the Presbyterian and Qua Iboe Churches established a presence in the eastern region by entering via Calabar. Over time, Christian Missions extensively expanded over Eastern Nigeria.

Moreover, Nigeria saw the arrival of missionaries in Northern Nigeria during the third phase, starting in 1870. It was said to occur in three distinct periods as well. The first period from 1870 to 1888 was rather successful, despite not achieving any individual conversions. However, the missionaries were able to establish contact with the northern region and pave way for future missionary endeavours. The key individuals involved in this endeavour were Crowther Samuel Ajayi, liberated Charles Pau, Archdeacon Henry John, Dr. Baike, and a Nigerian slave[94].

The subsequent stage occurred from 1888 until 1900. In this period, missionary endeavours became linked because of British imperialism, causing many to question the credibility of the missionaries. In 1890, the CMS (Church Missionary Society) funded the Sudan party, also known as the Hausa Association, with the purpose of spreading Christianity in Northern Nigeria. Their objectives included translating the Gospel into the Hausa Language and constructing a college.

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This group included individuals who were alumni of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, as well as among others, the presidents of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, CMS and others[95]. Every effort to win over the Muslim population was unsuccessful, the missionaries only managed to convert a few followers of the traditional faith in the northern region.

Over time, mission stations were systematically created across the area, serving as strategic hubs for the dissemination and infiltration of the Northern Nigerian gospel. Subsequently, more missionary organisations also expressed their desire to extend their efforts to northern Nigeria. During the third phase, from 1900 to 1918, the British government displayed an apparent opposition to missionary work by imposing restrictions on missionary activities inside the region. However, the early enthusiasm showed by some emirs in establishing trade connections with Europeans partially facilitated the growth and consolidation of Christianity in the Northern region[96].

2.1.9 s The Significance of Religion in the Nigerian Society

Nigeria is a religiously diverse country. In addition to the three prominent faiths; namely, Christianity, Islam, and Traditional Religion, there are various religions vying for significance and acknowledgment. Notwithstanding this fact, Nigeria is theoretically a secular state. This provision has been included in the constitution since the country gained independence. The term "secular" is derived from the Latin word "Secularis," which specifically denotes anything pertaining to the temporal or worldly aspects. The term is often understood as pertaining to secular matters, as opposed to holy ones or without specific religious affiliations[97].

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Secularism, as an ideology, denies or excludes religion. It asserts that religion should be excluded from matters of government and that government regulations should not concern themselves with religion. A secular state is characterised by the absence of any official connection or involvement between religious groups and politics. This diverges from a theocratic or religious state, where the affairs of the state are determined by religion.

In Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the government of the federation is prohibited from endorsing any religion as the official state religion[98]. Hence, religion should not be a factor in policy creation, governance, and other governmental operations. Implicitly, each individual has the entitlement to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Section 38 guarantees individuals the freedom of thought and conscience. Religion is a fundamental right, which allows individuals to freely alter their religion or belief, as well as the freedom to publicly or privately express and promote their religion or belief through worship, teaching, practice, and observance.

Individuals attending educational institutions shall not be compelled to receive religious education or participate in any religious rituals or practices that pertain to a religion other than their own or a religion disapproved by their parents or guardians. No religious group or sect shall be prohibited from offering religious instruction to students belonging to that particular group or sect in any educational establishment that is fully supported by that group or sect[99]. The constitution also underscores the active promotion of national integration. Hence, any kind of prejudice based on one's place of birth, gender, religious beliefs, social standing, ethnic background, or language affiliation is strictly forbidden.

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The core values of the country are Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Self-reliance, and Patriotism. Furthermore, political party membership is accessible to all citizens, regardless of their place of origin, circumstances of birth, gender, religion, or ethnic group[100]. Based on the above information, the religion policy in the Nigerian constitution may be comprehended in a theoretical manner.

The legislative laws are established to guarantee the people's right to religious freedom and to prevent the state or government from endorsing or favouring any one religion. The idea of "live and let live" is acknowledged, as well as the potential contribution of religion to the lives of people, therefore fostering a belief in religious tolerance. Religions are indeed powerful communities that foster strong and effective bonds among their members, like familial connections that are developed through experience[101]. The politicisation of religion is an inherent consequence of a multi-religious country such as Nigeria. The only way to prevent this is by avoiding the circumstances that cause it[102].

2.1.10 The Concept of Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism, as a socio-religious phenomenon, denotes a strict following of basic principles to the foundational principles of a specific belief system, often characterized by a literal interpretation of sacred texts and a resistance to modern secular influences. It spans various religions, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, manifesting as a reaction to perceived threats to traditional values and practices. The term originated in early 20th-century Protestant Christianity, describing a movement emphasizing the "fundamentals" of biblical doctrine[103].

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Fundamentalist ideologies typically reject theological compromise and seek a return to perceived religious origins, resisting the influence of contemporary societal norms. In the Islamic context, this has led to the rise of political Islam, where fundamentalist movements advocate for the implementation of strict Sharia law. In Christianity, fundamentalism can be observed in movements opposing secularism, science, and social changes, often manifested in debates over issues like evolution or gender roles[104].

Key characteristics of fundamentalism include a sense of absolute certainty in one's beliefs, a rejection of pluralism, and a tendency towards exclusivism, viewing adherents of other faiths or even slightly divergent interpretations as adversaries. Fundamentalist movements often advocate for a homogeneous society based on their interpretation of religious principles, thus leading to potential conflicts with secular governance and human rights[105].

While some individuals find solace and identity in fundamentalist beliefs, the rigidity inherent in these ideologies can contribute to social division and intolerance. The concept of fundamentalism raises important questions about the balance between religious freedom and the potential societal impacts of rigid, uncompromising interpretations of faith. Understanding and engaging with fundamentalism necessitates recognizing the complex interplay between religious beliefs, cultural contexts, and broader socio-political dynamics[106].

Fundamentalism, a term initially coined in the context of early 20th-century Protestant Christianity, has evolved to encompass various religious, political, and cultural movements. Scholars from diverse disciplines offer nuanced definitions, reflecting the multifaceted nature of fundamentalist ideologies[107]

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One prominent definition stems from the work of a religious studies scholar, who identifies fundamentalism as a reactive and militant response to perceived secularization. He emphasises the assertion of absolute truth, often accompanied by a rejection of pluralism, and a strict adherence to sacred texts. While insightful, this definition could be critiqued for potentially oversimplifying the motivations behind fundamentalist movements. It may not capture the complexities of historical, cultural, and political factors that contribute to the emergence of fundamentalist ideologies[108].

On the other hand, a political scientist broadens the scope, defining fundamentalism as a discourse of power rather than merely a reaction to secularism. Lawrence argues that fundamentalism seeks to establish a particular vision of society and polity, often involving the imposition of a rigid moral code. This definition introduces a valuable political dimension, highlighting the power dynamics inherent in fundamentalist movements. However, it may be critiqued for downplaying the role of genuine religious conviction among adherents, potentially overlooking the sincere quest for spiritual purity that characterises some fundamentalist expressions[109].

Anthropologists offer a more nuanced perspective, emphasizing the historically contingent nature of fundamentalism. A scholar argues that the term is often employed to stigmatize movements that challenge dominant political and cultural norms. This definition encourages a critical examination of power dynamics and the political use of the term "fundamentalism" to marginalize dissent. However, it may be critiqued for its potential relativism, as it might downplay the distinct characteristics of movements that genuinely exhibit fundamentalist tendencies[110].

Historian and theologian focusing on the Christian context, defines fundamentalism as a renewal movement seeking to preserve the core tenets of a faith tradition in the face of perceived theological drift. Marsden's definition highlights the sincere desire for doctrinal purity within

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fundamentalist movements. However, it may be critiqued for its potential bias, as it primarily addresses the Christian experience and may not fully encapsulate the motivations of fundamentalist movements in other religious traditions[111].

A scholar provided a definition of Christian fundamentalism as a militant opposition to modernist Protestant evangelicalism. Christian fundamentalists were against both modernist theology and the cultural changes associated with it. Many of these churches embraced a confrontational approach and specific theological beliefs such as dispensationalism. However, it is not an organized movement and lacks a national body or official statement. The founders reacted against liberal theology and actively affirmed that certain ideas were essential to the Christian faith: the infallibility of the Bible, Sola Scriptura, Virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and the imminent personal return of Jesus Christ.

The term fundamentalism is commonly used to depict a strict adherence to the Christian doctrines, rooted in a literal interpretation of the Bible, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th Century.

The Protestant movement, led by Evans, opposed the adaptation of Christian doctrine to modern scientific theory and philosophy. Fundamentalism emerged as a response by American evangelicals to uphold biblical authority in the face of various aspects of modernity. It can be best understood as orthodox Christianity during the later 19th and early 20th century, representing a continuation of biblical and supernatural Christianity, when many denominations deviated. The term "fundamentalist" was introduced in 1920 to describe those who fiercely defended the fundamentals of Christianity.

Within Christianity, fundamentalism typically refers to the conservative faction of evangelical Christianity, known as the most conservative segment of Protestant Christianity. Fundamentalist

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Christians generally uphold the belief that the Bible is inspired by God and is without error. They reject the modern analysis of the Bible as a historical document shaped by authors advocating their evolving spiritual beliefs. Instead They consider the Bible to be the word of God, internally consistent, and free of error.

The word "fundamentalist" comes from the 1909 book "The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth," which outlined five essential Christian beliefs for those against the modernist movement[115]. It also prohibited the instruction of any theory that contradicts the account of divine creation of humanity as presented in the Bible, and instead promoted the teaching that humans are descended from a lower form of animals.

In the late 1930s, a sub-culture of Christian fundamentalists emerged and essentially disengaged from the broader society. After significant modifications to Roman Catholic beliefs and practices, in the 1960s Vatican II conferences, the label "fundamentalist" began to encompass Catholics who opposed the changes and sought to uphold traditional beliefs and practices. As a result, it became a widely used term to characterise the most conservative factions within Christianity, including both Protestant and Catholic groups[116].

Fundamentalism is a widely used term that describes the strict adherence to Christian doctrines rooted in a literal interpretation of the Bible. Those who adhere to the longstanding belief that every word of the Bible is true are referred to as advocating for biblical inerrancy. This assertion is based on faith, but it does not necessarily align with following or embodying the teachings of Jesus. The Protestant concept of "faith alone," derived from Saint Augustine by Calvin and Luther, renders all of that as predominantly optional or renders any form of morality irrelevant. They only

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recognize matters related to sex, adherence to their religious teachings, and challenging authority as "sin".[117]

Nigeria has long been home to people who subscribe to different religious beliefs. Yet, in recent years, the conflict between the different religious groups, especially Christians and Muslims, has become increasingly violent and more frequent. The growth of Islamic fundamentalism seems to be the catalyst of much of the violence in the region. This has been especially so since the establishment of a terrorist organization by the name of Boko Haram in 1995, who carry out attacks in their quest to establish a 'pure' Islamic state. The organisation promotes fundamentalist ideologies, meaning that subscribers of the organisation are often unwilling to be tolerant of those who do not adhere to the same beliefs as them[118].

Although relations have been particularly fraught between these religious groups throughout Nigeria, nowhere has witnessed more suffering than the central and northern regions, where discrimination against Christians is rife. Areas of particular concern include the states of Borno, Yobe and Kano where it is alleged that Boko Haram has been responsible for scores of attacks. As of April 2013, these three states had collectively seen no fewer than 902 casualties because of Boko Haram instigated attacks since 2009[119]. Acts of violence that have and continue to take place include suicide bombings, massacres, and the deliberate targeting of churches.

2.1.11 Analysis of Fundamentalism throughout History, its Beliefs, and Practices

Many religious splinter groups, such as the Plymouth Brethren (who developed dispensationalism), the Millerites (who became the Adventists), the Mormons, the Jehovah's witnesses, and the Pentecostals, embrace modern Premillennialism (end-times theology). They often attempt to discredit historic Christianity by asserting that all the prominent commentaries, church fathers, and even the Reformers were misled by "man-made doctrines". New revelations

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are claimed, and their leaders even claimed to have received “new truth” or at other times “discovered truth” that had been lost since the apostles[120].

Enthusiasm was whipped up on the false pretence that Christ’s coming was imminent. Frequent false predictions did not seem to deter this enthusiasm. Dispensational premillennialism was marketed the same way as the cult-like groups. For these groups, the only scriptures addressed specifically to Christians were the gospel of John, Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation[121]. Their moral code is that of the most brutal sections of the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments. One will hear “born again” (John) endlessly, but little relevance is paid at all to the other gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke, the core of Jesus' most important moral teachings[122.] Because much of Jesus' teachings are now optional, fundamentalists think they are saved and that their behavior, no matter how morally reprehensible, is pardoned. They create God after themselves[123].

It should be mentioned that all of these cult/splinter religions regard mainline Protestant and Catholic churches as "spirits of the Antichrist." The majority of their assertions are wholly unbiblical, such as the idea of a "secret rapture," meanwhile, the word "rapture" is not found once in the Bible. In reality, they advocate for the occult and their politics. Their leaders possess no official theological training. However, it is impossible to quantify the harm they cause to other people's emotional health[124].

In 1920, a Baptist editor also created the phrase "fundamentalism" to describe Christians prepared "to do battle royal for the fundamentals." The term was swiftly taken up by all parties. The 19th-century American and British theologies served as several of the foundations for fundamentalism. One source was dispensationalism, which emerged from the application of the historical-

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grammatical method of hermeneutics to the entire Bible[125] and represented a rediscovery of early Christian premillennialism in the 1830s in England. According to a millenarian conception, God revealed Himself to humanity in phases known as "dispensations," which separated time into distinct periods.

An author classified the dispensational principle as follows: (a) the dispensation of man till the fall of man. Before the advent of sin, man lived in a pristine moral state during this time. (b) The 1656 years from the fall of man until the deluge, during which conscience was "dispensed with knowledge." The moral state of humanity continued to deteriorate. (c) The way human government is implemented, from the flood to the language barrier. God was so incensed by the moral state of humanity that he overturned their scheme by causing a linguistic misunderstanding. (d) The Promised Land, 430 years from Abraham's call to the Exodus[126].Man's moral state caused him to become idolatrous and resort to the Egyptian gods. (e) The law was dispensed from Sinai to Calvary, a 1491-year journey that culminated in the cross.

The Acts and Epistles describe the grace period, which spans from the descent of the Holy Spirit to the descent of Christ. The moral situation demonstrates that sinfulness resulted from man's fall. (g) The era of judgment or adversity spanned from the church's rapture until the millennium. The moral state of humanity demonstrates that the disappearance of the church has left the world's population with no regard for God and no means of self-control. (h) The kingdom dispensation period, which spans 1000 years from Christ's descent until the judgment on the great white throne[127]. Man is fallen and unrepentant in terms of his moral state in this situation. The world is about to enter the final phase, according to this theory, when Christ will return. The revival of Israel is a significant indication since fundamentalist foreign policy revolves around its support.

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Fundamentalists view themselves as "guardians of both the early Christian heritage and the American traditions of the Puritans and the Founding Fathers." However, the sense of religious mission linked to the Puritans had largely faded even before the American Revolution. The American Revolution itself can be characterized as a conservative shift, in contrast to the violent upheaval of the French Revolution[128], which paved the way for fascism and communism. While fundamentalism serves as a response to modernism, it has also embraced various new beliefs and practices. Many of these churches have been influenced by non-Christian modern theologies, such as Christian Identity and Christian Reconstructionism, which often incorporate elements associated with the occult, racism, and anti-Semitism.[129]

Christian identity, particularly, can be problematic due to its apocalyptic theology, which fosters a mindset of paranoia and a sense of infiltration within churches. Many fundamentalist preachers were often only semi-literate and tended to reject most mainstream church teachings and education as a whole. They relied on the misconception that the Bible was the sole source of inspiration, often preaching their own views. This has led to the emergence of numerous new cults and churches today.

In this manner, anything could be considered "the word of God". Fundamentalism deployed cessationism to dismiss the current significance of the charismata by claiming that spiritual gifts were exclusive to a previous generation and are no longer applicable[130]. Fundamentalists are not opposed to intellectual discourse; rather, they are informed defenders who respond to liberal theology and skepticism by employing the same philosophical approaches and critical analysis

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used by their adversaries. Decades later, the term fundamentalism underwent a significant transformation. Pentecostalism and Muslim fundamentalism aligned in their opposition to modernity while emphasising the inerrancy of their sacred texts, as well as nationalism and resistance to minority consciousness[130].

They both asserted that they were the true embodiment of their respective traditions, emphasizing unique aspects, activism, moralistic puritan ethics, and a blend of intellectual and popular influences. They contended against the supremacy of reason over revelation, the minimization of the supernatural, and the acceptance of relativistic, universalistic ethics[131]. The American moral majority, that actually emerged when evangelicalism reinvented itself in the post-second world war era, became the signifier of this movement within Christianity.

2.1.12 The Pluralistic Ideology of Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria.

An author portrays Pentecostalism and radical Islamic groups in Africa as fundamentalists, citing increasing conflict as a result of competing fundamentalism. Commentators link the collapse of Pentecostal charismatic spirituality and the violent reaction of enraged Muslims over the past 20 years. Since the mid-1970s, charismatic evangelical activities have increased in the northern areas that had previously been Muslim enclaves[132]. One notable instance is the 1990 campaign led by German-born citizens in the historic city of Kano. More than a million people flocked to the stadium every night for a week. He dispatched vans across the city to transport the street vendors, the blind and deaf.

Although he is said to have healed a great number of people, a riot occurred to indicate Muslim opposition when he was scheduled to return two years later. During the same time period, Muslim radicalism on a global scale had had an ideological impact on young Muslims. The violent

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environment might have been exacerbated by the coincidence of the two trends, the emergence of young, charismatic Pentecostalism and extreme Islam.

The demonization of Islam in the Nigerian Pentecostal rhetoric and the absence of a dialogical theology and praxis within this fast-expanding branch of Christianity should be underlined as potential sources of harm and obstacles to conflict transformation[133]. However, the dynamics of the political culture must be understood to comprehend Pentecostal political ethics.

Like mesmerizing drums, the great commission and the d'awaah call adherents to a contemporary crusade. Nigeria's division of the country into sharia and non-sharia states represents a deliberate endeavor to territorialize Islam and to draw lines between holy places and other areas against infidels[134].

The rise of prominently visible Christian places in Nigeria's northern areas is an intriguing feature of the new religious landscape. Every northern city has a section designated for the old cities and the Sabon Gari, or outer districts inhabited by strangers. These regions acquired a particular southern Christian identity that charismatic organizations built as redeemed spaces, even as the southerners achieved commercial dominance.

The emergence of a fierce competition over the use of contemporary media as a propaganda tool is another sign of a hostile environment. Muslims mimicked Christian propaganda, using radio, television, pamphlets, and cassettes to resist the charismatic insurgency. The media's allure for Pentecostal organizations has grown to be a significant area of research[136]. Muslim sellers responded by invading public spaces and motor parks with cassettes that played sermons and songs in Arabic. Islamic evangelism erupted from mosques into wider public areas due to the da'wah

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call. The geographic distribution of religious expression becomes crucial to comprehending the evolving religious landscape in Nigeria[137].

The religious market became more competitive, which explains why using violence is so simple. Northern non-Islamic ethnic groups began to reclaim their identity after years of trauma. They rejected the politics of cultural dominance and marginalization, and expressed their autonomy within the new democratic regime. Just as their opponents used Islam as a cultural signifier and identity marker, they accepted Christianity. Chieftaincy disputes, pilgrimages, equal time and space allotment in state-owned media, and the distribution of political offices were among the many topics that turned into hot spot debates[138].

The un-Islamised communities emphasized that Muslim leaders would no longer rule and went over the imposed idea of a single North to govern them[139]. When the Muslim Hausa rulers in Zango Kataf objected to the cultural revival, a violent confrontation broke out.

Hajj performers in Nigeria are referred to as Alhaji or Alhaja. Christian travelers who have visited the holy land have begun to add JP, or Jerusalem Pilgrim, to their names. Bottles of Jordanian water and crucifixes, sanctified at the Holy Sepulchre and Mount Olive, are highly profitable commodities traded by Roman Catholic and Anglican patrons[140]. Students at schools were enlisted to be the front-runners, which made the atmosphere unstable. In several universities, polytechnics, and secondary schools, there were boiled-over conflicts. Elections for student union government positions at the tertiary level resembled religious conflicts.

Another Pentecostal fallacy is that since Ishmael is not included in the covenant, Islam is the bondwoman's false religion. It is believed that Allah was one of the 360 gods in the Ka'abah during

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Arabia's pre-Islamic era and that, only because his father served as that particular deity's priest prior to his death, Allah survived the reconstruction of this temple following Mohammed's conquest. The moon, the star, and other fundamental Islamic symbols, together with their rites of power, are demonized in Pentecostal cosmology[141]. This is significant because, since the 1970s, fundamentalism has become increasingly integrated into mainstream national politics, setting it apart from its predecessors. There have always been political ramifications to fundamentalism. Fear of a Christian culture dying out was one of the many factors that shaped the early fundamentalists.

They contended that the only appropriate reaction was a national renaissance. They declared that the culture would once again be righteous through soul salvation. At the very least, they suggested that born-again people would select moral leaders who upheld God's rules[142].

Pentecostalism's critics contend that because of its emphasis on economic, social, and political power, literalist interpretations of the Bible, and some common doctrinal affirmations, it has been associated with fundamentalism. A particular worldview that explains the Pentecostal reaction to the created order is thus reflected in its emphasis on church development, gaining converts, healing, deliverance, signs and wonders, and other manifestations of divine power.

An author claimed that the so-called "house-church" movement is home to some of these conservative Christians. They reject what they refer to as the "purely nominal" and organized Christianity of the earlier churches; nonetheless, they are unavoidably creating their own structures and are frequently subject to strict leadership from those they believe to be specifically guided by the spirit[143]. In this particular setting, Christianity has been influenced by modern Western society.

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The world has been astounded by this culture's technological advancements, and a large portion of that technology appears to have contributed to the spread of the gospel of Christ brought by western missionaries[144]. The gospel was viewed as a passport to advancement in one form or another, just as fast transportation, healthcare technology, and education. This culture, which has come to be known as modernism, brought with it an absolute faith in the ability of human reason to govern the environment and to denigrate much of the traditional culture as primitive or superstitious. Reason could dismiss or obscure the reality of the supernatural[145].

This has occurred with biblical stories, conventional wisdom and symbolism, and the contemporary signs and wonders movement. No one can ignore this western society today, no matter how much we may criticize it for its conceit, narrow-mindedness, and indifference to alternative realities. Western technology is more appealing to many African nations than their traditional ways of life. As a result of modernity, such as the enlightenment period, which is the outcome of the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance, evangelism has become the idea of passing on or transmitting of ideas[146].

In response to these concepts, people are urged to choose to accept Christ into their lives, to believe that he has done so, and to stop expecting to feel or see any difference. Becoming a Christian is primarily about the person and the intellect. This is very different from the evangelism found in the New Testament, which focuses on the manifestations of God's activity among people, such as the coming of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, or even signs and wonders. There was nothing good[147] if nothing was happening. In the same manner that it does in most places of the world today, being a Christian made a noticeable difference to people. Westerners have come to accept the status quo of analysis and comprehension. The gospel has made a noticeable and dramatic impact on people's lives, which is why it has grown quickly in Nigeria[148]

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As a result, fundamentalism has taken on diverse forms in relation to all of the main religions. While Muslim fundamentalism concentrates on how Islam can actually make the world sit up and pay notice, Christian fundamentalism concentrates on the Bible, Hinduism on the nation, and Jewish Zionism on the land[149]. Many Westerners rejected the idea that there could be a reality that could not be observed and quantified by physical means.

A popular belief concerning the nature of the world is atheism. Nonetheless, there is blatant religious diversity, and many believers in transcendental beings embrace all other viewpoints with great tolerance. Fundamentalism is thriving in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam[150]. In Nigeria, even though Islam and Christianity both operate within the same political system, it is important to understand the sociopolitical, religious, and cultural factors that influence how Christians respond to the challenges posed by both Islam and the state. For example, Christian missionaries in the North were not linked with enslavement and exploitation by people they interacted with, in contrast to the caliphal jihadists. Instead, the social, medical, and educational services they provided were all intended to open up new vistas for individuals who came into contact with them; this explains numerous ethnic groups south of the Niger[151].

For example, among the Yoruba, whose religious identity is a much weaker force than that of other ethnic groups, strong ethnic allegiance to ancestral homes served as a mechanism for the control of hostilities caused by religious differences in southern Nigeria, such as between the Igbo and Catholics, or between the Egba, Ekiti or Ijebu[152]. In terms of collaboration, Northern Christians established the Northern Christian Association (NCA) after feeling threatened by the Northern premier's campaigns of Islamization. Once more, they all felt compelled to unite in light of the concerns brought about by government policies towards the churches, about matters like school ownership, social, medical, and other voluntary activities. The Nigerian Christian Association

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(CAN) was founded in the early 1970s, and among its members was the Catholic Church. The process of looking for a meaning and purpose in life found expression in the emergence of a brand of Christianity that attempted to address these needs.

The traumas of the civil war and the difficulties associated with pursuing the "three RS" (reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation) all took their toll. Prayer, prophetic, and healing houses started to appear in the 1970s as a way to "survive the peace" and as support systems[153]. The main goal was to find the outward signs of the spirit's gift in areas of life like financial success, defense against harm, speaking in tongues, healing, etc.

The difficulty here is that these new Christians are involved in intra- and inter-denominational disputes that result in expulsions, resignations, and occasionally physical attacks on other church founders. This is similar to the born-again of the 1970s that appeared to have only targeted the mainline churches. The development of satellite technology broadened the scope of these shifts, which began to forge connections with Americans after being encouraged by the success of televangelism in that country.

What Nigerians call "mushroom churches" are the result of Christianity's internal revitalization. However, the language that has contributed to the rise in fundamentalist fervor has frequently been linked to their growth[154]. This is the case because, in addition to their desire to bring Christianity back to life, these Christian fundamentalists have a history of deliberately provoking conflict with Islam by claiming that Muslims must be won over to Christianity because, in the absence of Jesus Christ, there can be no life. This is where the battle for religious space gets a little murky because,

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as a result, religion is used to explain everything in the country, including government appointments, the civil service, the implementation of policies, and others..

Considering this, the Nigerian constitution has provisions like the quota and the federal characters that are meant to guarantee national stability although this seems unnecessary these days. Neither has this particular strain of Christianity attempted to directly influence governmental decisions, nor has the impact of American evangelists' surpassed efforts made by religious leaders to further and deepen their own personal fiefdoms[155].

2.1.13 The Nexus between Religious Fundamentalism andIntercultural Development in Nigeria

The foundation of sustainable development is religious fundamentalism, which can transform, if there is a true dedication to religious ideals and principles. To put it another way, industrialization and a spirit of hard work are fostered by religious fundamentalism and serve as the cornerstone for sustainable development[156]. Development activities are frequently led by individuals who follow religious precepts, beliefs, participations, rituals, behaviors, etc. A steadfast adherence to religious values tends to promote global development.

Religious teachings uphold the idea that all people are created equal and are dedicated to advancing the common good, which includes meeting basic human needs, ensuring the preservation of human rights, and fostering integral development globally[157].In the same manner, an author highlighted that a significant source of misunderstandings is the disregard for religion's role as a separating,

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uniting, and organizing force in many popular views of globalization. However, appropriate commitment to religious ideas and values in any society will greatly promote tolerance, trust, diligence, honesty, courage, hope, peace, and love, all of which contribute to that society's sustainable growth[158].

In a similar vein, religious and sustainable development are unquestionably linked. Therefore, upholding religious beliefs and ideals appropriately offers the uniting basis for bringing about peace as well as socioeconomic, political, educational, and technical advancement.

In a similar vein, a former World Bank president stated that religion is a ubiquitous and seamless aspect of everyday life, that exists in an unlimited variety of forms, and contributes to the unique characteristics of every community. Therefore, religion could not be viewed as something distinct and private. Instead, it is a facet of existence that permeates all the things that those individuals do. Faith influences numerous people's perspectives on a wide range of topics, including investments, savings, and various financial issues. It affects areas that we have grown to regard as essential for prosperous development, such as approaches to health care, gender equality, and education[159]. In summary, religion may both be a major force for change and a barrier to advancement.

An author's pure religious viewpoint promotes the development of an accepting community where individuals are urged to rely on and trust one another. Respecting one another's human rights and God-given dignity will come from taking such a stand. It will surely make it possible for each individual to fulfill their obligations to one another and to society in a meaningful way. In a similar

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spirit, a robust religious worldview offers the story that is required to build a society that is socially resilient as well as one of moral character, moral conscience, and moral conviction. A society that is socially healthy encourages involvement in economic activity and active commitment, which leads to educated radical social thinking and action[160].

All things considered, a real and pure religion cultivates a community in which it is acknowledged that God has given us the duty and the mandate to, by careful environmental management; make the planet hospitable for all life, including humans and the rest of creation. Not only is religious fundamentalism necessary for sustainable development in Nigeria, it also fosters sustainable development[161]. Religious fanaticism does not only impede progress towards sustainable development, it also stifles happiness and love. In this sense, an author emphasized that Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) support and enhance government efforts to raise Nigerians' standard of life in light of the country's vulnerability and the inadequacy of its institutions to deliver the human good to its population. Over 46,000 faith-based organizations exist in Nigeria, and their activities include properphilanthropic endeavors that reduce poverty, advance society, and act as catalysts for development[162].

2.1.14 Factors that Promote Religions Fundamentalism in Nigeria

Religious fundamentalism in Nigeria is influenced by a confluence of factors, reflecting a complex interplay of socio-political and economic dynamics.

Ethno-religious diversity, historical tensions, and economic disparities contribute to a fertile ground for fundamentalist ideologies to take root. Additionally, governance challenges, corruption, and weak institutional structures exacerbate social grievances, pushing some individuals towards more rigid interpretations of faith, as a means of seeking identity, stability, or

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resistance. External influences, such as global jihadist movements, also play a role[163]. Some of these factors are:

The Pursuit of a Holy Life: One of the main things that could motivate religious practitioners, whether they are Muslims or Christians, to uphold their ethics and ideals is the desire to be pure and holy. Every Christian is required by God to aspire to live a life of holiness and purity. He insisted that religious adherents of all eras are obligated by the sacred texts to practise holiness and purity since it is the intention of the creator. He maintained that God made man to be pure both inside and out, holy in nature and spirit, and of unblemished heart. Religious people are motivated by this desire to be holy and clean [164].

Human Heart Regeneration: The human heart is a powerful force that can help someone practically abide by the teachings, precepts, and principles of the holy book. For example, in Islam, good deeds are the foundation for renaissance. These tasks include upholding the five tenets of Islam, which include witnessing, praying five times a day (Salat), giving charity (zakat), fasting during Ramadan (Saum), and making the trip to Mecca (hajj)[165]. Allah will have a set of scales on the Day of Judgment so that people can compare their good actions to their bad ones. Human heart regeneration gives someone the ability to think, act, and behave in a way that honors their creator and advances the welfare of those around them.

Constant Desire for Peace and Harmony: Strict adherence to religious standards and principles can be encouraged by the desire for peace and harmony. No religion advocates militancy, strife, or violence. Every religion promotes and preaches harmony and the peaceful cohabitation of all people. Jesus Christ is referred to as the Prince of Peace in Christianity. During His time on earth, He preached, gave commands, and showed us the value of peace. Throughout his earthly mission, Jesus showed everyone his love and peace to men[166]. Islam also calls for charity, tolerance, and

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peace, a condition of social, mental, spiritual, and physical harmony. Some of the other attributes of Islam are that Muslims are encouraged to live in peace and harmony with other people, to replace evil with that which is good, and to persevere in the face of adversity[167].

Strong Desire for Advancement: Religious fundamentalism is influenced by a strong desire for progress. Religion has the potential to impact how far our planet has come. Religion is dedicated to the advancement of the human good in order to provide fundamental human needs, ensure the preservation of human rights, and foster integral development of the human person because of its sizable congregations and shared conviction in the dignity of the human person under God.

Economic Transformation: A fair economic transformation is predicated on religion. Religion offers the components of love, justice, and peace that are necessary for long-term commercial endeavors in the world. In their quest of profit, those who practise a pure monotheistic religion are better able to refrain from dishonest practices that are frequently harmful to human flourishing[168]. If religion is fully embraced in all of its truths, it promotes equity, love, and harmony in all interpersonal interactions.

2.1.15 Religious Fundamentalism and its Features

Within the religious community, religious fundamentalism is characterized by a certain set of beliefs and behaviors. It is a way of life based on religion that takes the form of a tactic, used by followers to protect the integrity of their identity. This is done through the doctrines, practices, and beliefs of a sacred past[169.] Some of the basic ingredients, and literal interpretation of the morals, laws and guidelines are included in the sacred text.

Ultra-orthopraxis: The rigorous observance of religious precepts and laws in one's religious life

Messiahism: The belief in a Messiah or Savior, an all-powerful intermediary who will bring about the perfect spiritual society, is known as Messiahism.

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Reactivity: As secularization and modernism permeate the wider religious community, fundamentalists respond to its effects.

Moral Manichaeism: A Manichean worldview in which the universe is dualistically split into a realm of light (a spiritual world of good) and a realm of darkness (a material world of evil) is essential to fundamentalists. Ultimately, virtue will prevail over evil.

Authoritarian Organizational Structure: Fundamentalist groups typically have voluntary, unbureaucratic membership, which primarily promotes equality amongst members. Fundamentalist organizational structures yet adhere to "the charismatic leadership principle"[170].

Strict Guidelines: Detailed guidelines about attire, partner preferences, and other matters guarantee strong emotional bonds. Meanwhile, sinful behavior is strictly forbidden. There are many laws governing drinking, sexual behavior, acceptable speech, and child discipline. Similarly, there is strict oversight, viewing habits, and reading material control.

2.1.16 Religious Conflicts and Fundamentalism in Nigeria

The concept of "fundamentalism," derived from the Latin term fundare (to establish), refers to an intense commitment to the essential doctrines of a particular faith. Adherents in both Islam and Christianity "hold their sacred texts in such high regard that they endorse eternal, universal moral truths and assert definitive certainties." Consequently, an unwavering adherence to one's own religious practices and convictions, coupled with a dismissal of the rituals and beliefs of other faiths, could be construed as a form of religious fundamentalism. Moreover, fundamentalism constitutes a specific category within the broader framework of fideism[172.]

Fideism posits that "one cannot arrive at true religious beliefs as a result of rational reflection" and asserts that "humans are religious by nature" [173]. In other terms, fideism underscores the importance of faith in the Supreme Being, independent of the advantages provided by human

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reason. Fundamentalists assert that every individual is required to acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being in alignment with the tenets and rituals of their respective faith, and that the Supreme Being may, at its discretion, aid the convert in attaining a rational comprehension through revelation or supernatural insight. The challenge presented by fideism lies in its prioritization of faith in the Supreme Being, aligned with the doctrines and rituals of a specific religion, relying exclusively on faith as the avenue for engagement with the Supreme Being[174].

Consequently, individuals who do not adhere to a specific faith and refuse to undergo conversion are perceived as dissenters who have deliberately opted not to accept the veneration of the Supreme Being mandated by their respective belief systems. Reasons such as the absence of a logical foundation for one's beliefs, a lack of adherence to the doctrine and tenets of the faith, or a sense of satisfaction with one's own faith are deemed unacceptable by the fundamentalists[175]. The preceding study suggests that fundamentalism flourishes in the absence of a rational foundation for religious behaviors and beliefs. It functions on the assumption that rational thought is prohibited, beginning with common-sense, to mitigate the extremes of religious practices and convictions founded on the erroneous idea that faith alone (fideism) can sufficiently justify religious actions and beliefs[176].

The allowance of reason to assume prominent or auxiliary roles in various domains of human existence, including culture, politics, health, social services, and education, highlights the inconsistency of its exclusion from religious discourse. This intentional dismissal of reason's relevance in matters of faith challenges the notion that reason is a defining characteristic of humanity. Consequently, when rational thought is absent from any facet of human life, the individual becomes subservient, akin to a puppet or a fool, under the control of those in positions of authority, particularly the religious ministers. Fundamentalism diminishes the importance of

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reason as a defining characteristic of humanity, while simultaneously exacerbating religious intolerance and conflict.

An examination of the historical context surrounding Nigeria's three predominant religions is essential for a comprehensive understanding of religious intolerance. Islam and Christianity are not indigenous to Nigeria. Their ancestors did not originate from Nigeria, nor did they commence their endeavours there before branching out to other nations. Islam and Christianity can be regarded as relatively unfamiliar religions178. In Nigeria, African Indigenous Religion facilitated the convergence of these two faiths. Among the three predominant religions in Nigeria, AIR stands out for its liberal perspective, positing that multiple pathways exist towards the Supreme Being, with Christianity and Islam representing two of these avenues[179].

Commented [U3]: This figure should be a superscript.

Regrettably for AIR, the religions it acknowledges, namely Islam and Christianity, do not reciprocate this acceptance. They predominantly perceive it as an act of devil worship rather than reverence for the Supreme Being, and consequently, they advocate for its eradication. Consequently, negative remarks are made concerning AIR. The intense devotion exhibited by AIR followers is likely to provoke natural responses, akin to the reactions of the Meccans towards Muhammad in Mecca, which may instinctively result in religious conflicts[180]. The provision within the Nigerian Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion to all citizens, irrespective of tribal or gender distinctions, necessitates rigorous adherence and enforcement by all law enforcement agencies. This should occur in conjunction with a commitment to mutual respect for the products of individuals and companies as represented in advertising.

This approach aims to alleviate religious tensions arising from extreme evangelization, characterized by Christians and Muslims, denouncing one another, as seen in the context of

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Nigeria[181]. The Nigerian Constitution, specifically in Chapter Four (4) of the 1997 and 1999 versions, guarantees that every individual is entitled to the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The principle of religious freedom aligns with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The author underscores that all individuals possess the inherent right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This entitlement includes the liberty to change one's religion or belief, alongside the freedom to articulate one's religion or belief through teaching, practice, worship, and observance[182].

The ethical dimensions of advertising can be employed to mitigate the excesses of radical evangelism. Advertising functions as a "quasi-moral institution" aimed at enhancing individuals' standards of living and is perceived "as a moral imperative." The ethical obligation compels individuals to engage in a virtuous behaviour and to avoid malevolence whenever possible. Upholding the rights of others constitutes a fundamental component of achieving success. Advertisements, while occasionally employing exaggerations, para-poetic hyperboles, pseudo-truths, and financial reasoning, maintain a level of respect for the products of others and refrain from making disparaging remarks, whether directly or indirectly, in order to circumvent costly legal repercussions.
Regarding religion, this indicates that although it is acceptable to advocate for one's own beliefs, it is unacceptable to belittle, demean, or employ derogatory language towards other faiths

Any adherent who violates this principle of respect for differing religions should be subject to repercussions. Citizens should be advised to promote Christianity, Islam, or AIR. while refraining from disparaging or condemning any other belief system that diverges from their own. Should an individual embrace the doctrines another individual advocates, they may undergo a transformation in their beliefs, ultimately relinquishing their former faith. One might consider the possibility of

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advocating for one's beliefs while simultaneously allowing others the freedom to make their own decisions[185]. Neglecting a religion that contrasts with one's own, such as AIR, Christianity, or Islam, introduces a significant issue related to perspective or measurement.

What is the basis for the assertion that your religion is the sole true and virtuous belief system, while characterizing all other religions as malevolent? Individuals often reference their sacred texts as a means of substantiating claims that their faith surpasses all others. The criterion for evaluating faiths is their respective scriptures. The question, “Who established your faith as the benchmark for evaluating religions?” is a pivotal matter that now requires careful consideration. The answer commonly provided to the enquiry is "God" or "the Supreme Being." Nevertheless, no faith system refutes the presence of "God" or "the Supreme Being." Consequently, what methods can we employ to differentiate between the faiths that assert a connection to "God" or "the Supreme Being" and those that do not make such claims?[186] The challenge regarding the authority attributed to religions and their texts, the absence of human rationality, becomes evident when we seek to address the previously mentioned enquiry.

It is essential to underscore that no text or religious doctrine can claim absolute authority when confronted with the diverse and often contradictory practices and beliefs found within other faiths. It cannot function as an arbiter or the criterion by which to adjudicate a matter pertaining to it. Consequently, for religion to be a pursuit of rational individuals, belief systems and their scriptures must be subject to critical and logical examination. All texts and belief systems may prove to be inadequate when subjected to rigorous logical and critical scrutiny. Nevertheless, the aim of advocating for a thorough and rational enquiry is not to assert that any scripture or religion considered deficient should be eliminated.

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Primarily, we are rational beings who engage reason in every aspect of existence, thereby employing common sense and logic in our interactions with the Supreme Being, perceived as a "person" (AIR, Christianity, and Islam advocate for a personal relationship with the Supreme Being). Furthermore, it is essential to recognise the boundaries of our beliefs and comprehension of the Supreme Being, acknowledging our fallibility as human beings whose perceptions of reality, especially concerning the Supreme Being, cannot be impartial. Concerning the elements that shape our thoughts, one author articulates: “Our idea is coloured not just by our past experiences but also by our feelings, upbringing and education, our friends' beliefs and attitudes, our historical context, and a variety of other elements.” Nevertheless, certain authors recognized that the influence of these factors can be mitigated through reflection; however, they promptly noted, "It seems unlikely that a person could ever do this completely."

It may seem irrational and illogical for an individual to believe they have achieved this, as it would jeopardise their opportunity to uncover additional nonsensical influences.”[189]. The concept of the Supreme Being serves as the cornerstone of various religious beliefs, while the constraints of human cognition and intellect renders a complete understanding of the essence of the Supreme Being unattainable. The concept of the Supreme Being will consequently remain perpetually elusive. This further elucidates why individuals may recognise the presence of a Supreme Being while refraining from claiming complete understanding of it.

Indeed, the orthodox Christian creed, commencing with "I believe in God" instead of "I know God," provides stronger support for this notion. What justification do we possess to denigrate another belief system if we lack a comprehensive understanding of the Supreme Being? In what manner should scripture and personal faith serve as the benchmark for evaluating all other religious traditions? Could it be that all religions, in moments of consensus, convey truth, while in instances

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of discord, they mislead one another and the faithful, exploiting their spiritual naivety under the guise of divine authority? Individuals possess the right to engage in or advocate for any religion of their preference; however, it is imperative that such actions are conducted with a regard for the beliefs of others.[191]

Embracing diverse religious beliefs is a commendable quality. At this juncture, it is crucial to acknowledge that the predominant religious conflicts observed in Nigeria, in recent times, have primarily occurred in the northern region, where Muslims and Christians once coexisted harmoniously.

Within both the Muslim and the Christian communities, there exists a presence of fundamentalists who exclusively embrace their own religious beliefs. Any individual who passionately asserts that their religion is the sole authentic faith that should prevail, that salvation is unattainable outside of their belief system, and that all others are not considered the progeny of the Supreme is a fundamentalist. To embody fundamentalist principles entails advocating for equal treatment, dignity, and respect for all individuals. An individual of this nature poses a significant risk and presents challenges to the community of rational individuals, as they embody fundamentalist beliefs. It is essential for such a person to receive education and enlightenment.

What justifies the authority to take life and destroy the possessions of individuals who do not adhere to a particular faith, especially when it is believed that there is no possibility of salvation beyond their own religious beliefs? It is generally understood that one should respect the autonomy of individuals who do not adhere to one's religious beliefs, and, if inclined, one may express sympathy for their differing perspectives. Allow the Supreme Being to determine their destiny in the afterlife, for only the Supreme Being possesses knowledge of the events that will unfold on

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judgement day and the timing thereof. Furthermore, the notion of evangelization in its entirety requires elucidation[193]. The primary objective of evangelization is to augment the membership of a particular religion. The individuals who have undergone conversion ought to voluntarily express their agreement.

What value does it hold to agree to adhere to a particular religion if such consent is not granted freely, or if it is extracted through coercion or other abusive methods? Typically, actions or offerings made under coercion or compulsion are regarded as lacking significance. Considering that the three principal religions assert that the Supreme Being endowed humanity with the gift of free will, there remains ambiguity regarding the extent to which the Supreme Being would value offerings made under such circumstances.

What value do worship, acclaim, and good deeds hold for the Almighty Being if they are conducted without the exercise of the inherent freedom of choice that is fundamental to humanity? It is unnecessary to compel individuals to adhere to a specific religion under the auspices of the Supreme Being, as it is conceivable that such a Being may not acknowledge anything that is not willingly offered by humanity.

2.1.17 Good and Bad Fundamentalism in Nigeria

Under this subsection, it would be easy to assume that religious fundamentalism has two distinct facets: positive and negative fundamentalism. The positive aspects of religious fundamentalism center on upholding widely acknowledged religious moral principles that safeguard society's common welfare. Consider the lessons Jesus taught in 'The Beatitudes' and the Pauline Letter to the Romans about civic duty, which is the foundation of good citizenship, and which does not harm society but rather improves it[195].

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The foundation of peacemaking and sustainable development is the traditionalist's regard for mother earth, which breeds piety and reverence for natural rules. Similarly, Muslims recognize that the people of the book are the same people of Allah whom they should not destroy.

Negative fundamentalism, on the other hand, takes the form of violence, the willful damage of people and property, and the disruption of business. This is counterproductive to Nigeria's model of sustainable development. A scholar notes that the emergence of religious extremism, primarily among Muslims but also among some Christian groups, poses a serious danger to the delicate balance of power over the question of Nigeria's secular state[196].

The cleric's declaration of an Islamic Republic in Iran may have given Islamic fundamentalists more confidence to reject the notion that politics and religion should be kept apart. Additionally, some of their leaders think that Judeo-Christian principles were becoming more prevalent in Nigeria under the guise of upholding the country's secularism[197]. The calls for the Shari'a rules and legal system to be extended to all of Nigeria's Muslim-populated areas may have acquired traction in this context. Regardless, the Shari'a controversy significantly hampered the work of two Constituent Assemblies that were tasked with drafting the constitutions for the Second and Third Republics of Nigeria, respectively. In both cases, the Federal Military Government had to intervene to broker agreements that essentially maintained the status quo.

2.1.18 The Religious Fundamentalism's Effects

One cannot stress the negative effects of religious extremism enough. Everyone is able to observe its impact. However, the following are some of the negative effects that this study examines:

Exploitation: The inescapable truth that all developments can only flourish in a peaceful, harmonious atmosphere is as universally acknowledged as the sun rising above the horizon.

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On the other hand, it is evident that no significant material or super structural development can be preserved because it is a common knowledge that no one in any society becomes richer by acquiring and discarding things. Consequently, as people grow increasingly apprehensive about their lives and property, in places that are not theirs by custom or tribe, they become indifferent to the development of their non-traditional host areas[198]. It is possible that these individuals didn't plan to invest outside of their comfort zones, but they chose to stay in their home states and regions out of concern for potential bad outcomes. Development of this kind of mindset avoids the host communities, which are essentially relegated to a site of exploitation.

Insecurity: Nothing worries investors more than insecurity. Insecurity is the reverse of security and it affects not only life but progress as well. No one wants to put all of their eggs in one broken basket, no matter how many baskets there are. A scholar states that, "An investor would never put money where they were unsure of the return"[199]. Investors cannot afford to watch helplessly as their hard work turns to flames.

Both internal and foreign investors are stopped by insecurity. In a state without investors, development is typically slow. There won't be any progress in a place where fundamentalists declare it ungoverned; how much more might be done to build upon something that isn't even there[200]. Nobody can add more functionality to a deceased person or repair a burned-out property.

2.1.19 The Church's Reaction to Terror by Islam

The threat posed by Islamic radicals is the Nigerian church's main issue. More than ever, Christians are willing to put their possessions, freedom, jobs, and lives in danger in order to follow Christianity. Boko Haram views Christian churches, fellowships, and worship as abomination; wearing Christian clothing is equivalent to calling for an early death.

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The Church is the first institution to come under attack in any village. The Church has had to accept that "religion and terrorism are a powerful mix and when religion empowers terrorism, then, terrorism apparently has no limits and acknowledges no boundaries" as a result of this predicament.[201]. Therefore, the Church has taken the following proactive measures in response to terrorism: First, the Church established anti-terrorist organizations: The Church has recognized that implementing counter terrorism measures, such as the following, is one of the most effective ways to combat terrorism: the creation of a pressure group to advocate to the government against Church victimization. Additionally, the Church organizes teenagers to act as vigilantes in Christian towns and localities, assisting law enforcement agencies.[202]. The youth in the North typically organize as militia to protect the church during worship sessions and services. In addition, all attendees of the church's programmes undergo security searches and checks. Thanks to the church's vigilante efforts, numerous suicide bombers have been found and apprehended.

The Church's second strategy is the implementation of a communication plan. Press conferences are frequently held by the Church to denounce the heinous acts of terrorism against it . To denounce the Islamic fundamentalists' attack on the Church, the Church hosts retreats, conventions, synods against terrorism, and communiqués that are published and distributed[203]. Additionally, the Church regularly provides intelligence to the security services, enabling them to monitor potential terrorists. The practice of church planting is another way that the Church has responded to terrorism.

Attacks by Islamic fundamentalists aim to instill terror in Muslims in order to deter them from becoming Christians and to keep the Church from spreading[204]. However, the Church has started

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intensive evangelism in response to this. For example, in the northern part of Nigeria, where insurgencies are endemic, the Anglican Church of Nigeria has established 23 missionary Dioceses. The Dioceses in Southern Nigeria provide funding and oversight for all of the bishops, clergy, and churches in these missionary dioceses. As a result, the impact of terrorism on the Church has been lessened, and despite the persecution from Islamic fundamentalists, the Church has continued to grow.

In response to Islamic terrorism, the Church has also demonstrated the strength of unity[205]. The Nigerian churches are coming together as one body, one faith, one spirit under one Lord and one God, yet the more they are terrorized. With the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) as its umbrella organization, Nigerian churches (denominations) now speak with a single voice. Any issue pertaining to a church affects all denominations. In opposition to Islamic policies that are seen as antagonistic to the Church, CAN has planned multiple demonstrations. Following the implementation of Shari'a in Zamfara State in 2000, the CAN organized Christians, who protested the imposition of Shari'a by gathering in large numbers in the streets. To put it briefly, Christians have utilized the force of solidarity to lessen the impact of terrorism on the Church[206].

2.1.20 Different Religious Fundamentalisms among Individuals

To clarify why fundamentalism varies across national boundaries, the work will focus on globalization, state regulation of religion, religious freedom and fractionalization, and state authoritarian structure fragmentation. We take into account the possible effects of (a) religiosity, religious modernism, and faith in religious institutions; (b) liberal principles, (c) antipathy toward outsiders, (d) fatalism, (e) information sources, and (f) demography on an individual basis.

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First, it's clear that religious fanaticism might not exist in the absence of religion[207]. Thus, a higher correlation between religiosity and fundamentalism may exist. Additionally, those who have higher levels of faith in religious organizations are more likely to self-restrict to them in order to receive guidance and information, to construct a more rigidly monotheistic understanding of religion, and to identify as fundamentalists. Lastly, people who support religious modernity and think that religious ideas promote growth may become more fundamentalist in their outlook, have a more holistic understanding of religion, and acquire a stronger attitude against secular progress. Secondly, fundamentalism is associated with religious subservience as well as conservative and patriarchal ideals[208]. As a logical extension of this thesis, we suggest that people who embrace liberal ideals like gender equality, expressive individualism, and secular politics are more likely to voice skepticism about the veracity of religious claims and less likely to adhere to fundamentalist ideologies.

Thirdly, social science research has demonstrated a connection between right-wing solidarity and religious beliefs and xenophobia (or the hatred of foreigners) and conspiracy theories. We evaluate these theories further by examining how they relate to fundamentalism in each of the eight nations. Fourthly, fatalistic people, who believe that their fate is predetermined and that there is little that can be done to change it, may also have a stronger conviction in submission to a strict God and the need for complete surrender to Him[209].

The Fifth one stems from those who get their religious information primarily from friends and family members. They are less inclined to consult others from more varied sources and are more likely to adhere to strict fundamentalism. Conversely, people who get their knowledge from a range of sources are more likely to encounter different viewpoints on religion. Consequently, individuals typically acquire a broad understanding of the presence of multiple belief systems and

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substitute spaces for achieving spiritual fulfillment. Additionally, they are less likely to support fundamentalist religion[210]. Lastly, social status, ethnic and religious identification, and living in an urban or rural area are all possible demographic indicators of fundamentalism. We contend that greater affluence and education are likely to erode fundamentalism; education is thought to reduce the mental obstacles to enlightenment.

Compared to people with less education, those with more education are better at analyzing problems, evaluating opposing viewpoints, and making sense of the world on their own. Therefore, in comparison to people with lower levels of education, they are less likely to hold a literalist, exclusivist, or intolerable perspective of religion. Furthermore, because they have greater access to a wider range of cultural viewpoints and networks, people with higher wealth are also less likely to hold fundamentalist beliefs. Conversely, those with lower incomes are more likely to favor fundamentalism[211]. Experiencing a higher level of status insecurity, they are more inclined to be in favor of Christian fundamentalism's communitarianism. Fundamentalism may also be impacted by disparities in terms of race, religion, or religious sect.

We evaluate whether members of the majority ethnic groups are likewise more strongly fundamentalist than members of ethnic minorities, in line with the theory that links prejudice on the part of the dominant ethnic group to their sense of threat from other groups. Likewise, because they claim to own religion and believe that the religious minority have strayed from the true path and hence pose a threat to their group[222], we anticipate a higher level of fundamentalism among adherents of the dominant religion or religious sect. Conversely, there should be fewer fundamentalisms among religious minorities, since adopting a more moderate stance would be conciliatory to the majority faith and ease religious tensions.

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Individuals in rural locations may exhibit more extreme forms of fundamentalism than those in metropolitan areas because they have less access to a wider variety of religious environments. Lastly, we statistically control for age, gender, marital status, and employment to eliminate the chance of spurious functions of these variables[213].

2.1.21 Nigeria's Religious Future

Considering the aforementioned, it might not be overstated to predict that Nigeria's three major religions will endure into the next century. In Nigeria, it seems that ATR, Islam, and Christianity have a very bright future. Pentecostal churches in the country are genuinely spreading widely. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) has committed to establishing churches in every developing country, city and town that is five minutes' walk away by foot and in every developed country, city and town that is five minutes' drive away by car. In Northern Nigeria, the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptist Church are expanding rapidly, something that didn't happen in the 1960s[214].

It is also possible that Islam may prosper in Nigeria. The majority of Muslims live in the northern states, where they make up over three-quarters of the total population. However, Islam is already the predominant religion in a few southern states and it is also progressively spreading to the eastern states. The explanation for Islam's current spread might not be implausible. Islam follows a very austere lifestyle, and the majority of those who preach it are traders who typically swarm everywhere. Once more, Islam has been effective in fusing a significant percentage of its ideas with native practices, particularly the use of magic and medicine for protection, which appeals to the majority of people in crisis-prone Nigeria.

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Whether or if ATR will endure in Nigeria is in the affirmative[215]. With regard to the most profound aspects of life, such as conception, union, and demise, both Muslims and Christians have mostly continued to adhere to African religious beliefs. In Nigeria, interest in traditional remedies is also growing. For apparent reasons, people in the country are fervently seeking healing from traditional medicine practitioners. There are many illnesses in Nigeria, currently, some of which have eluded conventional medicine or medical research, so people find relief in using local herbs[216]. A registered body of traditional medicine practitioners exists in Nigeria today, and they occasionally host trade shows for traditional medicine that draw large crowds of patients.

In Nigeria, majority of people have always been forced to seek protection from local doctors due to civil, ethnic, and religious conflicts, which inadvertently contribute to the trade's expansion. The assertion that the majority of prayer house practitioners in Nigeria are essentially native doctors, who have recently become familiar with Pentecostal healing modalities and likely infuse Pentecostals' prayer techniques into their work, may also be accurate. Furthermore, some so-called Pentecostal pastors are starting to favor local physicians in an effort to gain influence over a sizable portion of the church's membership. This contributes significantly to improving ATR's prospects in Nigeria[217].

2.1.22 The Development of Extremist Organizations in Nigeria

Some scholars suggest that the rise of extremist organizations in Nigeria may be associated with the constitutional failures of the state to adequately address the needs and responsibilities of its citizens. For instance, a researcher noted that a comprehensive analysis of the roles of states (as previously outlined in the context of Nigeria) will reveal that, concerning Nigeria and the broader African continent, the state has not succeeded in meeting its responsibilities to all citizens. Nigerian politicians have demonstrated a heightened dedication to perpetuating the under-

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development and exploitation of their nation, a practice mirrored by their predecessors prior to independence[219].

Furthermore, the authorities in Nigeria have not intentionally sought to embed shared socio-political perceptions within the consciousness of all citizens since the nation achieved independence. One of the duties of states towards their citizens involves political socialization, a process through which individuals come to comprehend, accept, and support the norms, institutions, and external factors that shape political life. Consequently, states that do not possess a cohesive foundation exhibit limited capacity to cultivate consensus. They may operate as collectives that establish regulations; however, their utility in societal and political endeavours is limited, as such actions necessitate a robust normative framework. In addition to the previously mentioned points, there exists a pervasive sense of discontent and disenchantment among various factions in Nigeria.

This sentiment arises from the inability or reluctance of successive administrations to adequately respond to their grievances over an extended duration. Such circumstances foster a climate of despair, prompting experienced and ambitious temporary leaders to contemplate acts of insurrection or impending disorder. Recent research has shown that religious fundamentalism, especially as exhibited by political and religious leaders, has roots that extend back to the early history of contemporary Nigeria.[222] Nevertheless, the phenomenon of religious violence has endured across various regions of the nation, attributable to both governmental shortcomings and the populace's inability to mitigate the escalating crisis since the time of independence. The events encompass the Maitatsine crisis in Kano in 1980, followed by incidents in Bullum-Kutu in 1982, Maiduguri in 1982, Yola in 1984, Ilorin in 1984, Bauchi in 1984, Ilorin again in 1987, Kano in 1984, Kafanchan in 1987, Zuru in 1980, Birnin Kebbi in 1990, Katsina in 1991, Tafawa Balewa

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in 1991, Kano in 1991, Jalingo in 1992, Kaduna Polytechnic in 1992, Kasuwar Magani in Kaduna in 1994, Gure Kahugu in 1987, Kafanchan in 1987 and 1999, Kaduna in 2000, Jos in 2001, Kano in 2001, and Tafawa Balewa in Nasarawa in 2001. Additional instances include the Chamba-Kuteb dispute in Taraba State from 1975, the Bassa-Igbira crisis in Toto, the Tiv-Jukun conflict, among various others. The dynamics of manipulation have led to persistent conflicts and unrests, resulting in the emergence of increasingly radical fundamentalist factions.

These groups have evolved in their objectives, transitioning from the mere incitement of internal discord to aspirations aimed at dismantling the nation and instituting a religious state. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Boko Haram group, which emerged into the public consciousness in 2009, has asserted dominance over certain areas in the northern region. This group is collaborating with other organisations that share similar ideologies and beliefs, receiving sponsorship from both domestic and international sources, and has persistently executed lethal and destructive assaults on individuals of differing faiths.

2.1.23 Fundamentalism in Modern Nigeria and the Fate of Northern Minorities

Scholarly analyses have established a connection between the 2003 "Taliban" raids and the emergence and activities of the Boko Haram organization. The collective first established their presence in Bukarti Village, situated within the Bursari Local Government Area, asserting their identity as adherents dedicated exclusively to the study of the Quran and the practice of prayer. Subsequently, they commenced training at an oasis located in Janama (Kanama) within the Yunusari Local Government Area, from which they initiated assaults that led to the fatalities of multiple police officers.

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The adherents of Boko Haram are indoctrinated with the belief that it is their duty as devout Muslims to eradicate societal influences stemming from Western education and to supplant them with sharia law. The group asserts that Western education is considered Haram, a term in Arabic denoting something that is prohibited or sinful. Evidence exists to substantiate the assertions made by the group regarding the detrimental role of western education in perpetuating unfairness, inequality, and corruption within society, warranting its prohibition. Regarded as having its roots in Maiduguri, a committed member of Boko Haram must be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to safeguard this cause. In light of this belief, many members destroyed their degrees, Higher National Diplomas, and various credentials, thereby renouncing Western principles as an expression of their faith.

As a result, the Sect targeted police stations, educational institutions, and other representations of Western literacy and state authority in an attempt to express their grievances. An author elaborated on the context leading to the emergence of a new fundamentalist group in modern Nigeria, detailing their operational methods and noting that the inception of Boko Haram occurred approximately in the year 2000. Upon his election as President of Nigeria in 1999, the former President appointed service chiefs, all of whom were situated in the North Central Zone. Benue, Plateau, Kogi, and Kwara States are notably characterised by their Christian populations. The situation prompted three governors from the northern region to conclude that Obasanjo had failed to appoint individuals they deemed to be authentic Hausa/Fulani northerners as service chiefs, which subsequently motivated them to establish and train Islamic terrorists in the name of defending Islam.

Subsequently, they generated militant Islamists. Each of the governors allocated N100 million for the procurement of uniforms, military equipment, and various supplies intended for the militants.

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Nigeria promptly entered a period of religious turmoil[229]. Subsequent to their financial investment, asserting a desire for Sharia, organized Islamic extremists instigated a religious crisis in the regions of Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa, and Zamfara. Their objective was to harass and intimidate the Christian community. They initiated a series of homicides during assaults on places of worship. They would attack and incinerate places of worship whenever elections occurred and the outcomes were unfavorable to them. They did not visit the Independent National Electoral Commission or the offices of political parties to finalize their assaults[230]. Concerning the actions and priorities of the terrorist organization, the author explained that:

On February 18, 2006, a group of young men expressed their aspiration for the implementation of Sharia Law in Maiduguri, which was met with resistance from the state governor at that time. Furthermore, they engaged in protests, ignited 66 churches within the state, and perpetrated the murder of numerous Christian individuals, including men, women, and children, in response to a cartoon produced in Denmark in 2006. Subsequently, they transitioned from one residence to another and from one place of worship to another. Reports indicate that in July 2009, the rebels "destroyed 27 churches, which resulted in the deaths of numerous Christians." At that time, only security personnel and Christians[231] were killed.

Between 2009 and 2014, there were instances of violence against Christians, characterized by assaults on churches and systematic searches of residences. In 2014, they commenced assaults on various groups, especially Muslims, operating under the conviction that their leaders had forsaken them by declining to provide support in their struggle against "infidels" in the North. In the year 2009[232], four reverends were tragically killed. Consequently, minority groups and the Christian church often find themselves subjected to hostilities within these occupied regions. This position is clearly articulated by a scholar who asserts that Nigeria has, throughout history, served as a

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home for individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. In recent years, there has been a notable rise in violence and hostility among various religious groups, especially between Christians and Muslims, with such incidents occurring with greater frequency. A significant amount of the violence in the region seems to have been ignited by the emergence of Islamic extremism. This assertion has been especially valid since 1995, the year in which Boko Haram, a designated terrorist organization, was founded.

They execute assaults in their endeavor to establish a "pure" Islamic state. The organization's advocacy of fundamentalist ideologies often results in its members exhibiting a notable lack of tolerance towards individuals who possess differing perspectives from their own convictions. In the northern region of the country, the minorities comprise of local inhabitants of diverse ethnicities alongside individuals who may possess a common linguistic heritage with the populace yet do not subscribe to the tenets of the fundamentalists' religion. In many instances, influential political figures and religious authorities in northern Nigeria support extremist organizations driven by self-serving motives[235].

2.1.24 The Psychodynamics of Fundamentalism of Islam

Initially used as a general term by conservative evangelicals within mainstream Protestant denominations in the early 1900s, the term "religious fundamentalist" is now widely applied to a wide range of groups outside the canon of Christianity, particularly but not exclusively to Judaist and Islamist entities[236]. Religious fundamentalism is characterized by its social conservatism; however, it is not usually politically conservative. Some authors additionally note that Islamic fundamentalist organizations aim to topple the current political and socio-economic order by a

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variety of strategies, such as terrorism or acts of violence, gradual changes to the political systems in place, or winning elections by organizing a political party[237].

An author gave a thorough overview of Islam and its history in her talk, tracing the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and its effects on world politics, while employing a theoretical and chronological approach. She contends that the forces at work in Islamic societies, both internal and foreign, produce Islamic fanaticism. A common explanation for the theological rebirth of Islamic fundamentalism is that it is a defense mechanism against the risks that modernity poses to a religious group's traditional identity[238].

Intertwining national, ethnic, and religious identities and restoring historical customs, as a means of maintaining national self-preservation and cultural purity, further complicate psychology; this can happen even in situations where external threats to a group's identity do not arise. Radical Islamic fundamentalists are frequently characterized as deeply estranged people who have dogmatic, rigid beliefs[239]. An author examined Islamic fundamentalism within the larger context of a fundamentalist theory. He contended that in order for Islamic fundamentalism to be helpful, in the broader examination of the theological phenomenon known as fundamentalism, it must be appropriately defined as an analytical category.

The author’s challenge of fundamentalism provides an understandable and thought-provoking analysis of Appleby's argument on modernity and thesis[240]. His stance offers authoritative norms that define the Islamic fundamentalists' philosophical discourse. He is an advocate of Islam as a religion and a 'hawk' in terms of its extremist expression. He contends that an intentional effort to resuscitate and restate Islam's theoretical relevance in the contemporary world is largely responsible for the conceptual foundations of Islamic extremism.

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Unlike what has been previously written, another scholar's writing about Islamic fundamentalism, is the most convincing and comes closest to expressing this kind of viewpoint. Lawrence contends that fundamentalist and Western worldviews collide cognitively, a position echoed in historical work.[241]

Lawrence concentrates on Islamic fundamentalists and makes the case that their objectives are seen as moral requirements rather than as interests. Furthermore, the soul, destiny, and moral conditions of their community are prioritized by fundamentalists over self-interest. The world's peace and security are seen as being threatened by Islam and fundamentalism. Islam is perceived as both a source and an embodiment of violence, obscurantism, and extremism. For many people, Jihad and Islam have become synonymous[242].

The tenets of Islam and the directives of its rules are one cohesive garment, fashioned by God for his creation. It was said by both the Greek and the Aristotelian that humans are political animals by nature. Islamic fundamentalism maintains that religion is ingrained in human nature, or that human nature is essentially religious. But the phrase "religious fundamentalism" is starting to appear more frequently in both scholarly and popular discourse. Several publications, journal articles, and academics have proposed conflicting theories regarding the topic[243].

Individuals who acknowledge the analytical significance of the term do so, based on their perception of contemporary religious groups and the characteristics of their religious rebirth, which, while encompassing diverse religious traditions, exhibit some characteristics that indicate a common preoccupation with fundamentalism.[244]

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2.1.25 The Northern Region's Boko Haram Emergence

The Boko Haram sect due to the doctrine they spread, originally named as Jamaatul Alissunna lid da a wa wal Jihad, or "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" became well-known under the moniker "Boko Haram." Literally, the words "Boko Haram" originated from Arabic and Hausa respectively. The Arabic term "Haram" literally means "sin," whereas the Hausa word "Boko" denotes "Western or otherwise non-Islamic education"[245].

It might be said that Boko Haram has existed covertly since the early 1960s, although public awareness of the group only started to grow around 2002. Its leader was Mohammed Yusuf, a young Nigerian who was born in the town of Girgir in Yobe State. The organization relocated to Kanamma in Yobe State in 2004. He created Kanamma, its headquarters[246]. The Almajiris in Northern Nigeria and the illiterate casual laborers are embodied in the Boko Haram cult. It established a religious complex including an Islamic school and a mosque. The rise of Boko Haram is a sign of another terrorist organization, and the extremism of its ideology poses a serious threat to the stability, security, and unity of the country[247].

Following the 1999 restoration of civil government in Nigeria, the political environment became more open, giving rise to the reinstatement of the Sharia legal system, initially in Zamfara state and then in numerous other largely Muslim states in NorthernNigeria[248]. Power in these governments is now "in the name of Allah," thus solidifying the role of religion in politics brought about by sharia". In these jurisdictions, Sharia is deeply ingrained in the legal system. One could argue that the establishment of Sharia law and Islamic indoctrination are more important factors in the rise of the Boko Haram[249]. In the country's northern regions, Islamic indoctrination serves as the cornerstone of family upbringing and social formation. What Islamists are taught, instructed,

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preached in their homes, mosques, Arabic schools, and through Quranic indoctrination centers shapes their agenda[250].

In Northern Nigeria, children hailing from Muslim households frequently receive their initial schooling and teaching through Islamic indoctrination and brainwashing. Thus, radical and fanatical beliefs are ingrained in the minds of the youngsters at a very young age, shaping, directing, influencing, and controlling their ideas and conscience for the rest of their lives[251].

2.1.26 Boko Haram Insurgencies and Political Intrigues

It is important to note that delicate political concerns in Nigeria cannot be completely detached from the current Boko Haram insurgencies in the country's northern regions. Nigeria's religious politics and Islamic insurgencies in the country's north are centered on the characteristics of the state, particularly its secular heritage and legal system[252]. It is argued that fundamentalist Islamists do not distinguish between the sacred and the profane, or the laws that regulate them. These Muslim actors have strongly opposed the Nigerian secular state and called for the establishment of an Islamic state based on Sharia law, after discovering a connection between it and Christianity.[253]. Extremist emotion is also produced in Nigeria by religious extremists, particularly in the northern regions of the nation. They usually regard threats to any one of their religious traditions as threats to their religion and life because they see these traditions as inextricably linked to their community. Consequently, religious fundamentalists respond by pursuing a governmental structure that prioritizes their faith at the expense of others, in response to challenges to Islam.

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It is also possible that under these situations, religious symbols will be utilized to further their political sentiments[254]. Every religion has a different approach to dealing with various God-related problems; the resurgence of Boko Haram militants is a protest against and a rejection of any kind of authority that is not derived from a divine text[255].

They went on to state that they were driven by the liberal foundations of Western culture and neo-imperialism, which are endangering tradition and also prioritizing the person over the fundamental principles of Islam. The Boko Haram insurgencies in Northern Nigeria demonstrate that, despite its global scope, the rise of Islamism cannot be fully understood without taking into account the dire social and political conditions in thecountry[256]. The Boko Haram sect opposes all things deemed to be "Western." Furthermore, there will undoubtedly be a far greater proliferation of armed uprisings in many parts of the world, as a result of the gerontocracy rule and the oligarchy that the West has courted, which continues to disregard Islamic principles in the country[257]. The so-called fundamentalists are one of the popular reactions to Nigeria's poor leadership. That is to say, the Boko Haram sect's insurgencies and suicide bombings demonstrate that the Islamic fundamentalists are serious about their goals and have lost faith in Nigeria's government establishment.

The recent wave of Boko Haram insurrection in Borno State and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, has been attributed to a number of factors. According to one school of thinking, the Boko Haram group reacted violently to a perceived or actual loss of control among the Muslim elite in the north. In other words, some politicians are behind the scenes that encourage and aid Boko Haram in their quest to use religion as a means of retaining control or to destabilize the recently

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established civilian government[258]. Without a question, the Boko Haram problem and the bloodshed that followed the elections in the North are responses to a perceived or actual loss of power by an elite class that is primarily "Northern" and "Moslem," despite the fact that the main proponents of this program may not view religious piety as one of their best virtues.

He goes on to say that the rise of Boko Haram insurgencies is an obvious example of a struggle for absolute political power, with parties fighting for control over who lost and who gained power back[259]. The political crisis that has engulfed the "northern" political class is closely linked to the processes that produced President Goodluck Jonathan as the nominee of this elite layer. Radical Islamist organizations in the North are likely to utilize their connections within the governmental machinery to further their goals, as seen by the backdrop of activities of Boko Haram within the nation. A prevalent accusation directed towards the Nigerian political elite is the functions performed by various political factions and religious figures, including those detained in relation to the actions of Boko Haram[260]. The public believes that because some of the fundamentalists had connections to the government and were formerly high-ranking government employees, the state permitted them to operate for a considerable amount of time.

The majority of the people killed in Maiduguri by the Boko Haram faction were dignitaries and government agents. The younger brother of Borno State's Shehu and the previous governor were shot by the out-of-control Boko Haram sect. Besides, The Boko Haram sect assassinated the All-Nigeria Peoples Party's (ANPP) candidate for governorship prior to the 2011 national elections.[261] Not once has a member of any other party been slain by Boko Haram gunfire in Maiduguri and the surrounding areas. A number of the politicians who have been killed by the group in the recent

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ten months were members of the ANPP. That leaves enough leeway to draw the conclusion that there may be political undertones to the targeting of members of a specific political party.

The situation surrounding the Boko Haram insurgencies is also a crucial issue in national politics; it became highly politicized and was used in the struggle for power between elite groups claiming to speak for one or more religious groups, particularly in light of the growing popularity of Sharia among the masses in Northern Nigeria[262].

Noteworthy is the fact that the Boko Haram group maintained close relationships with political entrepreneurs in the Northern areas of the country. Upon taking office, certain governors promoted Sharia as the solution to all of the socio-economic issues. The claim is that under Sharia, authority will be exercised in the name of God and the greater good of the populace, and that administration would no longer be based on a lack of fear of God. Thus, authority shall be used in accordance with Islamic principles and for the benefit of all citizens[263].

One could claim that certain northern Nigerian governors abandoned the Sharia initiative, which is what led to the emergence of Boko Haram. It should be noted that the leaders of Boko Haram believed that the "Sharia governors" were genuinely interested in implementing Sharia law when the northern governors implemented it in their states. However, after the governors heedlessly abandoned Sharia, having profited politically, the Islamists launched a variety of initiatives deemed most effective for strengthening Islamic traditions in the northern region of Nigeria[264]. The introduction of Sharia rule in Nigeria, a country of 140 million people who are roughly split between Muslims and Christians, is thought to be one of the main goals of the Boko Haram cult. The Boko Haram gang harbors a pathological hate for western education and society, according to another official stance. Naturally, this is implied by the group's name.

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"Boko Haram" is an acronym for "Western education is evil." It has come to light, however, that, unlike what their name suggests, the Boko Haram sect is not against "western education." Rather, their leader is against the governors' management style, which has made western education less beneficial for people who are notelites[265]. These political figures have not behaved in accordance with Islamic principles as pledged during their campaigns for the general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011. The bulk of those with Western education are unemployed for many years due to poor governance, which worries fundamentalists. Meanwhile, the minority who have gained political power use the same Western education to justify their abuse of state power and ill-gotten wealth[266].

The verse in the Quran that reads, "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors," had an impact on the Boko Haram cult and its adherents. Boko Haram propagates an interpretation of Islam that declares it "Haram," or forbidden, for Muslims to engage in any social or political action connected to Western civilization, such as attending a secular school, wearing shirts and pants, or casting a ballot. It is important to note that Boko Haram is not just uninterested in western-style education, but that one of its political objectives is the establishment of an Islamic state. As a result, this Quranic School served as a recruiting ground for jihadists who would battle the state[267].

Concerning Boko Haram, it was the Nigerian government that made the allegation that the group is opposed to western education and civilization, not Islamists. Since the beginning of its activities in 2009, Boko Haram has not targeted a single school in any part of the nation; instead, its main objectives have been governmental buildings, police stations, and prominent politicians. The reason state officials despised Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram, so much was not because he advocated against western education, as the public was informed, but rather because

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he used the best part of his daily sermons to remind people about the horrors committed by state officials and how they contributed to the collapse of the Nigerian state[268].

Everyday, he and his preachers would trash Nigerian politicians, and the size of the loudspeakers in their mosques is a testament to how seriously they take this subject. They address certain political figures by name, during his sermons, and drawing attention to specific transgressions they do to people[269]. Nigerians generally believe that although the governors in different sections of northern Nigeria were aware of Yusuf's "nuisance value," they were unable to call him to order due to large roles he and his followers had played in their ascent to power.

For example, despite multiple attacks and killings of civilians, security personnel, Christian and other targets by the Boko Haram sect, prominent traditional and religious leaders in Bornu State have not been outspoken in denouncing the group's actions [270]. Public experts contended that Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram, was swiftly executed to make sure he didn't live to reveal the identities of their followers in the various northern Nigerian government positions. Many people are aware of the fact that several politicians in the area received spiritual support from people like Yusuf in exchange for their victories in elections[271].

A few Islamist fundamentalists also think that some of the demands made by the Boko Haram sect represent people's frustration and rejection of their current socio-economic situation as well as an effort to create a system that will make them feel like they belong.

Moreover, they contend that the state's and its allies' inability to meet their basic wants and ambitions results in material deprivation and alienation, which led people to start challenging accepted beliefs and institutions that directly affected them[272]. Furthermore, the vicious cycle of national underdevelopment has fostered Islamic fundamentalism among the impoverished. They

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are further fueled by the excessive wealth concentrated in the hands of a few numbers of aristocrats and the extreme poverty in both urban and rural areas. As a result, a large number of them has been inspired to join the jihad. It is true that a large segment of this upper class feudalists is responsible for the inception and maintenance of these issues inside their own nation.

The government's inability to push modernization in the region and generate results is what led to the emergence and agitation of Boko Haram in the country's northern regions. Also government has failed to fulfill its pledges of reform for the benefit of the common people under the current political system. Thus, some analysts contend that the disenchantments and disappointments of the first twelve years of our democratic government in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and in various parts of Northern Nigeria are still present in our democratic dispensation[273].

2.1.27 The Boko Haram Rebellion's After Effects and the Nigerian State's Future

Undoubtedly, the persistent uprisings by Boko Haram demonstrate that Nigeria is an unstable nation, perched on a cliff, akin to a tinderbox. Given how low Nigeria has fallen in the past ten years, due to religious strife, many people outside the country believed that the most populous Black nation in the world had experienced a major catastrophe.

Since 2009, when the organization announced its assault on several government institutions in the northern Nigerian heartland, particularly in Bauchi, Borno, Kaduna, Kano, and Plateau States, Boko Haram insurgencies and bloodshed have posed a serious danger to national security in Nigeria. [274].

Upon visiting these states as well as the Federal Capital Territory, it became evident how the insurgencies led by Boko Haram had resulted in violent conflicts between various ethnic groups, political parties, and communities. Particularly in metropolitan areas, there has been a rise in religious militant activities that have caused significant devastation. Attacks on churches were

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carried out almost simultaneously by Boko Haram insurgents in Maiduguri[275]. In Nigeria, the Sinimari Church of Christ was attacked by three armed militants using petrol bombs and pistols, leaving bullet holes in the walls and killing the security guard. Meanwhile, some thirty jihadists stormed Victory Baptist Church on the opposite side of the city[276].

The signature of Boko Haram has been the deployment of gunmen on motorcycles to assassinate law enforcement officials, politicians, and anybody else who disagrees with the group, including Christian preachers and clerics from various Muslim traditions. Anxiety levels spiked, and the majority of people left Maiduguri. From the areas of Maiduguri and Biu, where significant damage occurred, many people were displaced.

Additionally, there were stampedes and more extensive damage in Yola, Bauchi, and Maiduguri. In response, the state administration quickly enforced a curfew from dusk to sunrise. The killings of non-natives and Christians, the burning down of government buildings, bank robberies, and the shooting of a police station, were orchestrated by the Boko Haram in Maiduguri, Bauchi, Gombe and Yola.[277]. Both the recent suicide assault in Abuja and the ongoing insurgencies in Maiduguri were deeply unsettling, causing numerous Nigerian army personnel to be sent to the areas of unrest.

When Boko Haram militants started carrying out suicide bombings, their insurgencies took a new dimensionon. On the 26th of August, 2011 the incident left many people dead and caused immense suffering, notably for the staff and officials of the United Nations (UN) headquarters where it was carried out. It was stated that the suicide attack on the UN building claimed the lives of about twenty-five individuals.[278] There were restrictions on movement throughout the city, and residents were forced to submit to extended searches while holding up their hands. Some citizens even received whippings from the soldiers. The Boko Haram sect's first foreign target was the UN

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headquarters in Abuja. This development may allow the group to establish connections with international jihadists, which, if left unchecked, might destabilize the nation.

Movement in the city was restricted, with civilians made to undergo thorough searches with their hands raised up, some suffering beatings with horsewhips from the soldiers. The bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja is the first international target of the Boko Haram sect and this development can forge links with global jihadists, which if not properly tackled may destabilise the country.

Nevertheless, some survey also revealed that the Boko Haram militias pose a threat to peace and stability in the country. Their varied actions put other people's lives and property in danger, in addition to endangering the development and unity of the country. Aside from that, it should be emphasized that the current acts of terror and violence against other community members have seriously exacerbated political and economic instability in the area.

Lastly, peace and stability are undermined by the methods of their operation. The Boko Haram insurgencies have caused a large number of individuals in major cities in the Northeastern parts of the nation, including Maiduguri, Bauchi and Damaturu, to make their way to safer places, while insurgents and government security forces continue to fight bloody gun battles.[279]

Several local communities were raided and later destroyed by the troops during the conflicts. Numerous religious militia members, locals, and government security personnel died as a result of these developments. Journeys across Borno, Bauchi, and Yobe States, the three main states that make up Nigeria's Northeast region, showed how the region's instability translated into deadly confrontations involving religion, politics, and communities. There has been a rise in religious

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hostilities, particularly in metropolitan areas, which has resulted in significant violence and destruction[280].

It should also be underlined that the actions of the Boko Haram militias in Maiduguri and surroundings have had adverse effects on the developing democracy in Nigeria. One could perceive the effects of Boko Haram insurgencies as a danger to democracy and the unity of the country. With Boko Haram's multiple acts of terrorism, the group has become a menace to the developing country[281]. One significant adverse effect of Boko Haram's violent activities during the previous general elections was that it made election manipulation easier and intimidated voters who turned out to fulfill their civic duties.

According to the 2011 election monitoring group's assessment for the North East, Boko Haram's actions undoubtedly weakened democracy because the Islamic extremists interfered with the general elections that were held in the region[282]. In light of this, many opinion leaders expressed even more disapproval and pessimism regarding the contribution of religious fundamentalists to the nation's democratic consolidation. Occasionally, we are forced to come to the conclusion that these politicians may be the brains behind the insurgencies as well as those engaging in them. Under Boko Haram, a number of factions are out to commit atrocities. Politicians have found a very good cover to assassinate their political rivals, and armed robbers have found an alibi to operate without restriction and plunder banks.

In the Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State, suspected members of the infamous extremist Islamic group, Boko Haram, assaulted a police station and a commercial bank, killing five officers and a civilian[283]. The fact that Boko Haram is still fighting shows that there is now a condition of ambiguity surrounding internal security. If we assess the country by its current state

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of things and the uncontrollable terrorist attacks by Boko Haram, then security appointees have failed the country. It is important to emphasize that chaos and lawlessness prevail throughout the nation. It is unfortunate that the security in the country's northern regions was unable to curb the excesses of Islamic militants. The nation is currently dealing with the aggressive posturing of Boko Haram's military recidivism into politics, which calls for immediate remediation[284].

2.1.28 Conceptual Framework for the Study

The Conceptual framework of this study is aimed at offering insight into the complex interplay between religion, culture, and the socio-political landscape of the region, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to the surge in the rise of the religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, through Intercultural perspective.

In South-eastern Nigeria, where a diverse tapestry of ethnicities and cultures coexists, examining the rise of religious fundamentalism necessitates a multidimensional approach. The intercultural lens employed in this conceptual review considers how different cultural elements interact with religious ideologies, influencing the dynamics of fundamentalist movements. It delves into the historical, social and economic contexts that have given rise to religious fundamentalism, acknowledging that this phenomenon cannot be isolated from the broader cultural milieu.

One key aspect under scrutiny is the impact of globalization on local cultures and religious practices. The interconnectedness of the world has facilitated the spread of religious ideologies, sometimes leading to the radicalization of belief systems. Additionally, the study explores how economic disparities and political instability contribute to a sense of disenfranchisement, fostering an environment conducive to the growth of religious fundamentalism.

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The intercultural perspective also considers the role of interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange in mitigating religious tensions. Understanding the ways in which different religious and cultural groups in Southeastern Nigeria interact can provide insights into potential avenues for conflict resolution and the promotion of religious tolerance. Basically, the conceptual review on the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, from intercultural perspectives, offers a holistic examination of the phenomenon, by analysing the intricate interplay between religion and culture, and to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the forces driving the ascent of religious fundamentalism in this region.

2.1.29 The Evaluation Framework

Evaluation is considered a methodical and impartial analysis of a current or finished project or programme, encompassing its design, execution, and outcomes. Consequently, the purpose of an evaluation is to assess the relevance and achievement of objectives, as well as to examine development, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. In a comparable manner, evaluation constitutes a methodical approach aimed at comprehending the functions of a programme and assessing its effectiveness. The results of evaluations serve to uphold or enhance the quality of programmes, facilitating a more evidence-based approach to future planning. Evaluation is an integral component of a continuous cycle in the planning and implementation of programmes.

Evaluation seeks to ascertain, in a systematic and objective manner, the value or importance of an intervention, strategy, or policy. An effective evaluation must furnish information that is both reliable and beneficial, facilitating the integration of insights gained into the decision-making processes of both recipients and donors. Evaluation is a deliberate, methodical, and meticulous process of gathering and analysing information aimed at documenting the effectiveness and impact

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of improvements. The evaluation process involves two distinct stages, categorised as formative and summative.

(a) Formative Assessment: Formative evaluations are carried out throughout the development and implementation phases of a programme, serving as a valuable tool for assessing the most effective strategies to achieve objectives or enhance the program's quality.

It is essential to recognise that formative evaluations enhance the subject under scrutiny; they contribute to its development by analysing the execution of the programme or technology, the calibre of its implementation, and the evaluation of the organisational context, personnel, procedures, inputs, and other relevant factors. A formative evaluation, often referred to as process or implementation evaluation, is conducted to assess different facets of an ongoing programme with the aim of facilitating modifications or enhancements during the programme's execution. This form of assessment seeks to meticulously record the precise occurrences within a programme. Data are gathered and examined during a period when modifications to the programme can be executed to guarantee the sustained quality of the program's implementation. Formative evaluation may be employed throughout a continuous programme, with activities conducted within a specified timeframe and following the conclusion of a planned initiative; nonetheless, it encompasses ongoing activities aligned with the program's defined objectives.

Comprehensive Assessment: In contrast, summative evaluation investigates the effects or outcomes of specific objects, encapsulated by detailing the events that transpire following the implementation of a programme or technology. This process involves assessing whether the object

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can be attributed to the observed outcomes, evaluating the broader impact of the causal factor beyond merely the immediate target results, and estimating the associated relative costs linked to the object. Summative evaluation, often referred to as outcome evaluation, is performed to document the results of a programme, identifying specific goals and recording the extent to which those goals have been achieved. A summative evaluation's outcome may indicate necessary modifications to a programme to enhance its effectiveness in future iterations.

A summative evaluation's outcome can delineate the status of a programme and establish conditions for accountability purposes. The outcome may additionally serve as a needs assessment for the future planning of modifications to an existing programme or the implementation of new programmes and interventions. Summative evaluation, conversely, serves to assess the value of a programme and utilises data derived from formative evaluation to inform decision-making. Certain scholars characterise this assessment as taking place subsequent to the creation of a product, the conclusion of a programme, and the termination of a service cycle.

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2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theory, in the context of research, is a systematically organized set of principles that explains and predicts phenomena. It serves as a conceptual framework, guiding the researcher in understanding, interpreting, and explaining observed patterns in the data. The importance of theory in research lies in its ability to provide a structured lens through which researchers can make sense of complex phenomena, formulate hypotheses, and derive meaningful insights. In the study of the

rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in Southeastern Nigeria, a well-developed theoretical framework is essential[285].

Theories can offer explanatory power to understand the intricate web of socio-cultural, historical, and economic factors contributing to the phenomenon. For instance, social identity theory could illuminate how individuals derive a sense of belonging and purpose from fundamentalist movements in the context of cultural diversity. Additionally, conflict theory might help uncover power dynamics and inequalities that fuel religious tensions[208]. By employing a robust theoretical foundation, researchers can systematically analyse the interplay of variables, providing a comprehensive understanding of the rise of religious fundamentalism.

This theoretical lens enhances the study's validity and allows for the identification of factors that may not be immediately apparent. Overall, a well-defined theory is indispensable for researchers aiming to navigate the complexities of intercultural dynamics and religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.

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2.2.1 Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism, a sociological theory developed by Emile Durkheim and later refined by Talcott Parsons, posits that society is a complex system of interconnected parts, each serving a specific function to maintain social order and stability. It views society as analogous to a biological organism, where institutions such as family, education, and government play vital roles in

maintaining equilibrium[286]. Social structures are seen as interdependent, contributing to the overall functioning of the system. For example, education ensures the transmission of cultural values, while the economy provides necessary resources. Some scholars noted that structural functionalism is a sociological theory that emerged in the wake of the industrial revolution of the 19th century. The theory was created as a suitable instrument to address how different characteristics, organizations, groups, and other elements are interconnected within the social system[287].

The history of structural functionalism is as old as sociology itself. This may be seen in the writings of the discipline's founders, who attempted to define structural functionalism. In his view, structure refers to a collection of comparatively fixed and patterned interactions between social units, whereas function is understood to refer to the outcomes of social activities and makes for the modification or adjustment of a particular structure or any of its components or parts[288].

The biological sciences' organism analogy, which holds that every bodily organ in a living thing has some sort of interconnection binding it together, is where the functional approach in sociology originated. Every one of these instruments performs a crucial function for ensuring the organism's survival[290]. Under any circumstance in which any of the organ has abnormalities, it is thought that these faults could have an impact on the organisms[289]. Consequently, the functionalists contend that institutions and groupings make up society as a whole. They further explained that each of these establishments form the society and contributes to the ability to survive in the system. Given the aforementioned, functionalists see society as a system, or a collection of related pieces that work as a whole. Because of this, society serves as the main functional analysis unit.

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The main area of interest is the interactions between the fundamental components of society, or the different institutions, including the family, political, economic, religious, and legal systems. Educational institutions come together to function for the sake of the entire society's survival[291]. While influential in understanding social cohesion, critics argue that structural functionalism oversimplifies social change and neglects power dynamics and conflicts within society. Despite its limitations, the theory has contributed significantly to sociological thought and remains a foundational perspective in understanding the structural dynamics of societies.

2.2.1.1 Application of the Theory

Applying the theory of structural functionalism to the study of the rise of religious fundamentalism, from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria, involves examining how various social institutions contribute to the emergence and perpetuation of this phenomenon, with a focus on their functional roles within the broader societal framework.

Applying this presumption to comprehend the subtleties of religious fundamentalism, religion is dedicated to advancing the common good in order to meet fundamental human needs and encourage sustainable development[292]. This suggests that industrialization and a spirit of hard work are ingrained in religious fundamentalism, and they are the cornerstones of sustainable growth. Adhering to religious ideals and principles correctly will greatly promote tolerance, trust, diligence, honesty, hope, courage, peace, and love, all of which are factors that contribute to development. Furthermore, a strong commitment to religious ideals and principles provide the uniting basis for bringing about social, economic, political, educational, and technological development[293].

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In South-eastern Nigeria, the co-existence of diverse ethnic and religious groups forms a complex social structure. Structural functionalism suggests that religious fundamentalism may arise as a response to perceived threats to social stability. Institutions like family, education, and religious organizations play pivotal roles in shaping cultural norms and values[294]. The breakdown or perceived erosion of traditional values within these institutions may create a sense of social strain, prompting individuals to turn to fundamentalist ideologies as a means of restoring perceived order. Religious institutions, serving as integrative mechanisms, might offer a sense of belonging and purpose, especially in the face of cultural diversity. As South-eastern Nigeria undergoes social, economic, and political changes, religious fundamentalism may emerge as a reaction to these disruptions, aiming to restore a perceived moral order[295]. The theory also prompts investigation into how political and economic structures in the region influence the rise of fundamentalism. Economic disparities and political instability can create conditions conducive to the appeal of fundamentalist ideologies, while also offering a sense of certainty and structure in times of social flux[219].

2.2.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was developed by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. Their work initially focused on minimal group paradigms, where individuals were categorized into arbitrary groups, leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. One of the proponents expanded on these ideas, emphasizing that individuals categorize themselves and others based on social attributes, forming a social identity that influences behaviour and perception.

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Social Identity Theory seeks to explain how individuals derive their sense of self and social identity from group memberships. The main aim is to understand the psychological processes underlying intergroup behaviour, prejudice, and conflict. The proponents of this theory believe that people categorize themselves and others into social groups and these groups become a source of pride and self-esteem[296]. The theory suggests that individuals tend to favor their in-group over out-groups, leading to social categorization, social comparison, and social identity salience.

In the context of the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria, the Social Identity Theory becomes a valuable lens through which to examine the dynamics of group identity. Nigeria, with its diverse ethnic and religious composition, offers a complex social landscape. The theory is relevant to the study as it explores how individuals, facing cultural diversity and potential intergroup tensions, may seek a strong social identity through religious affiliations, contributing to the rise of religious fundamentalism[297].

South-eastern Nigeria, characterized by a mosaic of ethnicities and religions, provides a fertile ground for the application of the Social Identity Theory. In this region, individuals may align themselves with religious groups as a means of forging a clear and distinct social identity in the face of cultural diversity. The theory helps to explain how religious affiliations become a source of pride and self-esteem, especially when faced with historical tensions and contemporary challenges[298].

Social Identity Theory allows researchers to explore how individuals categorize themselves and others based on religious affiliations, leading to in-group favouritism. The desire for a cohesive social identity within a religious community may drive individuals to adopt more rigid and fundamentalist interpretations of their faith. Additionally, the theory helps in understanding how

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intergroup dynamics, influenced by social identity, contribute to the formation of religious communities that may resist or feel threatened by cultural diversity[299].

Despite its contributions, Social Identity Theory has faced criticism on several fronts. One critique is that it tends to oversimplify the complexities of individual behavior within groups, neglecting the impact of personal experiences and unique circumstances.

Critics argue that the theory may not fully capture the variability in human responses to social identity, as it tends to focus on general patterns and tendencies[300]. Another criticism is that the theory may be overly deterministic, implying that individuals are bound to conform to in-group norms and exhibit bias against out-groups. Some researchers argue that individuals are capable of more nuanced and individualized responses, and the theory may not adequately account for variations in how people navigate their social identities[301].

Furthermore, Social Identity Theory (SIT) has been accused of downplaying the role of power dynamics and historical context in shaping intergroup relations. Critics argue that the theory may not sufficiently address the impact of structural inequalities and historical injustices on the formation and perpetuation of social identities[302]. In the context of studying religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria, critics might contend that SIT oversimplifies the motivations behind religious affiliations, potentially overlooking broader socio-political factors that contribute to the rise of fundamentalist ideologies[303].

Social Identity Theory remains an influential framework for understanding intergroup dynamics and the formation of social identities. In the study of the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria, SIT offers valuable insights into how individuals derive a sense of self and pride from religious group memberships in the midst of

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cultural diversity. However, researchers must approach its application with a critical perspective, recognizing its limitations and considering the complex interplay of individual agency, historical context, and power dynamics within the intricate social fabric of South-eastern Nigeria.

2.2.3 Relative Deprivation Theory

The Relative Deprivation Theory originated in the mid-20th century and has been shaped by various scholars, with one of its early proponents being Samuel Stouffer. The theory gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s through the works of sociologists like James C. Davies and Ted Gurr. These scholars contributed to the development of the theory by exploring its applications in understanding social movements, political unrest, and collective behavior.

Relative Deprivation Theory posits that feelings of discontent and frustration arise when individuals perceive that they are not receiving their fair share of societal resources, opportunities, or privileges compared to others with whom they identify. The main aim of the theory is to explain how the perception of relative deprivation can lead to collective action, social movements, or, in some cases, radicalization. It emphasizes the psychological and subjective nature of deprivation, highlighting that it is not merely the absolute level of resources that matters but the perceived disparity between what one has and what others possess[304]. In the context of the study on the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in South-eastern Nigeria, Relative Deprivation Theory provides a compelling framework for examining how perceived inequalities and disparities contribute to the emergence of fundamentalist ideologies[305].

South-eastern Nigeria, marked by a diverse cultural and religious landscape, offers a context where Relative Deprivation Theory can be applied to understand the rise of religious fundamentalism. The theory encourages researchers to explore how economic, political, and social disparities may

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fuel a sense of relative deprivation among certain groups, pushing them towards religious fundamentalism as a perceived solution or coping mechanism[306].

Economic disparities, uneven resource distribution, and perceived social injustices in Southeastern Nigeria may contribute to a sense of relative deprivation. Individuals or communities experiencing these disparities may turn to religious fundamentalism as a way to address their perceived grievances, find meaning, and assert a sense of agency[307]. For instance, a community feeling marginalized economically or politically might find solace and empowerment in a fundamentalist interpretation of their religious identity.

The theory also allows for an exploration of the role of intercultural dynamics in shaping perceptions of relative deprivation. In a region with multiple ethnic and religious groups, Relative Deprivation Theory can illuminate how competition for resources or influence may exacerbate perceived inequalities, leading to the rise of religious fundamentalism, as a response to these perceived threats[308]. While Relative Deprivation Theory offers valuable insights into understanding social movements and collective behaviour, it has faced criticism on several fronts.

One critique is that the theory sometimes lacks specificity in explaining the conditions under which feelings of relative deprivation translate into collective action. Critics argue that not all instances of perceived inequality lead to social unrest, and the theory might oversimplify the complex factors that contribute to collective mobilization[309]. Additionally, the theory has been accused of neglecting the role of cultural and ideological factors in shaping perceptions of deprivation.

Critics argue that the emphasis on material disparities may overlook the significance of symbolic or cultural factors that contribute to feelings of relative deprivation. In the context of religious

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fundamentalism, this critique suggests that the theory might not fully capture the role of cultural and religious identity in shaping perceptions of deprivation and radicalization[310].

In the study of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria, critics might contend that Relative Deprivation Theory, while valuable, may not provide a complete picture of the multifaceted factors contributing to the phenomenon. It might need to be complemented with other theoretical perspectives that consider the intricate interplay of cultural, historical, and political elements specific to the region[311].

Relative Deprivation Theory serves as a pertinent framework for comprehending the rise of extremist religion in the South-eastern region by emphasizing the role of perceived inequalities and grievances in shaping collective behaviour. Its application in this context enables researchers to explore how economic, political, and intercultural dynamics contribute to feelings of relative deprivation, potentially fuelling the appeal of fundamentalist ideologies. While acknowledging its contributions, researchers must also consider the theory's limitations and integrate it with other perspectives to develop a comprehensive knowledge of the complex phenomenon of religious fundamentalism in the Southeastern region.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

A study was recently carried out on religious fundamentalism and interreligious conflicts in Southeastern Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to investigate the emergence and rise of religious fundamentalism, particularly Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, and its impact on interreligious conflicts in Southeastern Nigeria. It was established that religious fundamentalism emerged as a significant force in Southeastern Nigeria, contributing to rising tensions and conflicts between different faith communities in the region. This review of empirical study begins by

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examining the historical and socio-political context that has facilitated the growth of religious fundamentalism in the region. It discusses how the increasing polarization of religious identities, the competition for political and economic influence, and the erosion of traditional religious and cultural practices have all contributed to the rise of fundamentalist ideologies. The review then analyzes the ways in which religious fundamentalism has manifested in Southeastern Nigeria. This includes the proliferation of strict and exclusivist interpretations of religious doctrines,

the rejection of religious pluralism, and the use of violence and intimidation to enforce fundamentalist agendas. The study explores how these fundamentalist tendencies have led to heightened interreligious conflicts, characterized by clashes between religious groups, the desecration of sacred spaces, and the displacement of communities.

Furthermore, the study examines the socio-economic and political consequences of these interreligious conflicts, highlighting their impact on community cohesion, development, and the overall stability of the region. It discusses also the efforts made by religious and civic leaders to promote interfaith dialogue, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence, while also acknowledging the challenges and limitations of these initiatives. The study employed a qualitative, literature-based review approach. It drew on scholarly publications, reports, and other secondary sources to examine the historical, socio-political, and cultural factors contributing to the rise of religious fundamentalism in the region.

The qualitative, literature-based approach allowed the researcher to synthesize the existing knowledge and perspectives on the rise of religious fundamentalism and its impact on interreligious relations in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. This methodological choice was appropriate for the exploratory and conceptual nature of the study, which aimed to provide a

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detailed review of the topic rather than generating new empirical data. The study did not involve primary data collection from a specific sample population. There was no need for a data collection. Rather, it reviewed and synthesized existing literature and relevant secondary sources pertaining to religious fundamentalism and interreligious conflicts in Southeastern Nigeria. The study utilized thematic analysis to identify and explore the key themes and patterns emerging from the reviewed literature.

This allowed the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between religious fundamentalism and interreligious conflicts in the region. The study concluded that the rise of religious fundamentalism, characterized by the proliferation of strict and exclusivist interpretations of religious doctrines, has been a significant contributor to heightened interreligious tensions and conflicts in Southeastern Nigeria. These conflicts have had detrimental socio-economic and political consequences for the region. The scholar emphasizes the urgent need for a holistic and multifaceted approach to address the rise of religious fundamentalism and its detrimental effects on interreligious relations in Southeastern Nigeria. This includes engaging in intercultural and interfaith exchanges, addressing the underlying socio-economic and political factors that fuel fundamentalism, and fostering a culture of mutual understanding and respect among diverse religious communities.

In another empirical research, a scholar carried out a study on the influence of globalization on religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. This study explores the relationship between globalization and the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. The study also sought to investigate how various aspects of globalization- such as cultural exchange, economic integration, and the diffusion of ideas - have impacted the growth and manifestations of religious

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fundamentalist movements in that region. The study found that increased exposure to global cultures and values, through media, migration, and economic integration has challenged traditional religious and cultural norms in Southeastern Nigeria. This cultural disruption fueled the rise of fundamentalist responses aimed at preserving or reasserting local religious and cultural identities. The study also discusses the ways in which local communities have negotiated and responded to the challenges posed by religious fundamentalism in the context of globalization. The researcher found out and concluded that addressing the influence of globalization on religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach that addresses both local and global factors, fostering a culture of religious pluralism, tolerance, and constructive interfaith dialogue that could help mitigate the negative impacts of globalization on interreligious relations.

A researcher has earlier carried out a study on navigating the landscape of religious diversity: intercultural dialogue and the challenge of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. This review examines the efforts of intercultural dialogue and interfaith initiatives in addressing the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. It explores the strategies employed by religious and community leaders to promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among diverse faith communities. The study also critically evaluates the successes and limitations of these initiatives in the face of persistent religious conflicts and the continued growth of fundamentalist ideologies.

In Nigeria, interreligious conversation has grown in popularity as a response to the country's environment of cultural and religious pluralism, as well as a number of other challenges like violence, vandalism, killings, and most importantly, the disturbance of the peaceful coexistence of

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the many ethnic groups living there. Numerous unpleasant flashpoints and circumstances have arisen in different parts of Nigeria as a result of the complexity of various faiths, beliefs, customs, cultures, languages, and the threat of religious fundamentalism and extremism.

In order to address the challenges brought about by the plurality of religious faiths; this study aims to highlight the importance of and necessity for commitment from the various stakeholders. Specifically, it seeks to identify the efforts that religious organizations, traditional institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations including Christian and Muslim groups must make. Given that religion has a significant impact on social, political, and personal security of lives, as a country, there may therefore without ongoing communication amongst the citizens of this large country, there could be no lasting peace, which is why this study is essential. Both primary and secondary sources were used in the information for collecting data for this research.

From the study, the research called for the eradication of deeply ingrained prejudice and misconceptions while identifying a number of difficulties and issues with intolerance, existing conflicts of interest, unfairness, inequity, and the superiority of one religious' group over another. The country's legislative branch must pass and put into effect laws that promote religious liberty and prohibit discrimination. Additionally, this article promotes community involvement as this will foster local-level interreligious tolerance, among all the factors thought to be the way forward. There is no doubt that the media must take responsibility in promoting responsible reporting and messaging in the regular and social media that seek to promote a harmonious relationship between religious groups, while discouraging and campaigning against the incitement of religious hatred in Nigeria. This includes community-led initiatives and dialogues to sensitize the people on the need

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to coexist. From the study, mutual understanding, harmony, and harmonious cohabitation should be promoted.

2.4 Summary of Gaps in Literature Reviewed

The literature reviewed on the rise of religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspectives in Southeastern Nigeria has provided valuable insights, yet several gaps persist, warranting further research and exploration. One notable gap lies in the limited attention given to the role of gender dynamics within the context of religious fundamentalism. Understanding how gender norms and relations intersect with religious ideologies can shed light on the differential impacts of fundamentalism on men and women, potentially revealing unique challenges and opportunities for intervention.

Additionally, the existing literature tends to focus predominantly on the historical and economic factors contributing to religious fundamentalism, with less emphasis on the contemporary role of technology and media in shaping religious narratives. Exploring the influence of digital platforms and media on the dissemination of fundamentalist ideologies could provide a more current and comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which these ideologies gain traction.

Furthermore, there is a notable gap in research that examines the experiences and perspectives of minority religious groups within South-eastern Nigeria. Understanding how religious diversity intersects with cultural dynamics can offer a more nuanced portrayal of the complexities surrounding the rise of fundamentalism in the region. Addressing these gaps in the literature will contribute to a more holistic comprehension of the intercultural dimensions regarding extremist religion in South-eastern Nigeria.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design affords the researcher the opportunity to gather data from a large sample within the study area through church leaders, Muslim leaders and community leaders located within the research field.

3.2 Population for the Research

Population for the research comprised of 120 participants drawn from clerics and community leaders who are Christians and Muslims from the selected three states in the Southeast Geo-Political Zone of the country. The States are Anambra, Enugu and Imo.

3.3 Sample and Sampling techniques

The study adopted purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents from Anambra, Enugu and Imo states who are religious and community leaders, that are familiar with the rise of fundamentalism, from an intercultural perspective within Southeastern Nigeria. A simple random sampling by balloting with replacement was adopted to select 40 respondents from each of these states. It provided the states with equal chances of being selected and this gave us 120 respondents as sample size, representing 10% of the population.

3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

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The instruments used for this study were questionnaire and interview guide. These were developed by the researcher and employed to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts.

The first part was used to gather information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while the second section was used to elicit responses from the research questions. In addition to the above, the questionnaire was structured and designed on a five-point Likert scale to elicit responses from the respondents. The Likert scale in this study was structured as follows:

SA = Strongly Agree (4 points) A = Agree (3 points) D = Disagree (2 points)

SD = Strongly Disagree (1 point).

The instruments were:

a. Intercultural Perspective Strategic Adoption Questionnaire (InPSAQ)
b. Interview Guide for Christian Leaders (InGuCL)
c. Interview Guide for Moslem Leaders (InGuML)
d. Interview Guide for Community Leaders (InGuCL)

Each of the instruments meant for completion by the respondents were written in English.

3.4.1 Intercultural Perspective Strategic Adoption Questionnaire (InPSAQ)

The Instrument has thirteen (13) item constructs, and it was completed by the Christian clerics, the Moslem clerics and the community leaders within the selected states of the study area with the items relating to the under listed:

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1. Interfaith dialogue initiatives addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria.
2. Our children should not be allowed to learn about other religions.
3. The followers of other religions should not have the same right with mine
4. Criticism of Islam / Christianity should not be tolerated.
5. Criticism of Islam/ Christian religious leaders should not be tolerated.
6. Ethnicity funds religious fundamentalism.
7. Technological advancements and the media are influencing the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalist ideologies in South-eastern Nigeria.
8. Educational programs that highlight religious diversity can contribute to mitigating the appeal of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.
9. Political factors contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.
10. Economic development programs that promote intercultural understanding can be used in addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.
11. The influence of external forces, such as international politics or global ideologies, affects the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.
12. Political instability in South-eastern Nigeria intersects with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism.
13. Diplomatic efforts and international collaboration can address the impact of political and external influences on the rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.

3.4.2 Interview Guide for Christian Leaders (InGuChL)

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Clerics of both Christianity and Islam completed this instrument, which was composed of the following items:

1. Denomination/Ministry/Mission agency identity
2. Length of Denomination/Ministry/Mission Agency service in the area
3. Length of years of service among the people in the area
4. Mission strategies and Missions deployed towards religious fundamentalism from intercultural perspective in the area
5. Reasons for deployment of strategies
6. Effectiveness of the strategies towards the rise of religious fundamentalism from an intercultural perspective
7. Factors responsible for the success of the deployed strategies in the area
8. Setback to the deployed strategies in the area
9. Factors responsible for the setbacks of the deployed strategies in the area
10. Obstacles to effective management of the rise of religious fundamentalism from an intercultural perspective in the area
11. Cultural restraint among the religious groups preventing intercultural perspective in the area
12. Challenges of doing mission work in the area

3.4.3 Interview Guide for Community Leaders (InGUCL)

The instruments were completed by the community leaders in the selected areas of the three states in the South-eastern region of Nigeria.

1. Nativity

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2. Hometown
3. Religious affiliation
4. Primary religion of the people
5. Personal view about Christianity
6. Personal view about Islam
7. Perception of natives about religious fundamentalism
8. Perception of natives about intercultural perspectives
9. Opinions about wrongs and offences of religious fundamentalism
10. Willingness of the natives to accept intercultural perspectives
11. Cultural restrictions that prevent the natives from intercultural perspectives, which give rise to religious fundamentalism
12. Strategies to win the natives to intercultural perspectives

3.5 Validity of Research Instruments

Copies of the questionnaire and inventory scale were given to experts in evaluation and the core research area of validation. The suggestions and observations were collated and effected to produce the final draft of the questionnaire and the inventory scale before their administration at the research site.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

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A pilot study was conducted using 15 natives from Ibeku community in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. The outcome of the analysis from the administered copies of the questionnaire was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument.

3.6.1: Reliability Values of the Research Instruments

S/N	Instrument Construct	Crombach Alpha
1.	Intercultural Perspective Strategic Adoption Questionnaire (InPSAQ)	0. 7 6
2.	Interview Guide for Christian Leaders (InGuChL)	0. 76
3.	Interview Guide for Moslem Leaders (InGuML)	0. 76
4.	Interview Guide for Community Leaders (InGuCL)	0. 77

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork 2023

Table 3.6.1 indicate that the results of the Crombach Alpha test of 0.77 and 0.76 were above 0.70 as the benchmark criterion. Therefore, the researcher accepted the research instrument as reliable for data collection for the study.

3.7 Administration of Instrument and Technique for Gathering Data

Research instruments were executed through by the researcher using the assistance of two indigenes and a Moslem worker who helped in collating the copies of the questionnaire. The researcher visited the area to administer the instrument between August 16 and 20, 2022. A total of 120 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and duly completed.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

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Data collected through the instrument was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents results and discussions of findings according to the research questions raised in the study. The study was carried out to evaluate the rise of religious fundamentalism from religious perspectives in Southeastern Nigeria. The data are presented in tables. Simple percentage was used to analyse the personal data of the correspondents. Weighted mean (score) was used to analyse the study objectives. Details of the demographic information of the respondents have been displayed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Input Distribution of the Respondents

Questionnaire Distribution	Response	Percentage
No. distributed	120	
No. collected	120	100
No. not collected	0	0

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The response rate chart shows that out of the 120 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 100% was collected. The 120 copies collected was adopted as the study sample survey.

Details of the demographic information of the respondents are presented in Table 4.2.

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Table 4.2: Demographic Information of the Respondents

		Frequency =120	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	74	61.7
	Female	46	38.3
Age	Below 20 years	10	8.3
	21-30 years	10	8.3
	26-30 years	32	26.7
	31-40 years	18	15.0
	41-50 years	20	16.7
	51-60 years	25	20.8
	61 and above	5	4.2

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Marital Status	Married	54	45.1
	Single	34	29.9
	Widow	20	16.7
	Single Parent	10	8.3
Highest Education Qualification	Primary Six	23	19.2
	Junior Secondary School	20	16.7
	Senior Secondary School	31	25.8
	Sub-degree	18	15.0
	Degree/HND	6	6.7
	Master's Degree	14	11.7
	Ph.D	6	4.9
Occupation/Profession	Farming	29	24.2
	Trading	21	17.5
	Driving	5	4.2
	Produce Buying	19	15.8
	Pastoral	36	30.0
	Unemployed	3	2.5
	Retiree	4	5.8

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4.1 represents the demographic data analysis which shows the gender, age, marital status, highest educational qualification and the profession of each respondent. The table reveals that a total number of 74 were male representing 61.7%, while 46, representing 38.3%, were females. The age range is between 21 and 61 years and above, which was dominated by 26 to 30 years, representing 26.7% and comprised of 32 respondents. Marital status comprised married, single, widow and single parents. Educational qualification comprised of primary six, junior secondary school certificate, senior secondary school certificate, sub-degree (NCE, ND, Diplomas

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certificates, etc.), degree/higher diploma, master's degree and Ph.D. Occupation of the respondents comprised farming, trading, driving, produce buying, pastoral/mission work, unemployed and retired.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.2.1 Analysis of Research Questions

To what extent do you believe economic disparities contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria?

Table 4.3: Causes of economic disparities and how they contribute to religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria (N=120)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1.	Our kids shouldn't be allowedto learn other religions	24 (20.0%)	16 (13.3%)	29 (24.2%)	51 (42.5%)	2.1	0.646	Rejected
2.	The followers of other religions should not have the same right as mine	21 (17.5%)	18 (15.0%)	40 (33.3%)	41 (34.2%)	2.1	0.644	Rejected
3.	Criticism of Christianity or Islam is unacceptable	53 (44.2%)	42 (35%)	17 (14.2%)	8 (6.7%)	3.2	0.703	Accepted
4.	Criticism of religious leaders who are Muslim or Christian should not be accepted	46 (38.3%)	39 (32.5%)	12 (10.0%)	23 (19.2%)	2.9	0.696	Accepted
5.	Ethnicity funds religious fundamentalism	34 (28.3%)	51 (42.5%)	28 (23.3%)	7 (5.8%)	2.9	0.777	Accepted
6.	Technological advancements and the media influence the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalism	44 (36.7%)	36 (30.0%)	23 (19.2%)	17 (14.2%)	2.9	0.780	Accepted

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	ideologies in Southern Nigeria							
7.	Interfaith dialogue initiatives address the root causes of religious fundamentalism inSouthern Nigeria	33 (27.51%)	37 (30.8%)	29 (24.2%)	21 (17.5%)	2.7	0.713	Accepted
8.	Educational programs that highlight religious diversity can contribute to mitigating the appeal of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria	48 (40.0%)	32 (26.7%)	30 (25.0%)	10 (8.3%)	3.0	0.910	Accepted
9.	Political factors contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria	49 (40.8%)	32 (26.6%)	21 (17.5%)	18 (15.0%)	2.9	0.714	Accepted
10.	Economic programmes that promote inter-cultural understanding can be used in addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria	54 (45.0%)	54 (45.0%)	22 (18.4%)	20 (16.6%)	3.7	0.666	Accepted
11.	The influence of external forces, such as international forces or global ideologies, affect the dynamisms of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria	37 (30.82%)	38 (31.7%)	26 (21.62%)	19 (15.9%)	2.8	0.581	Accepted

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12.	Political instability in Southern Nigeria intersects with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism	32 (26.6%)	52 (43.3%)	23 (19.2%)	13 (10.8%)	2.9	0.611	Accepted
13.	Diplomatic efforts and international collaborations can address the impact of political and external influence on the religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria	60 (50.0%)	21 (17.5%)	24 (20.0%)	15 (12.5%)	3.1	0.899	Accepted

Source: (Fieldwork, 2023)

Note: A mean score of 2.5 was used for decision criterion. Any calculated mean that is less than 2.5 was rejected, while 2.5 or above calculated mean was accepted.

Table 4.3 shows the causes of economic disparities and how they contribute to religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria. The table shows that 24 (20.0%) strongly agreed that our children should not be allowed to learn other religion, while 16 (13.3%) agreed. 29 (24.2%) disagreed, while 51 (42.5%) strongly disagreed.

Further analysis reveals that the calculated mean result was 2.1, which is less than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). This shows the opinion that our kids shouldn't be allowed to study other religions was rejected. From the table also, it shows that 21 (17.5%) strongly agreed that the followers of other religions should not have the same right as mine, while 18 (15.0%) agreed.

However, 40 (33.3%) disagreed, while 41 (34.2%) disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 2.1, which was less than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The result of the findings rejects the opinion that the followers of other religions should not have the same right as mine. The table shows that 53 (44.2%) strongly agreed that criticism of Christianity or Islam is unacceptable; 42 (35.0%) agreed,

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17 (4.2%) disagreed and 8 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 3.2, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). Therefore, the result of the findings accepts that the criticism of Christianity or Islam is unacceptable.

The table also shows that 46 (38.3%) strongly agreed that criticism of religious leaders who are Muslim or Christian should not be accepted; 39 (32.5%) agreed, 12 (10.0%) disagreed and 23 (19.2%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 2.9, which was greater than the mean score of 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The findings accepted the opinion that criticism of religious leaders who are Muslim or Christian should not be accepted. In the table also, 34 (28.3%) strongly agreed that ethnicity funds religious fundamentalisms, 51 (42.5%) agreed, 28 (23.3%) disagreed and 7 (5.8%) strongly disagreed. The calculated mean score of 2.9 which was greater than the mean score of 2.5 was accepted, showing that ethnicity funds religious fundamentalism. The table also shows that 44 (36.7%) strongly agreed that technological advancements and the media influence the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalisms in Southern Nigeria; 36 (30%) agreed, 23 (19.2%) disagreed and 17 (14.2%) strongly disagreed. For the fact that the calculated mean result of 2.9 was greater than the mean score of 2.5, the findings accepted the opinion that technological advancements and the media e influence the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria.

The table above also shows that 33 (27.5%) strongly agreed that interfaith dialogue initiatives address the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southwestern Nigeria, 37 (30.8%) agreed, 29 (24.2%) disagreed while 21 (17.5%) strongly disagreed. The calculated mean score result of 2.7 was accepted because it was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table shows that interfaith dialogue initiatives address the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria.

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The table also shows that 48 (40.0%) strongly agreed that educational programs that highlight religious diversity can contribute to mitigating the appeal of religious fundamentalisms in Southern Nigeria. 32 (26.7%) agreed, 30 (25.0%) disagreed and 10 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean score of 3.0 was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). Therefore, we accepted that educational programmes that highlight religious diversity can contribute to mitigating the appeal of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria.

The table also indicates that 49 (40.8%) strongly agreed that political factors contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria, 32 (26.6%) agreed, 21 (17.5%) disagreed and 18 (15.0%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean sore was 2.9 and greater than the 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table revealed that political factors contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalisms in Southeastern Nigeria. From the table, 54 (45.0%) strongly agreed that economic programs that promote inter-cultural understanding can be used to address the root causes of religious fundamentalisms in Southeastern Nigeria, another 54(45.0%) agreed, 22 (18.4%) disagreed, while 20 (16.6%) strongly disagreed. The calculated mean score was 3.7, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table proves that economic programs that promote intercultural understanding can be used to address the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria.

The table also reveals that 37 (30.8%) strongly agreed that the influence of external forces, such as international forces or global ideologies, affect the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria, 38 (31.7%) agreed, 26 (21.6%) disagreed, while 19 (15.9%) strongly

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disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 2.8, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table shows that the influence of international forces or global ideologies affect the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria.

The table also indicated that 32 (26.6%) strongly agreed that political instability in Southeastern Nigeria intersects with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism.52 (43.3%) agreed, 23 (19.3%) disagreed, while 13 (10.8%) strongly disagreed, while 13(10.8%) strongly disagreed. A calculated mean score of 2.9 was recorded, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). This reveals that political instability in Southeastern Nigeria intersects with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism.

Lastly, the table reveals that 60 (50.0%) strongly agreed that diplomatic efforts and international collaborations can address the impact of political and external influence of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. 21 (17.5%) agreed, 24 (20.0%) disagreed while 15 (12.5%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 3.1, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table affirms that diplomatic efforts and international collaborations can address the impact of political and external influences on the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria.

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How does the interplay between globalization and local cultures contribute to the growth of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria?

Table 4.4: The interplay between globalization, local cultures and the growth of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria

S/No.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Any infraction of religious instruction will bring about God's severe punishment	39 (32.5%)	34 (28.3%)	29 (24.2%)	18 (15.0%)	2.8	0.701	Accepted
2.	Only the fear of God keeps people in the right path	64 (53.3%)	34 (28.3%)	15 (12.5%)	7 (5.8%)	3.0	0.816	Accepted
3.	Satan is behind any attempt to undermine faith in God	73 (60.8%)	27 (22.5%)	10 (8.3%)	10 (8.3%)	3.5	0.951	Accepted
4.	People stay in the correct road because they expect reward in heaven	103 (85.8%)	7 (5.8%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (4.2%)	3.7	0.992	Accepted
5.	Religious fundamentalism is a global challenge	65 (54.2%)	31 (25.8%)	10 (8.3%)	14 (11.7%)	3.1	0.984	Accepted

Source: (Fieldwork, 2023)

Table 4.5 shows the interplay between globalization and how local cultures contribute to the growth of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. The table reveals that 39 (32.5) strongly agreed that any violation of religious teachings will bring about God's harsh punishment, 34 (28.3%) agreed, 29 (24.2%) disagreed, while 18 (15.0%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 2.8, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table reveals that any violation of religious teachings will bring about God's harsh punishment.

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Table 4.4, item no 2 also reveals that 64 (53.3%) strongly agreed that only the fear of God puts individuals in the appropriate course, 34 (28.3%) agreed, 15 (12.5%) disagreed, while 7 (5.8%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 3.0, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table shows that only the fear of God puts individuals in the appropriate course.

From the table also, 73 (60.8%) strongly agreed that Satan is behind any attempt to undermine faith in God, 27 (22.5%) agreed, 10 (8.3%) disagreed and another 10 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. the result of the calculated mean was 3.5, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table revealed that Satan is behind any attempt to undermine faith in God.

Also from table 4.4, item 4, reveals that 103 (85.8%) strongly agreed that people stay in the correct road because they expect reward in heaven. 7 (5.8%) agreed, 5(4.2%) disagreed, while another 5 (4.2%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean was 3.7, which was greater than 2.5 ($\bar{X}$). The table shows that people stay in the correct road because they expect reward in heaven.

Lastly, the table also reveals that 65 (54.2%) strongly agreed that religious fundamentalism is a global challenge, 31 (25.8%) agreed, 10 (8.3%) disagreed, while 14 (11.7%) strongly disagreed. The result of the calculated mean score is 3.1, which was greater than 2.5. This table, therefore, reveals that religious fundamentalism is a global challenge.

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4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

What are the causes of economic disparities and how do they contribute to religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria**?**

The study revealed that criticisms of Islam/Christianity, their religious leaders, ethnicity, technological advancement, and the media are the major causes of economic disparities, thereby contributing to religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria. Minor causes were not allowing our children to learn other religious and disallowing equal human rights among the people.

The findings also revealed that political factors and economic programs also instigate religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria ideologies, political instability, and intercultural dynamics. However, the study revealed that interfaith dialogue, educational programs, and diplomatic efforts that promote intercultural understanding and international collaboration, are some of the means to mitigate religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria.

Commented [U5]: You have two spellings of Southeastern and South-eastern Nigeria. Please, stick to one spelling.

The study also revealed that any violation of religious teachings would attract God's punishment. That is why people believe that only God's fear prevents them from the wrong course, as they expect their reward from heaven. This fear of God, according to the study, is undermined by Satan through his temptation against people's belief in God.

Lastly, the study further revealed that religious fundamentalism is a global challenge. The reason is because of the influence of external forces, such as international forces or global ideologies which affect the dynamics of religious fundamentalism, not only in Southern Nigeria, but across the globe.

Intercultural interactions and religious diversity have significant influence on the dynamics of religious fundamentalism and it has exposed individuals to different belief systems and practices, which can challenge and broaden their perspectives. This exposure can create a more tolerant and

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inclusive environment, reducing the appeal of religious fundamentalism, rooted in exclusivity and rigid adherence to a single doctrine.

The findings revealed that intercultural interactions and religious diversity can contribute to social cohesion and integration within communities. When individuals from different religious backgrounds engage in social, economic, and cultural activities together, it strengthens bonds and promotes a sense of shared identity beyond religious affiliations. This inclusive environment can act as a counterforce against the isolationist tendencies associated with religious fundamentalism.

The study also revealed that when individuals from diverse religious backgrounds interact, it fosters an environment of religious pluralism and coexistence. This can promote dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect among different religious communities. Such an environment is less conducive to the growth of religious fundamentalism, which often thrives on divisive narratives and the rejection of other faiths.

Lastly, the study reveals that intercultural interactions and religious diversity in Southeastern Nigeria can both challenge and reinforce the dynamics of religious fundamentalism. While they can promote tolerance, pluralism, and social cohesion, they can also lead to conflicts, political manipulation, and economic disparities, which may contribute to the growth of religious extremism. It is essential for stakeholders, including religious leaders, policymakers, and civil society organizations, to foster an environment of inclusivity, dialogue, and equitable development to mitigate the risks associated with religious fundamentalism. Socio-economic disparities and marginalization can contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism. When certain religious or

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ethnic groups face economic inequalities and limited opportunities, they may become more susceptible to extremist ideologies.

Economic grievances can be exploited by fundamentalist groups, who offer a sense of identity, purpose, and solidarity to those who feel marginalized.

Findings reveal that high levels of unemployment and poverty can create a fertile ground for religious fundamentalism to take root. Lack of economic prospects and a sense of hopelessness can make individuals vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups. Economic difficulties may intersect with intercultural perspectives, as marginalized communities may perceive their economic struggles as being linked to their religious or cultural identity, leading to a sense of victimization and a greater susceptibility to religious fundamentalism.

The study also revealed that limited access to quality education and social mobility can contribute to religious fundamentalism. In areas where educational opportunities are scarce, extremist groups may exploit this gap by providing religious education and indoctrination. Lack of exposure to diverse perspectives and critical thinking can make individuals more susceptible to rigid interpretations of religious doctrines.

Again the study revealed that socio-economic factors intersect with intercultural perspectives when individuals seek a sense of identity and belonging. In the face of economic disparities and cultural dislocation, some individuals may turn to religious fundamentalism as a means to reclaim a perceived lost identity and restore a sense of community. Fundamentalist groups often provide

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a sense of purpose, belonging, and social support to their followers. Economic competition, particularly over scarce resources, can exacerbate tensions among different religious and cultural groups. Disputes over land, economic opportunities, or access to resources can be framed in religious terms, leading to increased polarization and the rise of religious fundamentalism as a response to perceived threats or injustices.

The study revealed that political actors may exploit intercultural dynamics and religious diversity to advance their own agenda. They can manipulate religious sentiments, identity politics, and sectarian divisions for political gain. This manipulation can strengthen religious fundamentalist groups by polarizing communities along religious lines, creating an environment that fosters extremism and intolerance. Weak governance, corruption, and lack of effective institutions can create a fertile ground for religious fundamentalism to thrive. When governance fails to address socio-economic disparities, provide basic services, or ensure justice and security, it can lead to disillusionment and frustration among the populace. Extremist groups may exploit these grievances and offer an alternative system based on religious ideologies

The study also revealed that external factors, such as transnational extremist organizations, can play a role in promoting religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. They may provide financial support, ideological guidance, and training to local extremist groups. These external influences can exacerbate intercultural dynamics by importing radical ideologies that can clash with the prevailing religious and cultural norms in the region. Political conflicts and instability can create conditions conducive to the rise of religious fundamentalism. In Southeastern Nigeria, for example, the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeastern part of the country has had ripple effects throughout the region. Displaced populations, breakdown of social structures, and the erosion of trust in the state can create an environment where extremist ideologies find fertile ground.

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Political and external influences can fuel sectarian violence, leading to a cycle of retaliation and counter-violence. Interactions between different religious and cultural groups become strained, and extremist ideologies may gain traction as communities seek protection and retaliation against perceived threats. This dynamic further deepens divisions and hinders intercultural understanding.

The study also revealed that global geopolitical factors can also indirectly influence the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria. Factors such as regional conflicts, geopolitical rivalries, and the spread of extremist ideologies in neighboring countries can spill over and impact the local dynamics of religious fundamentalism. These influences can disrupt intercultural dynamics and contribute to the growth of religious extremism.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

1. Religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria was caused by criticism, not only of Islam or of the Christianity belief dichotomy, but also by criticism and mutual hatred among leaders and followers. This made it a taboo to allow their children to learn about other religions, which gave rise to denying people of other faith, their fundamental rights.
2. Technological advancement, media exposure, political instability and globalization were other major causes of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria. These were worsened by economic disparities and global ideologies.
3. The historical legacy of colonialism and Christian missionary work have created tensions between Christianity and traditional beliefs. The imposition of Western education and values also led to cultural and religious conflicts.
4. Social and economic factors, such as unemployment, inequality, and political marginalization, have fuelled feelings of frustration and hopelessness, leading some to embrace fundamentalism.
5. Intercultural dynamics and cooperation have been hindered by historical grievances, mistrust, and power imbalances. Religious fundamentalism has led to increased polarization and tensions between different religious and ethnic groups.

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5.2 Conclusion

This study has attempted to evaluate the causes of religious fundamentalisms in southern Nigeria. The following conclusions were drawn in light of the results, it was discovered that technological advancements and media exposure are influencing the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalism in southern Nigeria. Ethnicity also contributes in funding religious fundamentalism in the study area. It was also discovered that the influence of external forces such as global ideologies affect the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria. Lastly, political factors such as political instability in Southern Nigeria intersect with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism.

However, religious fundamentalism is not only a response to perceived threats to one's own religion but also a means of asserting cultural and political identity. The rise of religious fundamentalism in South-eastern Nigeria is a complex phenomenon driven by a combination of cultural, historical, economic and political factors. From an intercultural perspective, this study has shown that the historical legacies of colonialism, Christian missionary work and Islamic revivalism have contributed to the tensions and conflicts between different religious groups. Finally, intercultural dialogue and cooperation are essential in addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism and promoting peaceful coexistence.

5.3 Recommendations

Some recommendations were made based on the research findings and conclusion.

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1) Christians and Muslims in Southeasthern Nigeria should avoid criticizing one another. This will promote tolerance, adaptability, peace and harmony among the leaders and their followers.

2) Social, political, economic and religious programs that promote intercultural understanding should be adopted in addressing these root causes of religious fundamentalism. Festivals, cultural dance, football matches and schooling together should be encouraged among Christians and Muslims. This will create room for love and mutual understanding in the study area.
3) The people of Southeastern Nigeria should allow their children to study other religions. Such will help them to have a broad understanding of the philosophy of religion and then embrace the universality of God and brotherhood among men.
4) There is the need for selective exposure of the social media and technology advancements. This will curb the infiltration of an antagonistic mindset that might instigate religious fundamentalism.
5) Politicians and public office holders in Southeastern Nigeria should ensure good governance and economic justice. This will ensure political stability, which will intersect with intercultural dynamics and shape the landscape of religious tolerance in the study area.
6) International politics and diplomacy should be encouraged among the people in Southern Nigeria,l bringing the wave of pro-religious tolerance ideologies that will promote peaceful co-existence, like in other parts of the world.
7) Religious education should be encouraged in our schools and colleges; especially teaching the fear of God, obedience to godly instructions, how to live against Satanic temptations, which will altogether lead to heavenly reward.

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5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study will help religious leaders in the Southeastern Nigeria and other religious organizations to understand the meaning, causes and remedies of religious fundamentalism in the region. It will also serve as source of information to public office holders on how to handle religious fundamentalism in Southern Nigeria. Educational institutions will use the study as source of information for religious education in Southern Nigeria. By exploring the interplay between cultural diversity and religious beliefs, the research sheds light on nuanced factors influencing the emergence of religious fundamentalism in the region. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing socio-economic influences, globalization, and interfaith dynamics in understanding the complex fabric of religious sentiments. The intercultural lens applied in the study offers a unique and context-specific perspective, providing valuable insights for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to address religious tensions. This research contributes not only to a deeper understanding of the factors driving religious fundamentalism but also offers actionable recommendations for fostering intercultural understanding and social cohesion in Southeastern Nigeria.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions are made for further studies:

i. Further studies can be carried out in the area of how scepticism can hinder religious tolerance.

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ii. The impact of intercultural activities, such as festivals, football matches, etc. can help for religious integration in the southern Nigeria.

iii. As South-eastern Nigeria grapples with the challenges posed by religious fundamentalism, the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying factors. The intercultural lens applied in the research emphasizes the need for nuanced and context-specific approaches to address religious tensions, fostering interfaith understanding and social cohesion within the region. Future research endeavours should continue to explore the evolving dynamics of religious beliefs in South-eastern Nigeria, considering the diverse perspectives of age, education, and marital status to inform targeted interventions that promote tolerance and inclusivity.

iv. Encourage initiatives that promote intercultural understanding and appreciation within South-eastern Nigeria. Educational programs, community events, and awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in fostering mutual respect among diverse cultural and religious groups.

v. Advocate for the integration of intercultural education in the regional curriculum. Educational institutions should emphasize the importance of cultural diversity, tolerance, and respect from an early age. This can help shape the mindset of future generations, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society that is less susceptible to the divisive influences of religious fundamentalism.

vi. Addressing the socio-economic factors associated with religious fundamentalism requires targeted interventions. Governments, NGOs, and community organizations should collaborate to create economic opportunities, reduce poverty, and provide employment prospects. A focus on inclusive development that considers the unique cultural context of

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Southeastern Nigeria can contribute to long-term stability and resilience against religious extremism.

vii. Intensify efforts to strengthen and expand interfaith dialogue initiatives. Engage religious leaders, community influencers, and youth groups in sustained dialogues that address the root causes of religious tensions. These initiatives should encourage a shared understanding of religious beliefs and practices, promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

viii. Establish a framework for continuous research and monitoring of intercultural dynamics and religious sentiments in Southeastern Nigeria. Regular studies can provide updated insights into evolving perspectives, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments in strategies.

ix. Finally, further research on the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria, with a specific emphasis on intercultural perspectives, could delve into longitudinal studies to track the evolution of religious sentiments over time. Exploring the impact of historical events and socio-political changes on intercultural dynamics would provide a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, a qualitative inquiry into the narratives and experiences of specific demographic groups, such as women, youth, and religious minorities, could offer nuanced insights. Comparative studies with other regions facing similar challenges would enrich the understanding of contextual factors. Examining the effectiveness of implemented interventions and policies in mitigating religious tensions and fostering intercultural understanding would contribute to evidence-based practices.

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Appendix 1

Intercultural Perspective Strategic Adoption Questionnaire [InPSAQ]

Dear Respondent,

This instrument is designed to obtain information on "The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism from Intercultural Perspective in Southeastern Nigeria". All the information gathered shall be used strictly for research purpose only and shall be treated with absolute confidence.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Onouha Emmanuel Enyinnaya

Section A: Demographic Information

Kindly fill in or tick (√) as appropriate in the space provide under each item.

1. Name of Church/Denomination (a) …….
2. Church Address/Location (a) ……..……...
3. Sex (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
4. Age (a) Below 20 yrs. [ ] (b) 21-25yrs [ ] (c) 26-30 [ ] (d) 31-40 [ ]

(e) 41-50 [ ] (f) 51-60 [ ] (g) 61and above [ ]

5. Marital Status: (a) Married [ ] (b) Single [ ] (c) Widow [ ] (d) Single parent [ ]
6. Highest educational qualification: (a) Primary six [ ] (b) Junior School Certificate [ ]

(c) Senior School Certificate [ ] (d) Sub-degree. NCE, ND, Diplomas, Certificate, etc. [ ]

(e) Degree/Higher Diploma [ ] (f) Master's Degree [ ] (g) PhD [ ]

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7. Occupation/Profession (a) Cattle rearing [ ] (b) Farming [ ]

(c) Trading [ ] (d) Driving [ ] (e) Produce buying [ ] (f) Pastoral/Mission work[ ]

(g) No job/Unemployed [ ] (h) Retiree [ ]

Section B: To what extent do you believe religious disparities contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria?

Kindly indicate how religious disparity contributes to the rise of religious fundamentalism in southeastern Nigeria.

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Our children should not be allowed to learn about other religions.				
2.	The followers of other religions should not have the same rights as mine.				
3.	Criticism of Islam/Christianity should not be tolerated				
4.	Criticism of Muslim/Christian religious leaders should not be tolerated.				
5.	Ethnicity fund religion fundamentalism				
6.	Technological advancements and media is influencing the spread and acceptance of religious fundamentalist ideologies in Southeastern Nigeria				
7.	In your opinion, how well are interfaith dialogue initiatives addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				
8.	Educational programs that highlight religious diversity can contribute to mitigating the appeal of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				
9.	Political factors contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				
10.	Economic development programs that promote intercultural understanding can be used in addressing the root causes of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				

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11.	The influence of external forces, such as international politics or global ideologies, affects the dynamics of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				
12.	Political instability in Southeastern Nigeria intersect with intercultural dynamics to shape the landscape of religious fundamentalism				
13.	Diplomatic efforts and international collaborations can address the impact of political and external influences on the rise of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria				

Section c: Does the interplay between globalization and local cultures contribute to the growth of religious fundamentalism in Southeastern Nigeria?

Please kindly indicate how the interplay between globalization and local Culture contribute to the rise of religious fundamentalism in southeastern Nigeria.

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Any infraction of religious instruction will bring about God's severe punishment				
2.	Only the fear of God keeps people in the right path				
3.	Satan is behind any attempt to undermine belief in God				
4.	People stay in the right path only because they expect reward in heaven				
5.	Religion fundamentalism is a global challenge				

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Appendix ii

Interview Guide for Christian Leaders in the selected area of the three selected states in Southeastern Nigeria. (InGuCL)

Section A: Personal Information

Please kindly tick ( ) the appropriate response that applies to you from the options provided

1. Name……..
2. Sex M [ ] F [ ]
3. Age range 18-30 [ ] 31-43 [ ] 44-56 [ ] 57 and above [ ]
4. Educational Background: Primary School [ ] Secondary School [ ] Diploma [ ] NCE [ ] OND [ ] HND [ ] Degree [ ] Master [ ] PhD/D/Min [ ]
5. Ministerial status. ……

Section B

Kindly answer the question in this section

6. What is the name of Denomination/Ministry/Mission Agency you are working with?
7. How long has your Denomination/Ministry/Mission Agency been serving in this area?
8. How many years have you been serving in this Denomination/Ministry/Mission Agency?
9. What Intercultural Perspective strategy does your denomination/ministry/mission agency employ among the people?

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10. Are these strategies effective?
11. Is there any setback to these strategies among the people?
12. How can these challenges be overcome?
13. What are the challenges of applying intercultural strategies to cub the rise of religious fundamentalism in the Southeastern Nigeria.?
14. How can these challenges be overcome?

Bio-Data

Personal Data

Name: Emmanuel Enyinnaya ONUOHA

Date of Birth: 6 December 1973

Address: Nkatalaike Road, Nkwuegwu Ohuhu Umuahia.

Home Town: Ubakala

Local Government Area: Umuahia South

State of Origin: Abia State

Nationality: Nigeria

Gender: Male

Marital Status: Married

Religion: Christianity

Next of kin: Mrs Oluchi Emma Onuoha

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Educational Background

Institutions Attended with Dates and Qualification:

a. Avon'ipupe Primary School Avodim Ubakala Umuahia, - 1986 First School Leaving Certificate.
b. Army Cantonment Boys Secondary School Ojo Military Cantonment Ojo – 1992 Senior Secondary Certificate Examination.
c. Trinity Theological Seminary Umuahia – 2004 Diploma in Theology
d. Crowther Theological Seminary Igbehin Abeokuta – 2018 Bachelor of Theology
e. Bethany International University Singapore – 2019 Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies
f. Lead City University, Ibadan. 2019 – till date Ph.D. in view

Work Experience	Date	Position
Diocese of Umuahia Anglican Communion -	2004 Till Date.	Priest

Publications:

Thesis / Dissertations

Christianity and Divorce: The Causes, Effects and Challenges to the Church and Society

(A case study of Ubakala Community, A Diploma in Theology Project 2004).

Youth Ministry and Church Growth in Anglican Diocese of Umuahia (A Bachelor of Theology Project 2018).

Church Planting in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects with Particular reference to the Gobirawa Housa Underengaged People Group of Sokoto in Sokoto State (A Master of Arts Degree in Intercultural Studies 2019).

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Signature Date

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The University Compliance Certificate

This is to certify that this thesis was written by Onuoha Emmanuel Enyinnaya with Matric no LCU/PG/001670, in the Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, and is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

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