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Title:

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS SALIENCE AND
ETHNICITY IN WEAKENING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA
SINCE 1960: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**

Dedication

To
Blessing, Ebube and Amarachi

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Abstract

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960,¹ the country had a difficult start to self-rule the hitherto ethno-religious tensions in the country that were suppressed by colonial rule resurfaced with a vengeance immediately after independence. Six years after independence the tension had reached feverish heights and finally in 1967, the country descended into a brutal civil war.² The war lasted between 1967 and 1970. At the end of the war, the country was clearly divided along ethnic and religious fault lines. The immediate and remote cause of the war is outside the purview of this research, but it would be helpful to acknowledge that the parliamentary democracy that the British colonialist handed to the country at independence, was toppled in a coup d'état that took place on the 15th of January 1966.³

The political turmoil that followed the coup led to it being labelled the 'Igbo coup' as the main protagonists of the coup were mainly Igbos from what is now also called the south-east. The protagonists include officers like Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna,⁴ they were touted as the two main leaders of the coup, although Major Adewole Ademoyega who is Yoruba by ethnicity also played a prominent role, the media particularly the BBC called the coup an 'Igbo affair'.⁵

The coup plotters, however, cited the widespread corruption and mismanagement in the nascent country,⁶ and the lawlessness in the southwest at the time, as the main reason behind their action. This submission was refuted by the premier⁷ citing that most northern politicians like the first republic prime minister Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the premier of the Northern region Sir Ahmadu Bello were killed while their counterparts from the south-east such as Michael Okpara and Dennis Osadebay who was at the time, the premier of the Midwestern region we were

¹ KSM, A. D. A. (2013). Security and economic development in Nigeria since 1960. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(6), 1.

² Ojo, Emmanuel Oladipo. "Leadership crisis and political instability in Nigeria, 1964-1966: The personalities, the parties and the policies." *Global Advanced Research Journal of History, Political Science and International Relation* 1.1 (2012): 006-017.

³ ibid

⁴ Oluwaseun, O. P., & Emmanuel, O. S. (2022). Leadership Flaws and Curse in Nigeria; The Military Perspective. *Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences ISSN, 2583*, 2034.

⁵ Omaka, A. O., Nwamuo, B., Alaku, E., & Nmaju, U. U. (2021). The January 1966 military revolt in Nigeria and the ethnic conundrum. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 10(2), 51-68. (2021:57)

⁶ Dike, V. E. (2005). Corruption in Nigeria: A new paradigm for effective control. *Africa economic analysis*, 24(08), 1-22.

⁷ Enor, F., & Ebaye, S. E. (2011). Military Coup as a Negation of Social Revolution: the Nigerian Experience. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 419-425.

spared, although Dennis Osadebay was the premier of the Midwest, he is ethnically Igbo. It should be noted, nonetheless, that the coup also led to the death of some prominent politicians in the south like Festus Okotie-Eboh and Ladoke Akintola this seems not to be enough to douse the ethnic tension that the coup d'état had created.⁸

However, as the dust settled, even as the coup plotters could not seize power, an Igbo officer Major Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi⁹ who was the highest-ranking military officer at the time was invited by the civilian administrators to take overpower and restore law and order across the country. For a while, this seemed to have worked out fine, but about six months later, it all came crashing down when the military head of state Major Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi was executed and overthrown in a countercoup, that appeared to show officers from the north seeking revenge for the failed January coup. This was the first time that the country's ethnic nationalities showed partisan pursuit in the quest to control the central government.

Despite these unfortunate incidents, the country seemed to be only divided along ethnic lines at the time as the new military government constituted after the countercoup was headed by a northern Christian, Yakubu Gowon. Even as many believed that the main coup plotters were mostly Muslims from the north. Yakubu Gowon would eventually become the wartime head of state, and at the time of his demise from power, it was clear that the country was not only divided along ethnic lines but along religious lines as well.¹⁰

This study sought to understand the level at which this ethnoreligious divide across the country has over the years weakened the country's institutions and how this has affected the overall performance of the country since independence in 1960. The study adopted the qualitative research method in answering the research question. The findings of the study showed that although laden with corruption and inefficiency, which is often blamed on leadership, there is enough evidence nonetheless to suggest that ethnoreligious nuances play significant roles in recruitment, training, and promotion in the civil service. This political interference in the civil service has weakened most institutions of the state thereby rendering them mostly ineffective in serving their designed functions, this lacuna leaves

⁸ Ibelema, M. (2008). The Nigerian Press and the First Republic. In *The African Press, Civic Cynicism, and Democracy* (pp. 93-118). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

⁹ Johnson, I., & Olaniyan, A. (2017). The politics of renewed quest for a Biafra Republic in Nigeria. *Defense & Security Analysis*, 33(4), 320-332.

¹⁰ Johnson, I., & Olaniyan, A. (2017). The politics of renewed quest for a Biafra Republic in Nigeria. *Defense & Security Analysis*, 33(4), 320-332.

enough room for the political leaders to act with little to no accountability, hence the high rates of corruption in Nigeria.

1.0 Chapter One

Introduction

Religion has ceased to be at the periphery of modern political studies.¹¹ For many years scholars ignored the subfield of religion and politics because it seemed like a dead end or a cul-de-sac as it was generally agreed that as societies become more civilized the influence of religion in the polity, chiefly politics, will gradually wither off.¹² So, this subfield was ignored by social scientists because it seemed like a solved case or a non-issue. But in recent years, events from around the world have shown that to be a huge mistake and that civilization does not change the role of religion in politics.

Fox defined religion as “a social institution or phenomenon which strongly influences human behaviour”.¹³ Philpott defines religions as “communities of belief and practice oriented around claims about the ultimate ground of existence”.¹⁴ For a while, the study of religious salience in politics suffered serious scholarly neglect by social scientists, as Bellin clearly pointed out, stating that though a significant lacuna still exists in the study of religious salience in politics, however, there seems to be a steady increase in methodological sophistication spurred by real-world events and a rekindled interest in the subfield among social scientists concluding that real-world events have placed religion in the heart of recent political studies.¹⁵ Huntington¹⁶ also theorized that the cultural component of religion will be the leading variable in modern global political and diplomatic engagements. The singular narrative or variable that unites all the scholastic submissions on the topic of religion and politics is the growing influence of religious salience in politics not just in developing countries but around the world.

At the turn of the millennium, following the fall of the Soviet Union, democracy became unchallenged as the dominant political ideology in most developing countries around the globe. The Soviet Union is to date the best experiment by any government that attempted to divorce religion completely from Politics. Greeley¹⁷ stated this succinctly, never before in human history has there been such a concerted

¹¹ Kettell, S. (2012). Has political science ignored religion?. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(1), 93-100.(Kettell 2012)

¹² Gentile, E. (2006). *Politics as religion*. Princeton University Press.

¹³ Fox, J. (2018). *An introduction to religion and politics: Theory and practice*. Routledge. (2018:4).

¹⁴ Philpott, D., Shah, T. S., & Toft, M. (2011). From faith to freedom: The role of religious actors in global democratic progress. *Available at SSRN 1909465*. (2009:192).

¹⁵ Bellin, E. (2008). Faith in politics. *New trends in the study of religion and politics. World Politics*, 60(2), 315-347. (315).

¹⁶ Huntington, S. (1993). The clash of civilizations?. *Foreign Affairs*, 31.

¹⁷ Greeley, A. (1994). A religious revival in Russia?. *Journal for the scientific study of religion*, 253-272 (253)..

effort to stamp out not merely a religion, but all traces of religion. The experiment failed, the will of the people triumphed, and democracy returned alongside religion.

This reality helped to solidify democratic ethos in the West as a victorious model for the “upliftment” of mankind all over the world.¹⁸ Few, at the time, were attentive to the challenges this newfound “saviour” would face in many of these emerging economies, especially as these nascent democratic states lacked the necessary political institution, convention, history, and the know-how to traverse the sociological minefield of politics.

This observation also challenges in no small measure the trivialization of religious influence in politics by the secularization theorists and highlights the failures of scholars that had hitherto jettisoned the logic or questioned the *raison d'être* of studying the relationship between religion and politics claiming that it is “limited in theoretical reach and methodological sophistication, studies of religion in politics have typically been shunted to the margins of the profession”¹⁹

Similarly, Gill²⁰ also bemoaned the neglect or the downplaying of religious roles in politics, especially as a huge majority of people from all walks of life profess some form of allegiance to spirituality and faith at varying degrees. The recent surge in religious fundamentalism Gill continued, has led many scholars to reconsider their stance in finding comfort in the ideas of the secularization theorists and to reconsider their viewpoint on the significance of a rigorous academic endeavour in studying the nexus between religion and politics. Secularization theorists were convinced that religion would eventually become immaterial in political economy, this persuaded some comparative researchers to ignore this significant variable in many of their studies²¹

Most recent studies have observed that religious affiliations are as prominent among people today as it has often been even in time past, some suggest that with religious sects and organizations springing up as quickly as they do currently, people are perhaps even more religious today than they have ever been much to the chagrin of

¹⁸ Hefner, R. W. (2011). Where have all the abangan gone?: Religionization and the decline of non-standard Islam in contemporary Indonesia. In *The politics of religion in Indonesia* (pp. 71-91). Routledge.

¹⁹ Bellin, E. (2008). Faith in politics. New trends in the study of religion and politics. *World Politics*, 60(2), 315-347.(315)

²⁰ Gill, R. (2001). The future of religious participation and belief in Britain and beyond. *The Blackwell companion to sociology of religion*, 279-291.

²¹ Gill, R. (2001). The future of religious participation and belief in Britain and beyond. *The Blackwell companion to sociology of religion*, 279-291. (117).

the secularization theorists.²² To this end, the gradual paradigm shift in the study of religious salience in politics is hardly surprising²³.

The cross-cultural element of democratic values inherent in this global resurgence of the phenomenon is to some extent a direct variable in the emergence of globalization as we know it today. Consequently, in many of these emerging democracies, the democratic process was marred by primitive struggle for power at any cost with many of the political parties lacking in direction and party ideologies. Such apertures were often filled with primordial sentiments like ethnicity, cultural heritage, dialectical variations, and religious differences.

In a widely cited essay Hefner²⁴, identified the dexterity with which ethno-religious sentiments resurfaced in global politics at the turn of the millennium, citing examples such as “Hindu nationalism in India, Islam and citizenship in France, the culture wars in the United States, and Islamist movements in the Muslim world”.²⁵ This submission also buttresses the fact that the hitherto assumption that politics is perfectly separated from religion was either entirely false or prematurely deduced. It should be noted nonetheless that politics and religion are to a large extent, more mutually exclusive in civilized or advanced democracies than they are in emerging democracies²⁶

However, some scholars argue, rather conveniently, that religion and politics have been mutually inclusive throughout history²⁷. For scholars in this school, the argument is that in every historical civilization, religion has often played some significant role in shaping the culture, norms, and ideas of these societies in several ways. In advancing his conviction,²⁸ Fox averred that usually in such societies, the state or the legitimate authority was often instrumental in helping to promote religious dogma among the citizenry and that in some instances, the state even supported the dominant religious doctrine financially. To buttress this claim, the author cited some ancient civilizations such as the Roman Empire, Babylonia, Greek, Egypt, and the Persian Empire where the bifurcation between religion and politics were mostly opaque.

²² Finke, R., & Stark, R. (1998). Religious choice and competition. *American Sociological Review*, 63(5), 761-766.

²³ Stark, R. (1999). Micro foundations of religion: A revised theory. *Sociological theory*, 17(3), 264-289.

²⁴ Hefner, R. W. (2011). Where have all the abangan gone?: Religionization and the decline of non-standard Islam in contemporary Indonesia. In *The politics of religion in Indonesia* (pp. 71-91). Routledge.

²⁵ Ibid (2011:3).

²⁶ Tromp, P., Pless, A., & Houtman, D. (2020). 'Believing Without Belonging' in Twenty European Countries (1981–2008) De-institutionalization of Christianity or Spiritualization of Religion? *Review of Religious Research*, 62(4), 509-531.

²⁷ Fox, J. (2018). *An introduction to religion and politics: Theory and practice*. Routledge.

²⁸ idid

This observation highlights the delicate historical complacency that has typified the marriage between religion and politics since the dawn of human civilization. Nevertheless, significant differences abound today in the relationship between religion and the state than what was obtainable in the Roman Empire for instance. Firstly, Christianity was the dominant religion in the Roman Empire with relatively little room for religious freedom or put succinctly, freedom to practise other faiths. If we juxtapose that with the current reality in many emerging democracies, the reality is different as many of these countries have historical antecedents of occupation and colonization which resulted in conflicting religious ethos, doctrine, and dogma struggling for political salience, space, and survival. It is this multitude of religions under a single political authority that has heightened the push for a more dominant role for religion in politics. Worse still, this push seems too ready to sacrifice anything and everything to achieve its goals. With each party struggling for power, conflict becomes inevitable, especially in multi-cultural societies with two or more opposing religions.

The separation of religion from state is a hotly debated topic among scholars.²⁹ To the normative and secular theorists, the state should purge itself of any form of religious sentiment to, among others, guarantee freedom and equality to all its citizenry. As utopian as this may sound, it is hardly practical. Many studies have shown that virtually all established governmental authorities and states exhibit some form of religious bias at varying degrees.³⁰ Using religious education as a singular variable in measuring the hand-off approach or the total separation of state from religion, Perez and Fox observed that, “all democracies violate the norm of separation of religion and state”.³¹

The number of religious beliefs competing for political salience in many emerging democracies is daunting and its sphere of influence continues to increase according to most recent scholarly discussions. Earlier, scholars like Karl Marx, Weber and Durkheim had dismissed religious salience in politics as a mere phase that would wither away with advancements in modernization and industrialization.³² These early thinkers birthed what is today often referred to as the “secularization theory” which claims that religion was a relic of premodernity and that it will gradually

²⁹ Perez, N., & Fox, J. (2021). Normative theorizing and political data: toward a data-sensitive understanding of the separation between religion and state in political theory. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 24(4), 485-509.

³⁰ Perez, N., Fox, J., & McClure, J. M. (2017). Unequal state support of religion: On resentment, equality, and the separation of religion and state. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 18(4), 431-448.

³¹ Ibid (2017:14)

³² Minkenberg, M. (2018). Between Christian and multicultural democracy: religious legacies and minority politics. *West European Politics*, 41(1), 53-79.

wither away with time³³. Karl Marx was particularly concerned about the salience of religion in politics as he famously referred to religion as the opium of the people and a form of consolation for the oppressed masses³⁴. Perhaps this explains why states such as the defunct Soviet Union that attempted to implement Marxism were rapaciously opposed to any religious tolerance.³⁵

Fox & Sandler³⁶ acknowledged that the influence of religion in politics harms state legitimacy by bolstering the culture of entitlement and undermining the institutions of the state. There is very little disagreement among scholars that religious salience negatively affects the competitiveness of the state and that if left unchecked, it could totally undermine an entire state structure. Despite the challenges and the difficulty that this phenomenon poses, a democratic state is understandably helpless in undermining the faith and belief system of its citizens. For many people religion is as essential to their sustenance as food and water, to some, it ranks even higher than mere physiological needs.

For instance, in recent years, there have been calls to abolish faith-based schools often referred to as faith schools in some relevant literature. The argument is that faith-based schools tend to indoctrinate pupils with dogma as no religion has presented a reliable proposition that is judged to be true.^{37,38} These scholars have found their “superior moral”, or normative argument come under serious academic assault even as they face the possibility of suffering the same faith as the secularization theorists.³⁹ Grace⁴⁰ opposed the argument of the abolitionists pointing out that there is a popular misconception of such schools that bothers on the popular but wrong assumption that such schools engage in the forcible indoctrination of pupils. The academic argument aside, there seems to be very little enthusiasm from parents in ceasing to send their wards to faith schools or public schools that emphasizes religious studies.

³³ Bellin, E. (2008). Faith in politics. New trends in the study of religion and politics. *World Politics*, 60(2), (2008:317)

³⁴ Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1967). The communist manifesto. 1848. *Trans. Samuel Moore. London: Penguin*, 15(10.1215), 9780822392583-049.

³⁵ Prideaux, M., & Dawson, A. (2018). Interfaith activity and the governance of religious diversity in the United Kingdom. *Social compass*, 65(3), 363-377.

³⁶ Fox, J., & Sandler, S. (2003). Quantifying religion: Toward building more effective ways of measuring religious influence On state-level behavior. *Journal of Church and State*, 45(3), 559-588.

³⁷ Clayton, M., Mason, A., Swift, A., & Wareham, R. (2018). How to regulate faith schools. *Impact*, 2018(25), 1-49.

³⁸ Hand, M. (2003). A Philosophical Objection to Faith Schools. *Theory and Research in Education*, 1(1), 89–99. (2003:90)

³⁹ Davie, G. (2012). From Believing without Belonging to Vicarious Religion: Understanding the Patterns of Religion in Modern Europe: Grace Davie. In *The role of religion in modern societies* (pp. 171-182). Routledge.

⁴⁰ Grace, G. R. (2002). *Catholic schools: Mission, markets and morality*. Psychology Press.

All these assertions certify the importance of religion in societies to the point where it is inconceivable to assume that such a pivotal part of people's lives has no impact on their political affiliations or voting patterns. Kalyvas⁴¹ vividly outlined how Christian democracy conquered Europe and the implication of democracy surrendering to the whims and caprices of faith. But what the essay did best was to point out the helplessness democracy faces when it is under the onslaught of religious forces. Others like Warner⁴² also agreed with Kalyvas in admitting that organized religion has an almost unchallenged political influence on democracies, particularly in the West. In concluding his essay, Gill⁴³ made the case for a greater interest in the study of religion and politics noting that it was erroneous for social scientists to have abandoned such a pivotal part of social life, for "world events make it increasingly clear that religion is, and will continue to be, a major player in politics".⁴⁴

The virulent resurgence of religious salience in politics is hardly surprising. What is worrisome is how such a major part of society was significantly ignored by researchers and academics for so long. The secularization theorists and their modernization counterparts were some of the most brilliant thinkers of their time perhaps that also explains the logic behind their theory going unchallenged for so long and some might also argue that it still holds sways even till this day in some quarters and among some scholars^{45, 46, 47}. As stated earlier, the secularization theorists could be excused for the lack of hindsight that we take for granted today for at the time of their speculation or theorization, most countries had only a single religion to contend with⁴⁸. As Fox⁴⁹ observed, religious diversity in countries often leads to a greater impact of religious salience in the polity. Therefore, religion becomes the instrument with which national governments can attain legitimacy or *vice versa* and religious salience has the absolute wherewithal to delegitimize a democratically elected government⁵⁰.

⁴¹ Kalyvas, S. N. (1996). *The rise of Christian democracy in Europe*. Cornell University Press.

⁴² Warner, R. S. (2000). Religion and new (post-1965) immigrants: Some principles drawn from field research. *American Studies*, 41(2/3), 267-286.

⁴³ Gill, A. (2001). Religion and comparative politics. *Annual Review of political science*, 4(1), 117-138.

⁴⁴ Ibid (2001: 135)

⁴⁵ Almond, G. A., & Coleman, J. (1960). *A functional approach to comparative politics* (pp. 3-64). Princeton: Princeton Press.

⁴⁶ Apter, D. E., Apter, D. E., & Rosberg, C. G. (Eds.). (1994). *Political development and the new realism in sub-Saharan Africa*. University of Virginia Press.

⁴⁷ Smith, A. E. (2018). Religion, politics, and the secular State. In *Routledge handbook of Brazilian politics* (pp. 87-102). Routledge.

⁴⁸ Sasson, K. (2017). Religion and Politics: A Troubled Relationship in a Volatile World. In *Comparative Perspectives on Civil Religion, Nationalism, and Political Influence* (pp. 32-61). IGI Global.

⁴⁹ Fox, J. (2018). *An introduction to religion and politics: Theory and practice*. Routledge.

⁵⁰ Nasr, S. V. R. (1998). Religion and global affairs: Secular states and religious oppositions. *SAIS Review*, 18(2), 32-37.

A major part of religion that was over the years understudied is its ability to mobilize and its capability to sustain loyal followership over a long period.⁵¹ Marty and Appleby⁵² argued that the leaders of religious fundamentalist organizations, exercise a great deal of control over their followers with their ability to mobilize and maintain loyalty over a long period. This ability to mobilize puts religion at the centre of politics. Politics at the end of the day is a game of numbers and any organization that can raise enough numbers to serve as a voting bloc will inevitably be recognized as a pressure group that could make political or economic demands in exchange for political support. Oftentimes, fundamentalist leaders can channel peoples' grievances into their organizational structure to foster unity and loyalty. Just as McNeil⁵³ poignantly deduced that fundamentalist organizations often prey on people's discontent to achieve their selfish aims. This position is also supported by Piscatori⁵⁴ who, correspondingly, acknowledged that fundamentalist organizations have mastered a way to channel the grievances of the people into social movements aimed at addressing perceived discontentment.

It is often argued that Huntington⁵⁵ initiated the global debate that the post-Cold War conflict would be defined by religious civilization. Numerous studies after the publication of Gills's thesis proved him right in many ways. Warner⁵⁶ showed that there was a growing trend in politics that had a religious coloration, predominantly Christianity. Kalyvas had also reached a similar conclusion.

The intersection between ethnoreligious conflicts, politics, and religion, which is rife in many developing countries, particularly in Africa was discussed by scholars like Gill.⁵⁷ Similarly, Fleet and Smith⁵⁸ examined the politics of the Catholic Church in emerging democracies in Latin America mostly Chile and Peru. Byrnes⁵⁹ also examined the politics of the catholic church differing from Fleet and Smith⁶⁰ only in context, by focusing on Post-communist Europe. The various disciplines in the

⁵¹ Appleby, R. S. (2008). Building sustainable peace: the roles of local and transnational religious actors. *Religious pluralism, globalization, and world politics*, 125-154. (Appleby and Marty 2002)

⁵² Appleby, R. S., & Marty, M. E. (2002). Fundamentalism. *Foreign Policy*, 128, 16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3183353>

⁵³ McNeil, M. (2004). The First Amendment Out On Highway 61: Bob Dylan, RLUIPA, and the Problem with Emerging Postmodern Religion Clauses Jurisprudence. *Ohio St. LJ*, 65, 1021.

⁵⁴ Piscatori, J. (1994). "Accounting for Islamic Fundamentalisms" in *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, Edited by M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby, Eds. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, Pp. 361–373. - Google Search, n.d.)

⁵⁵ Huntington, S. P. (1993). If not civilizations, what? Paradigms of the post-cold war world. *Foreign affairs*, 186-194.

⁵⁶ Warner, R. S. (2000). Religion and new (post-1965) immigrants: Some principles drawn from field research. *American Studies*, 41(2/3), 267-286.

⁵⁷ Gill, A. (1998). *Rendering unto Caesar: the Catholic Church and the state in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press.

⁵⁸ Smith, N. (1997). *Literature and revolution in England, 1640-1660*. Yale University Press.

⁵⁹ Byrnes, T. A. (2001). *Transnational Catholicism in post-communist Europe*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

⁶⁰ Ibid (1997)

social sciences like sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and economics among others, often study religion from different perspectives. But for political scientists, religion is often seen through the prism of power and influence which is hardly surprising.

1.0.2 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AFRICA

Like the rest of the world, there is now a growing trend in political discourse that focuses on the relationship between religion and politics in Africa. The multiplicity of religious beliefs and the relative newness of democracy in the region has put the continent in a unique position for the study of religion and politics.⁶¹ Although significant disparity still exists just like the rest of the world. However, researchers are gradually beginning to take the study of religion and politics on the continent a little more seriously. Abbink⁶² contends that though the surge in interest in the study of politics and religion is a global phenomenon, the secularization theory “now makes Africa, which is marked by vibrant religious life, a prime case for the comparative study of the relationship between politics and religion”.⁶³

It is widely agreed that the political elites in Africa use religion for dubious political gains and opportunistic political overtures.⁶⁴ The political elites capitalize on the religious identity of the people because “virtually all religious communities in Africa live in conditions of pluralism”.⁶⁵

Some of the other aspects of politics and religion covered by recent literature on the topic include secularism and identity politics.⁶⁶ State surveillance, freedom of worship, religious freedom, pluralism, and acceptance.⁶⁷ Some studies had earlier attempted to understand the relationship between economic development, poverty, inequality, politics, and religion in Africa, but they often tend to focus on the global narrative, while narrowing it down to religious charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) when it comes to Africa and developing world.⁶⁸ Such studies

⁶¹ Ellis, S., & Ter Haar, G. (2007). Religion and politics: taking African epistemologies seriously. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(3), 385-401.

⁶² Abbink, J. (2014). Religion and politics in Africa: The future of “the secular”. *Africa Spectrum*, 49(3), 83-106.

⁶³ Ibid (2014:84)

⁶⁴ Ellis, S., & Ter Haar, G. (2007). Religion and politics: taking African epistemologies seriously. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(3), 385-401.

⁶⁵ Abbink, J. (2014). Religion and politics in Africa: The future of “the secular”. *Africa Spectrum*, 49(3), 83-106. (*Modern African Studies*, 45(3), 385-401.

2014:87)

⁶⁶ Biri, K., & Togarasei, L. (2014). ... but the One who Prophesies, Builds the Church. *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe*, 79.

⁶⁷ Oduro-Marfo, S. (2018). Eyes on you while your eyes are on God: State surveillance of religion in Ghana under the Provisional National Defence Council regime. *Surveillance & Society*, 16(4), 399-409.

⁶⁸ Offutt, S., Probasco, L., & Vaidyanathan, B. (2016). Religion, poverty, and development. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 55(2), 207-215.

usually fall short in many areas, particularly in identifying how the religious salience in the polity directly affects the functioning of the state. Offutt, Probasco & Vaidyanathan⁶⁹ enumerated areas not covered by their study to include economic development, the colonial past, and the involvement of religious actors in political changes.

Africa represents a classic case study for the study of the intersection between religion and politics for several reasons. Firstly, the continent is booming with boisterous religious activities and innuendos.⁷⁰ Secondly, the continent has never been industrialized which presents a brilliant model not only to test but also to show why secularization theory went unchallenged for so long. It also presents a classic case study of politicians capitalizing on the guaranteed support of religious devotees for political gains.⁷¹ The reason for these is still a subject of debate but some pointers have identified factors such as increased levels of poverty, colonialism, the quest for quick fixes, and the search for easy solutions for complex problems as the major drivers of African religiosity. The subtle nuance of religion in Africa implies that religion is far more institutionalized than the state to the extent that people are more loyal to their religious beliefs than the state.

The angst among scholars shown by the recent rekindled interest in the study of politics and religion, clearly shows that significant lacunas still exist around the topic which clearly justifies the significance of this study. Africa has over the years been neglected in serious scholarly discourse in comparative politics, partly because of its colonial past, and the subsequent fallout from several centuries of slavery and subjugation, the continent is often looked upon as too complicated with multifaceted problems that deter scholarly endeavour. Secondly, due to the leadership challenges of the continent and the low rates of policy implementation, many see critical studies for public policy on the continent as not just a challenge, but also a waste of precious time and limited resources as the leaders lack foresight, particularly in policy articulation, formulation, and implementation.

But, with the recent rise in democratization on the continent and the death of the secularization theory around the world, there is now an urgent clarion call for a deeper understanding of the relationship between politics and governmental institutions on the continent. The continent is now the major frontier for most

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ Lauterbach, K., & Jones, B. (2005). Bringing religion back in: religious institutions and politics in Africa. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 35(2), 239-243.

⁷¹ Onapajo, H. (2012). Politics for God: Religion, politics and conflict in democratic Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4(9), 42-66.

religious movements seeking influence and expansion with its resultant antecedents of extremism, radicalization, and terrorism. The church of England for instance, which is also called the Anglican Communion has more adherents in Africa and the former British colonies around the globe, than in Britain.⁷²

The role of Anglicanism in colonialism and the expansion of the British empire has also been well documented which implies that colonialism came with politics on one hand and religion on the other hand^{73,74}. This study seeks to explore the nexus between religious salience and weak political institutions in sub-Saharan Africa focusing on Nigeria since independence in 1960 but chiefly since the return to democratic rule in 1999. The study seeks to examine how religious salience weakens African political institutions, thereby leading to reduced quality of life, increased rates of poverty and a decrease in general inequality, among others.

In the end, it is hoped that the findings from this study will help bridge the identified gap by seeking to decipher the nexus between politics and religion vis-à-vis the impact of such connection if it exists, on the institutions of the state using Nigeria as a case study. Though there is a form of revival in the study of religion and politics in Africa, there is still some significant gap in the literature particularly in comparative studies which could unearth the implications of religion playing a significant role in the politics of a pluralist and deeply religious society such as Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa. Abbink⁷⁵ summarized the identified gap beautifully “The depth and the richness of recent work (on Africa) are remarkable. But comparative study is often lacking”⁷⁶.

1.0.3 RELIGION AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA

Precolonial Nigerian history is a complex history of different ethnic nationalities, cultures, and religions. Broadly, there are three major ethnic nationalities in the country namely Hausa-Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the west, and Igbo in the east. Nigeria also has numerous other ethnic groups numbering up to about 250.⁷⁷ The history of the country is also divided into three main facets just like many other

⁷² Strong, R. (2007). *Anglicanism and the British Empire, c. 1700-1850*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

⁷³ Carey, H. M. (2011). *God's empire: religion and colonialism in the British world, c. 1801–1908*. Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁴ Gladwin, M. (2015). *Anglican clergy in Australia, 1788-1850: Building a British world*. Boydell & Brewer.

⁷⁵ Abbink, J. (2014). Religion and politics in Africa: The future of “the secular”. *Africa Spectrum*, 49(3), 83-106.

⁷⁶ Ibid (2014:87)

⁷⁷ Çancı, H., & Odukoya, O. A. (2016). Ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria: A specific analysis upon identities (1999–2013). *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 16(1), 87-110.

occupied or colonized countries, Nigerian history is subdivided into precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial. This essay hopes to present a brief overview of the history of Nigeria especially as it relates to religion and politics.

To achieve these aims, the major ethnic groups will be discussed (see chapter two) separately in precolonial and colonial times while the postcolonial history will be discussed in general terms for the entire country. Also, some minority ethnic groups like the Benin Empire will be discussed separately in the pre-colonial and colonial eras because of the significant roles played by such ethnic groups in those times in history.

1.0.4 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Secularization Theory

The Secularization theory forms the basis of the main theoretical framework of this study. The argument of the Secularization theory is that as societies become more educated or civilised, religious salience in the politics of the society goes down because the more educated, developed, and secular a state becomes, the more the citizens realise that religion is a form of dogma that should be jettisoned for a more rational, logical, and egalitarian society. Over the years however, studies after studies have shown that this is exactly not the case. This theory is used to lay the foundation of this study, to show that indeed, religion and other identities such as language and ethnicity does play a role in politics even in advanced democracies.

As it has been ascertained earlier, the paucity of literature and scholarly essays on the salience of religion in politics is often attributed to the long-lasting secularist assumptions and methodology^{78, 79}. Looking back, it is humbling to imagine that as early as 1710, Thomas Woolston had predicted with confidence that by 1900 Christianity would cease to exist.⁸⁰ His premise or supposition was that by 1900 modernity would have eradicated religion from the consciousness of the faithful.

Frederick the Great was overtly more optimistic claiming that Thomas Woolston got his calculation awfully wrong stating that the fall of religion will be even more rapid than previously thought or at least, sooner than Woolston had earlier predicted⁸¹. Thomas Woolston and his cohorts were so believable that notable thinkers at the

⁷⁸ Ozturk, A. E. (2021). *Religion, identity and power: Turkey and the Balkans in the twenty-first century*. Edinburgh University Press.
⁷⁹ Philpott, D. (2009). Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion? <https://doi.org/10.1146/Annurev.Polisci.12.053006.125448>, 12, 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1146/ANNUREV.POLISCI.12.053006.125448>

⁸⁰ Stark, R. (1999). Secularization, *rip*. *Sociology of religion*, 60(3), 249-273. (1999: 249)

⁸¹ Redmond, J. (2021). 'Universal Martyrdom': Resistance and religion in 1650s Ireland. In *Miracles, Political Authority and Violence in Medieval and Early Modern History* (pp. 173-189). Routledge.

time seconded their predictions notable among them were philosophers like Auguste Comte, and Fredrich Engels and political leaders like Thomas Jefferson⁸². Just a generation later, as Finke and Stark surmised, there was a phenomenal growth among American evangelicals notably Baptists and Methodists.

It should be noted nonetheless, that for these earliest proponents of the secularization theory, the focus was not to divorce the state from the church, it was essentially an illuminating venture, that purported to deliver people from believing in irrationality or fantasy. Individual piety was seen as a classless venture reserved for the “uncivilized” and with the growing rate of civilization, the uncivilized with become “civilized” and therefore abandon their irrational and archaic belief system for a more prosperous and civilized life, this was in essence, the entire proclivity of the secularization theorists. Case in point, Wilson⁸³ challenged the place of supernatural belief in a rational-thinking society, stating that "the rational structure of society itself precludes much indulgence in supernaturalist thinking".⁸⁴

However, in Islam, contrary to what the secularization theorists claim, Ahmad⁸⁵ pointed out that in Pakistan for example, the majority of the fundamentalist movements are headed by people with advanced degrees and their followers are mostly drawn from the middle class in the society.⁸⁶ This observation strongly contradicts the position of secularization theorists that suggests that people will jettison spirituality and faith-based beliefs when they get better educated. Mutlu⁸⁷ confirmed the conclusion reached by Ahmad.

In a 1978 study, Mutlu⁸⁸ found that almost 40 percent of university students at Ankara in Turkey, believe in heaven and hell and that there was a steady increase among students that confess to being adherents of the Orthodox Islamic belief system. Continuing, he stated that "the essential element of Islamic beliefs is becoming widespread among the university students i.e., the prospective elites, in Ankara” Mutlu.⁸⁹

⁸² Stark, R. (1999). Secularization, rip. *Sociology of religion*, 60(3), 249-273.

⁸³ Wilson, J. (1975). Text and context in Fijian Hinduism: Uses of religion. *Religion*, 5(1), 53-68.

⁸⁴ Ibid (1975: 81)

⁸⁵ Ahmad, F. (1991). Politics and Islam in modern Turkey. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27(1), 3-21.

⁸⁶ Stark, R. (1999). Micro foundations of religion: A revised theory. *Sociological theory*, 17(3), 264-289.

⁸⁷ Mutlu, S. (1996). Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A demographic study. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28(4), 517-541.

⁸⁸ ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid (1996:355)

Furthermore, Tamney⁹⁰ identified the ability of religion to be resilient in adapting to the challenges posed by modernity. Organized religion is also somewhat organic. Religion can withstand more changes than it had been hitherto credited, the belief in one God is a conviction in the paranormal, it defies science, logic, and reason. The piety of the individual and the fear of the unknown such as potential hellfire all come together to form a complex belief system that social scientists had grossly underestimated. Earlier, Tamney⁹¹ observed that there is a positive correlation between occupational prestige, higher education, and religious belief. The argument developed by Tamney⁹² is particularly interesting as it does not only contradict the secularization thesis, but it seems to develop an antithesis that is totally the opposite of what the secularization theorists had previously envisaged or developed.

The assumption of the secularization theorists extended beyond Western societies and was expected to be replicated in every industrialized society. Nelson⁹³ had surmised that "Shinto religious practices would seem a highly likely candidate for extinction within Japan's high-tech consumer society".⁹⁴ His prediction also failed just as the secularization theory failed in the West. Another interesting fact raised by the failure of secularization theory outside of the Western hemisphere is that secularization theory was tested against more traditional and magical belief systems. It was generally assumed that these magical belief systems would easily carve in when they are set side by side with the high-tech reality of a more modern and advanced capitalist system.⁹⁵ It should be noted also that again, this never happened. In places like Taiwan and Hong Kong, there are significantly more temples now than there were in the past.⁹⁶

1.0.5 OPPONENTS OF THE SECULARIZATION THEORY

Martin⁹⁷ is often credited for being the first social scientist to argue against the secularization theory. He argued that there is little to no evidence that modernization leads to a decrease in religiosity, therefore the argument of the secularization theorists cannot stand. He is not alone. Other scholars like Douglas⁹⁸ also towed the same path, arguing that secularization theory was a form of armchair theory borne

⁹⁰ Tamney, J. B. (1992). Religion and self-actualization. *Religion and mental health*, 132-137.

⁹¹ *ibid*

⁹² *ibid*

⁹³ Nelson, J. K. (1996). Freedom of expression: The very modern practice of visiting a Shinto shrine. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 117-153.

⁹⁴ *Ibid* (1996:77)

⁹⁵ Tan, S. Y. (1994). Ethical considerations in religious psychotherapy: Potential pitfalls and unique resources. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 22(4), 389-394.

⁹⁶ Stark, R. (1999). Secularization, *rip*. *Sociology of religion*, 60(3), 249-273.

⁹⁷ Martin, D. (2017). *On secularization: Towards a revised general theory*. Routledge.

⁹⁸ Douglas, M. (1982). The effects of modernization on religious change. *Daedalus*, 1-19.

out of prejudged ideology rather than rigorous study and therefore it should be discarded. Geertz⁹⁹ pointed out that there is no concrete evidence to suggest that societies in the past were outrightly religious as unbelievers may have existed then as much as they do today.

Murray¹⁰⁰ questioned the source of the data that justifies the “age of faith” accusing the secularists of demonization of faith not as a virtue but as the original sin¹⁰¹. Berger¹⁰² acknowledged the mistake of secularization theorists which he once believed and agreed that mistakes were made that should be corrected surmising that “secularization was a mistake. Our underlying argument was that secularization and modernity go hand in hand. With more modernization comes more secularization. It wasn't a crazy theory. There was some evidence for it. But I think it's basically wrong. Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious”.¹⁰³ It is important to note that much as Berger¹⁰⁴ admitted to the mistakes of secularization theory, the argument that there was some evidence for it was not substantiated and the evidence was never given.

Globally, the delimitation between religion and politics continues to get increasingly blurry partly because of improvements in information technology, an increase in democratization, and the demise of the anti-religious socialist republic of the defunct Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵ Democracy is symbolized by the struggle and competition for power. Not surprisingly, religion being a singular independent variable that guarantees access to a large pool of devotees that are easily persuaded by a charismatic religious leader is often the target of a powerful army of power-hungry politicians.

⁹⁹Geertz, C. (1966). Religion as a cultural system. In M. Banton (Ed.), *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion* (pp. 1-46). London Tavistock.

¹⁰⁰ Murray, A. (1972). Piety and impiety in thirteenth-century Italy. *Studies in Church History*, 8, 83-106.

¹⁰¹ Ibid (1972: 106)

¹⁰² Berger, P. (1997). Epistemological modesty: an interview with Peter Berger. *Christian Century*, 114(30), 974.

¹⁰³ Ibid (974)

¹⁰⁴ ibid

¹⁰⁵ Gill, A. (2001). Religion and comparative politics. *Annual Review of political science*, 4(1), 117-138.

1.0.6 RESEARCH QUESTION/METHODOLOGY

This study hopes to achieve its aim by looking at the role of religion and ethnicity in recruitment and training into the Nigerian federal civil service, agencies, and parastatals chiefly through an Xray of the federal character principle. The study shall answer such questions as a) Does religious affiliations and/or ethnicity help individuals gain employment in the Nigerian federal civil service, agencies, and parastatals? b) What role does religion and ethnicity play in the promotion and training of federal civil servants in Nigeria? c) How has such an arrangement affected such institutions if it does exist?

To answer the above questions, the study shall adopt a robust qualitative methodology, using document analysis of peer reviewed journals, primary studies, print and electronic media, government bulletins and archival materials, among others. Through document analysis a researcher could advance empirical knowledge, broaden knowledge and understanding of a research topic, it is also very practical in eliciting and interpreting meanings^{106, 107, 108}.

This methodology seems more practical in answering the research question because it guarantees access to a wider array of data which will be critical in conducting the study, it also takes away the human elements especially as it relates to ethical consideration in a country that is sharply divided among Muslim majority north and Christian majority south. The argument is, with a quantitative research method, the study participants may be reluctant to admit that their religious sect or doctrine played any role in weakening the state, as every religious organization holds on dearly to the claim of righteousness and piety. This reality might lead to the collation of highly subjective data, laden with cognitive bias where the study participant would create their subjective reality, which could weaken the findings of the research significantly. Also, in relation to ethics, the methodology adopted will be the safest mode of data collection for the researcher in a country where most regions are currently plagued by incessant terrorist activities and insurgencies. Document analysis has over the years been proven to be the “method of choice when the collection of new data is not feasible”.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Strauss, A., Corbin, J. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. India: SAGE Publications.

¹⁰⁷ Rapley, T. (2007) *The Sage Qualitative Research Kit. Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*. Sage Publications Ltd., Thousand Oaks.

¹⁰⁸ Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), 27-40.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid (2009:31)

2.0 Chapter Two

2.0.0 THE HISTORY OF RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN AFRICA

2.0.1 THE IGBO ETHNIC GROUP (EASTERN NIGERIA)

Introduction

Long before the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Africa, religion and politics existed on the continent. This chapter examines the complex relationship of religion and politics in precolonial Africa, using the Igbo ethnic group of Eastern Nigeria as a major example, attempt is also made to decipher the incongruity of religion and politics in Africa during the precolonial, colonial and the postcolonial era. This chapter also highlights some other ethnic groups in the region to drive home the point. The main reason of focusing on the Igbo ethnic group, is that it was the last of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria to adopt a foreign religion as Christianity was only introduced to the region in the 19th century.¹¹⁰ In contrasts with other major ethnic groups in Nigeria like the Hausa Fulani in the North and Yoruba in the West, where Islam is said to have taken foothold as early as the 15th century.¹¹¹

Religion and politics were greatly intertwined in precolonial Igbo society, although the system of governance did not emphasize centralized government. The oracle or the deity also served as the appellant court, in this case, those who have been denied justice in the court of man (Umunna) could approach the gods to intervene and prove their innocence.¹¹² The system was in many ways, some form of indirect democracy as the people (Oha) often come together in decision-making and policy implementation. Njaka¹¹³ sees it as a form of *Ohacracy* which was incredibly efficient and helped shape the society for generations. The system was also successful because “the oracle was believed to be a lesser god with supernatural powers and was capable of connecting with the transcendental realm to get answers to questions of its consultants”.¹¹⁴

In the Igbo pre-colonial society, the general belief was that there is a king in every man.¹¹⁵ The singular unique trait that distinguished the precolonial Igbo political culture is that achieved status is generally more appreciated than any ascribed status

¹¹⁰ Igwe, S. O. (1977). *Church, State and Education in Eastern Nigeria (1847-1975)* (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education, University of London).

¹¹¹ Abdulkadir, M. S. (2011). Islam in the non-Muslim areas of northern Nigeria, c. 1600-1960. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, 1(1), 1-20.

¹¹² Uchendu, V. C. (1965). *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*.

¹¹³ Njaka, E. N. (1974). *Igbo Political Culture*. United States: Northwestern University Press.

¹¹⁴ Onyeozili, E. C., & Ebbe, O. N. (2012). SOCIAL CONTROL IN PRECOLONIAL IGBOLAND OF NIGERIA. *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies*, 6. (2012:37)

¹¹⁵ Henderson, R. N. (1972). *The king in every man: evolutionary trends in Onitsha Ibo society and culture*. Yale University Press. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ff26-022>

or position in society, and to achieve this status, the individual would have to exhaust all his wealth to basically buy a position of respect in society.¹¹⁶

However, there was very little separation between religion, politics, and law in the whole systemic setup. Some scholars like Anyasodo¹¹⁷ argued that law and religion were the same thing in precolonial Igbo society. Others like Mbiti¹¹⁸ also expressed similar sentiments. This conclusion makes the study of religion and politics in the precolonial Igbo society exceedingly difficult because just like governmental structure or institution, there is no known religious structure and, in many cases, it appears that all elements of nature represent some form of deity, spirit and religion such things like bodies of water such as rivers or ocean, land, trees, mountains and the spirits of the ancestors^{119, 120}.

One of the earliest documented essays about the Igbos by Western researchers was the anthropological study of Igbo tradition and culture by Basden¹²¹ the author is quoted to have warned future explorers that “the longer one lives among West African natives, the more one is convinced that it is a practical impossibility for the European to comprehend fully the subtleties of the native character”.¹²² The complexities of cultures in Africa are daunting even to the best anthropologists, the situation is made further complicated by the use of oral records to justify claims and the lack of mnemonic evidence to justify assertions. Some Igbo scholars have emerged as great storytellers and their accounts are highly respected and believed at home and abroad. Uchendu Victor Chikezie wrote a series of essays in the early 1960s¹²³, that are to date some of the best document memoirs in their genre. Chinua Achebe is also another Igbo cultural essayist that is often viewed as an authority in Igbo political culture, religion, and social life.

¹¹⁶ Achebe, C. (2012). *There was a country: A memoir*. Penguin.

¹¹⁷ Anyasodo, U. P. (1975). *Ebolachi--have You Survived the Night?*. Anyasodo.

¹¹⁸ Mbiti, J. S. (1971). *New Testament eschatology in an African background: A study of the encounter between New Testament theology and African traditional concepts*.

¹¹⁹ Mbiti, J. S. (1971). *New Testament eschatology in an African background: A study of the encounter between New Testament theology and African traditional concepts*.

¹²⁰ Onyeozili, E. C., & Ebbe, O. N. (2012). SOCIAL CONTROL IN PRECOLONIAL IGBOLAND OF NIGERIA. *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies*, 6.

¹²¹ Basden, G. T. (1921). *Among the Ibos of Nigeria: An account of the curious & interesting habits, customs, & beliefs of a little known african people by one who has for many years lived amongst them on close & intimate terms*. JB Lippincott Company.

¹²² Ibid (497)

¹²³ Ottenberg, S. (2007). Two Renowned Nigerian Scholars: Ikenna Nzimiro and Victor Chikesie Uchendu. *Dialectical anthropology*, 31, 11-43.

2.0.2 THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE IGBOS

In the precolonial Igbo traditional system, it is often argued that religion and politics were mutually inclusive, and the people's political and economic lives were almost totally determined by supernatural powers.^{124, 125} The Igbo traditional religious system is deeply rooted in reincarnation and the belief in the powers of ancestors or deceased kinsmen that watch over the living. The age-grade associations and societies fraternize to be the custodian of culture, serving as instruments of sanction to enforce the law. In many ways, the activities of the age-grade units are strikingly similar to the roles of the modern-day police force, but it goes even deeper.

Remarkably, capitalism existed in the Igbo enclave before the Igbos had any form of contact with European colonial masters though the capitalist system had a communal flair with kindreds looking out for one another. Land, for instance, was largely owned communally using a traceable family tree or kindred.¹²⁶ Although the political system was largely patriarchal, not all males were entitled to positions of influence and control, the society to a very large degree was stateless, and there was neither a national assembly nor a regional legislative arm. The consensus among scholars is that the precolonial Igbo society was unarguably stateless. However, the council of elders, the kindred often referred to as *Umunna*, the shaman often referred to as *Dibia*, and the custodians of the oracles alongside members of the secret societies all had enormous political and social influence in the system.^{127, 128}

The traditional Igbo society, though largely stateless, was nonetheless well organized, based on class, some of which persist to this day.¹²⁹ There are three documented classes namely- *Diala* also referred to as *Nwa-afọ* (Free-born), *Ohu* (Slaves), and the *Osu* (ritual Slaves or Outcasts).¹³⁰ The gods were greatly revered, and the custodians of the gods were looked up to for justice and cleansing of the land when a crime is committed. Broadly, crimes are subdivided into two main categories *aru* and *mmehie*.

The former is a crime against the gods or the god of the land such as murder, incest, or some mundane offences like cutting down a sacred tree or killing and eating a domesticated animal that is dedicated to the gods. The latter represents a collective

¹²⁴ Anyasodo, U. P. (1975). *Ebolachi--have You Survived the Night?*. Anyasodo.

¹²⁵ Onyeozili, E. C., & Ebbe, O. N. (2012). SOCIAL CONTROL IN PRECOLONIAL IGBOLAND OF NIGERIA. *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies*, 6.

¹²⁶ *Ibid* (2012:31)

¹²⁷ Uchendu, V. C. (1965). The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria.

¹²⁸ Ottenberg, S. (1958). Ibo oracles and intergroup relations. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 14(3), 295-317.

¹²⁹ Onyeozili, E. C., & Ebbe, O. N. (2012). SOCIAL CONTROL IN PRECOLONIAL IGBOLAND OF NIGERIA. *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies*, 6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid* (2012:33).

of crimes that can be committed against other members of society such as stealing or robbery of any kind, such crimes usually carry lesser sanctions like fines, restitution, and public shaming. The prison system as it is known today was never practiced until the European colonial masters arrived. For serious offences (*aru*), a free-bon could lose his or her status and be downgraded to *Osu* or banished from the community.¹³¹

Uchendu (1965) averred that the highest court in precolonial Igbo society was the oracle. The oracles modus operandi was shrouded in secrecy and only a select few knew the inner workings of the oracle, this created an environment of fear and led many of the citizens to be law-abiding as going against the gods could lead to banishment, downgrading to a lower class or caste, sale into slavery in another community or region and even death sentence. The religion of the precolonial Igbo society, therefore, consisted of the gods they could see and the consequences they had witnessed. This is a clear contrast from the Christian religion that was later introduced to the region by European missionaries that preceded colonial conquest, which preaches punishment after death in the form of hellfire and a god that cannot be seen. “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”¹³²

Some of the notable gods in precolonial Igbo society were *Ibini ukpabe* of the *Aro-Chukwu* community, *Agbala* of the *Awka* community, *Kamalu* of the *Ozuzu* community, *Mkpokiti Abirikete* of the *Umunze* community. The oracles were seen as the manifestation of God almighty among the people to direct, protect and sanction the people to live a godly, upright, and pious life. They were highly respected and any transgressions against the gods or the deities were seen as a sin against the almighty which mortal man cannot forgive.¹³³ To this end, the *Osu* caste system is still practiced to this day in most parts of eastern Nigeria among the Igbos even though the post-colonial dominant religion in the region is mostly Catholicism and Anglicanism.¹³⁴ This shows that Christianity has not taken away the respect and fear of the oracle which brought about the belief that men cannot forgive men who sinned against the oracle which is the central argument of the adherents of the *osu* tradition.

¹³¹ Achebe, C. (1959). *Things Fall Apart*. Greenwich, Conn.

¹³² The Holy Bible John 4:24, English Standard Version

¹³³ Uchendu, V. C. (1965). *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*.

¹³⁴ Mezie-Okoye, C., & Asike, J. (2019). *Osu caste system in Igbo society, Nigeria: A sociological evaluation*. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies (IJIRAS)*, 6(3), 89-93.

2.0.3 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRECOLONIAL IGBO SOCIETY

The overwhelming conclusion among scholars is that the precolonial Igbo traditional political system was overtly patriarchal, but this is not exactly true. Van Allen¹³⁵ averred that the British colonialist intervention birthed the weakening of the political powers that the women enjoyed prior to colonialism, adding that “British colonialism shows that Western influence can sometimes weaken or destroy women's traditional autonomy and power without providing modern forms of autonomy or power”.¹³⁶ The truth is that power was cleverly diffused among all law-abiding adults from young adults to senior citizens every age grade had its roles and obligations. The Igbo pre-colonial traditional political institution could be said to be exceedingly stronger than what is obtainable in most emerging economies today, particularly Nigeria.

2.0.4 THE ABA WOMEN RIOT (*OGWU UMUNWAYI*)

The *Ogwu Umunwayi* or Aba women riot as it is known in most Western literature, represents one of the greatest testaments to the institutional ability and political agility of women in precolonial Igbo society.¹³⁷ In a nutshell, the riot was an uprising to show the dissatisfaction the Igbo women had against the system that was attempting to strip them of all the institutional powers they once enjoyed. The argument that Western civilization liberated African women from subjugation is highly disputed and misrepresented. There is no argument about the fact that men exercised greater authority in the polity prior to colonialism, but women were given broad specific roles that served as their inalienable rights. Those rights also provided the balance of power between men and women in society. Such rights were grievously trampled upon by the British colonialists and the *Ogwu Umunwayi* is one of the ways the women fought back^{138, 139}.

Broadly, the ideology of the colonial powers was to weaken every strong political group and entity that could assert power that would weaken the might and influence of the colonial political authority. The term “riot” was heavily criticized by scholars as a ploy by the colonial powers to delegitimize the legitimate struggle of an organized political group that was losing the political powers and influence, they hitherto enjoyed in their traditional system because of a foreign invasion by an

¹³⁵ Van Allen, J. (1972). “Sitting on a man”: colonialism and the lost political institutions of Igbo women. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 6(2), 165-181.

¹³⁶ Ibid (1972:165)

¹³⁷ Matera, M., Bastian, M. L., Kent, S. K., & Kent, S. K. (2011). *The women's war of 1929: Gender and violence in colonial Nigeria*. Springer.

¹³⁸ Zukas, L. L. (2009). Women's War of 1929. *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest*, 1-2.

¹³⁹ Okonkwo, U. U. (2020). Herbert Macaulay As The Father of Nigeria's Nationalism: A Historical Misnomer and Misogyny Regarding the Role of Igbo Women in the Decolonization Process. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 21(1), 172-184.

authority that had very little regard for women suffrage at the time home and abroad.¹⁴⁰

The contention of Van Allen¹⁴¹ therefore, was that the right terminology should have been “war” not riot as riot connotes activities of miscreants rather than a genuine agitation by a marginalized group seeking better political recognition. Van Allen was right, as *Ogwu* clearly translates to war or fight in Igbo language, just as *Ogwu Umunwayi* literally translates the Women's war. The author later summarized it beautifully in the end, stating that, “in the conventional wisdom, Western influence has "emancipated" African women - through the weakening of kinship bonds and the provision of "free choice" in Christian monogamous marriage, the suppression of "barbarous" practices. But Westernization is not an unmixed blessing.

The experience of Igbo women under British colonialism shows that Western influence can sometimes weaken or destroy women's traditional autonomy and power without providing modern forms of autonomy or power in exchange”.¹⁴²

Similarly, Korieh¹⁴³ argued that the notion that the colonized societies were mostly patriarchal was largely a European invention which aimed to impose the ideas of the colonizer on the colonized. Institutions and ideologies were created with the gender delineations of European political institutions.

This arrangement over concentrated the authority of the state institutions on the men. It was a convenient arrangement as many of the colonizers were male it was easier to deal with fellow men, but the consequence of that was the total destruction of an established political institution. This created the negative sentiments that led to or brought about the *Ogwu Umunwayi* or the Aba women riot as the colonialists termed it. One major historical fact of the Igbo precolonial society was that “women were not subordinate to men, but rather complementary to them”.¹⁴⁴ The precolonial Igbo

¹⁴⁰ Van Allen, J. (1997). “Aba Riots” or Igbo “Women’s War”? *Ideology, Stratification, and the Invisibility of Women* (pp. 488–503).

¹⁴¹ *ibid*

¹⁴² *Ibid* (1975:165)

¹⁴³ Korieh, C. J. (2001). The invisible farmer? Women, gender, and colonial agricultural policy in the Igbo region of Nigeria, c. 1913-1954. *African Economic History*, 29, 117–162. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3601709>

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid* (2001:120)

political institution was bifurcated with both genders sharing their parallel sphere of influence independent of the other^{145, 146, 147}.

2.0.5 THE ECONOMIC INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN PRECOLONIAL IGBO SOCIETY

In precolonial Igbo society, women had special clubs just like men. Those clubs were respected by both men and women in the society and the women that attain such clubs had special appendages such as being the first daughter in the family, being a wife from an exogamous marriage, being of a particular age grade, and so on.¹⁴⁸ However, some societies like the *Omu* society require elaborate ceremonies and economic resources to join just as many of the men societies.

The *Omu* society in many Igbo communities controlled the markets which were usually the economic nerve centre of the community, they also had the power to impose fines and sanctions on men and women that go against the ordinances of the market. The most powerful notion of women in the pre-colonial Igbo society was that “women were perceived to possess superior spiritual wellbeing and headed many of the traditional cults and shrines.”¹⁴⁹

From the above description, it could be inferred that there was some form of separation of power in precolonial Igbo society as the men controlled the political arm, and the women controlled the religious/economic arm. Given the interconnectedness of politics and religion in the region at the time, the control of such institutions means the control of a great deal of influence and political might.¹⁵⁰ The *Omus*, Chinua¹⁵¹ continued, often attended the community town hall meetings where matters affecting the communities were discussed. With this opportunity, the

¹⁴⁵ Ibewuiké, V. O. (2006). *African Women and Religious Change: A study of the Western Igbo of Nigeria with a special focus on Asaba town*. 353. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-6200>

¹⁴⁶ Okonjo, I. K. (1980). *The role of women in social change among the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria living west of the River Niger*. Xerox University Microfilms. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ff26-021>

¹⁴⁷ Tamale, S. (1996). Taking the Beast by its Horns: Formal Resistance to Women's Oppression in Africa. *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, 21(4), 5–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24482766>

¹⁴⁸ Obasi, C. O., & Nnamani, R. G. (2015). The role of Umuada Igbo in conflict management and development in Nigeria. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5(04), 256.

¹⁴⁹ *Things Fall Apart – Chinua Achebe (1958) | 1960s: Days of Rage*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2023, from <https://1960sdaysofrage.wordpress.com/2020/12/31/things-fall-apart-chinua-achebe-1958/> (1958: xxviii)

¹⁵⁰ Rex, O. C. (2020). JUSTICE AND ITS ADMINISTRATION IN IGBOLAND BEFORE THE DAWN OF THE PRESENT MILLENNIUM. *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.47941/JHS.368>

¹⁵¹ *Things Fall Apart – Chinua Achebe (1958) | 1960s: Days of Rage*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 22, 2023, from <https://1960sdaysofrage.wordpress.com/2020/12/31/things-fall-apart-chinua-achebe-1958/z>

women's society represented by the leadership of the Omu society had the power to declare wars or call for cessation of hostilities although women themselves never fought in battles.

Women also had a wider sphere of influence in politics. Men only participated in the affairs of their communities because there was no central authority and every community operated as an autonomous independent entity. But for women, they had the advantage of participating in the politics of their home community and the community of their husbands. It should be noted, however, that married women asserted more influence in their community of marriage than their community of birth because the marriage system was almost exclusively patrilineal.

In general, the line that separates religion from politics and social life in this complex political arrangement was very blurred. Chinua¹⁵² sees it as “thin as the air” and it was grossly misjudged by the British colonial officers while imposing a political system on the people. The Igbos believed in God long before the first missionaries arrived. The system of religion was monotheism, as they believed in one God called Chukwu who lived far away in the sky and superintends over all the people on Earth. The justification for this claim is often drawn from the incantations used in traditional prayers, folktales and proverbs passed down from generation and most of these still exist to this day.

They believed in heaven as the sky where God resides to watch over the earth. Good people get good rewards and bad people suffer bad misfortune, it was a kind of Karmic system often attributed to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. The ancestors of the people are often seen as messengers of God who deliver punishment and could also intercede on behalf of the people before God when they pray for forgiveness. The *Omus* and the other heads of the shrine have direct access to the ancestors and can communicate with them by conjuring them to come closer to draw their attention to the message they had to deliver.

This means that the *Omus* as well as other chief priests of the deities often referred to as *Ezemmuo* were more than just humans but half human and half spirit which the Igbos called “*Okala Mmadu-okala Mmuo*”¹⁵³. This shows why the *Omus* who were always exclusively women were highly revered in the society for they, in many cases, were seen as demigods with supernatural abilities. For the sake of inference, the roles of the *Omus* are strikingly similar to the roles of clergymen in many

¹⁵² *ibid*

¹⁵³ Rex, O. C. (2020). Justice And Its Administration In Igboland Before The Dawn Of The Present Millennium. *Journal of Historical Studies*, 1(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.47941/JHS.368> (2020:340)

established religions today and that is only half of their power as they also wielded huge economic powers as the markets were headed by the *Omus* as local trading was seen as a mostly feminine activity.

It is therefore ironic that the Western colonial masters that purported to bring civilization and economic freedom to the African woman ended up taking away most of their powers in terms of politics, religion, and commerce.¹⁵⁴ Such harsh reality formed the basis of the confusion of colonialism in the region and it also established the different political ideologies in the region and perhaps the whole continent. Many African countries and communities still struggle with this dichotomy. The leadership vacuum and destruction of pre-existing political institutions are often seen as the beginning of the weakening of African political institutions that have made the region hopelessly uncompetitive in the modern neoliberal global political economy.

2.0.6 COLONIALISM IN EASTERN NIGERIA

There are many dimensions of colonialism in Igbo society or Eastern Nigeria. But for the sake of this study, the emphasis shall be on the religious and political aspects of colonialism in this region. As precolonial Igbo history has shown, the region had no form of centralized government with every family and community able to run their administration as an autonomous entity. Although significant similarities abound among various communities in the region, they, however, operate independently of each other. This reality posed the greatest challenge to the colonial army when they arrived in the region. The solution the colonial masters introduced, was the creation of warrant chiefs who help the colonial authority govern the region through what is today known as an indirect rule.¹⁵⁵

While European expedition in Africa dates back to as early as the 14th century, with slavery following in the 16th century, European colonialism as we know it today, was not officially established until the late 19th century.¹⁵⁶ The general system of administration adopted in this region by the colonial imperialists was the indirect rule. The system sought to govern the colonies by proxy using local officials known and trusted by the local people who are then controlled by the colonial authority that

¹⁵⁴ Ogbomo, O. W. (2005). Women, Power and Society in Pre-colonial Africa. *Lagos Historical Review*, 5(1), 49–74. <https://doi.org/10.4314/lhr.v5i1.32524>

¹⁵⁵ Afigbo, A. E. (1965). Herbert Richmond palmer and indirect rule in Eastern Nigeria: 1915-1928. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 3(2), 295-312.

¹⁵⁶ Cappelen, C., & Sorens, J. (2018). Pre-colonial centralisation, traditional indirect rule, and state capacity in Africa. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 56(2), 195-215.

provide power and force to coerce the people into submission while also receiving taxes, cheap and free labour through the local administrators that they appointed.

Different European imperialists modified the indirect rule system to suit their needs and to deliver on their colonial mission. The British used the controversial “divide and rule” or “divide and conquer” system that is today blamed for incessant political upheavals in much of former British colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria.¹⁵⁷ In places where there were no established regional political authorities for the indirect rules, such as Eastern Nigeria where the Igbo practiced *Ohacracry* without formal state structure and institution, the colonial administrator appointed warrant chiefs.¹⁵⁸ The British imperialists also encountered similar circumstances in Sierra Leone.¹⁵⁹ In places where local chiefs did not exist in precolonial times, warrant chiefs were manufactured by colonial administrators to fill the void created by the absence of traditional rulers.¹⁶⁰ This arrangement made the warrant chief very unpopular and increased the level of dissent among the local population towards the colonial administrators.

The British intervention, therefore, destroyed the democracy or theocracy that the local population had enjoyed for centuries, Christianity that preceded the political intervention had earlier weakened the spiritual arm of the society. This double assault on Igbo political and societal institutions, alongside the amalgamation of the Igbos with other neighbouring tribes to form what is today known as Nigeria, greatly weakened the traditional state institutions and has made the region prone to bad governance which has resulted in very high levels of poverty and malfeasance.

Before the introduction of indirect rule and warrant chiefs, many African kingdoms had functional checks and balances in the government structure. Erring chiefs or traditional rulers could be sanctioned by their subjects thereby providing a well-balanced power structure that could not produce corrupt leaders or despots, the system also guaranteed rules of accession into a position of authority that was both democratic and fair. This arrangement guaranteed legitimacy for the constituted authority and freedom of expression for the subjects. The village assembly had all the entrapments of the modern-day legislature with debates, lobbying, and concession. The imperialist intervention destroyed all that finesse by giving the

¹⁵⁷ Ali, M., Fjeldstad, O. H., Jiang, B., & Shifa, A. B. (2019). Colonial legacy, state-building and the salience of ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa. *The Economic Journal*, 129(619), 1048-1081.

¹⁵⁸ Crowder, M. (1964). Indirect rule—French and British style. *Africa*, 34(3), 197-205.

¹⁵⁹ Acemoglu, D., Chaves, I. N., Osafo-Kwaako, P., & Robinson, J. A. (2014). Indirect rule and state weakness in Africa: Sierra Leone in comparative perspective. In *African Successes, Volume IV: Sustainable Growth* (pp. 343-370). University of Chicago Press.

¹⁶⁰ Adegbulu, F. (2011). PRE-COLONIAL WEST AFRICAN DIPLOMACY: IT'S NATURE AND IMPACT. *Journal of International Social Research*, 4(18).

European-appointed warrant chiefs or European-backed local chiefs, “more power than they had in pre-colonial days, where they were either subject to control by a council or liable to a deposition if they became too unpopular”.¹⁶¹

2.1.0 THE HAUSA/FULANI ETHNIC GROUP (NORTHERN NIGERIA)

The history of politics and religion in this part of Nigeria where Islam was a major religion considered to be adequate by the locals has generated many studies by many notable scholars in the social sciences. In light of how it started, the challenges encountered and major reformations by Usman Dan Fodio who was one of the greatest leaders of the region as recorded in history. The colonial era ushered in the indirect rule system where the kingdoms and the political and religious structure that had formed the bedrock of legitimate government in the region were coerced into the highly technical and Europeanized British politics and administration, that the people barely understood or approved even till this day.

The northern part of Nigeria was one of the largest territories ever colonized by British colonial masters in the West African region before the introduction of the Amalgamation by Lord Lugard in 1914. However, there was strong resistance from the northerners to the new way of life introduced by the colonial masters because it was alien to the lifestyles or way of life that has been in existence for centuries. Colonialism is a major factor that has truncated a lot of things in Africa where it has altered the traditional institutions, political administration, religious institutions, political structure, and cultural heritage of the people in a bid to introduce the Western way of life, values, norms, and ethics. Sometimes, violent measures were adopted by the colonial masters to achieve high compliance from the indigenes of the locality that forms their colony. Colonialism altered, uprooted, and misplaced the African way of life to that of the Western lifestyle.¹⁶²

Colonialism as it were, is the loss of internal political control of Africa by the natives and the takeover of the control of the political affairs of the African continent by the European colonizers in their scramble for domination of global influence.¹⁶³ It is also important to note that colonialism is not only the control of the political affairs of the African territory but also the control of its economy and religious institutions and beliefs. Colonialism is connected to economic goals and benefits. A situation where the Europeans disrupted the African economic, political, historical, social, and cultural progress to develop European nations at the detriment of African

¹⁶¹ Crowder, M. (1964). Indirect rule—French and British style. *Africa*, 34(3), 197-205. (1964:198).

¹⁶² Ake, C. (1981). A political economy of Africa.

¹⁶³ Nkrumah, K., & Nkrumah, K. (1965). Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism.

communities and localities.¹⁶⁴ The encounter between the Europeans and the Africans exposed the huge resources and potential that are in the continent to the Europeans thus igniting their passion and interest to colonize the region, explore and exploit it.¹⁶⁵

Before the emergence of colonialism in Africa, there were kingdoms, chiefdoms, practices, lifestyles as well as religious practices, beliefs and educational systems, and other ways of accomplishing things in their own way, method, and style. These colonies were very comfortable with the way these kingdoms were managed/operated and administered until their disruption by the emergence of colonialism. However, colonialism affected Africa positively and negatively as opined by various historical scholars.

The British in the late 1800s secured control of many territories in West Africa and which guaranteed the introduction of the colonial government in the gold coast presently Ghana and the Niger Benue region and other places in the sub-region including the northern region.¹⁶⁶ The early part of the 1900s laid the foundation for the capture and total control of the northern territory which comprised of the present-day North-East, North-Central, North-West and the part now known as the federal capital territory in Abuja Nigeria by the colonial master.¹⁶⁷ Before the emergence of these colonial masters, the northerners had a political structure, administrative structure, a system of religious practice, a legal structure known as sharia law, and an educational system that was informal in nature.¹⁶⁸ The British colonialist introduced their own legal pattern, politics, administration, and education thereby disrupting the existing political structure, administrative structure, educational structure, and religious practice which has been in existence for centuries in this region. However, this disruption by the British was not received with open arms but was seriously rejected by the northerners because it was alien to the ones they grew up with over the years.

2.1.1 PRE-COLONIAL ERA IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

The northern territory of Nigeria had a centralized administration under the former Fulani Sokoto caliphate, Kanem Borno, Hausa Kingdom, and other kingdoms in Tiv, Nupe, and Jukun. The religions and political institutions and administration in

¹⁶⁴ Rodney, W. (2018). *How europe underdeveloped africa*. Verso Books.

¹⁶⁵ Nkrumah, K., & Nkrumah, K. (1965). Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism.

¹⁶⁶ Crowder, M. (1986). The book crisis: Africa's other famine. *Africa bibliography, 1985*, xvi-xxi.

¹⁶⁷ Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶⁸ Dudley, L., & Montmarquette, C. (1976). A model of the supply of bilateral foreign aid. *The American Economic Review, 66*(1), 132-142.

Northern Nigeria historically began in the nineteenth century. There wasn't a United and complex political entity or structure in the northern part from the eleventh century.¹⁶⁹ There were several kingdoms in the north before the emergence of colonialism. These kingdoms were Katsina, Kano, Zazzau, Daura, Zamfara, Gobir, Bauchi, Jukun, Igala, Ibirra, Tiv, and other smaller kingdoms in the north.¹⁷⁰

It is important to note that these kingdoms were United under Queen Amina of Zazzau kingdom as one but not as a whole entity because the heads of these kingdoms were still in charge of their kingdoms but the battle for supremacy over another was suspended through the help of Queen Amina of Zazzau.¹⁷¹ It is believed that the northerners had the most organized and enduring political administration before the emergence of colonialism, and it had the most lasting and ancient religious practices for many centuries before colonial rule.

The northerners were politically organized, they had hierarchies in their political structure for ease of administration. In the north, there is the king who is called the Emir, the Waziri who was the assistant or the king's vice, the *Magatakarda* who is the palace secretary, Galadima who was the king's chief protocol officer, Sarkin Yaki who was the commander of the military, Yerima who was the prince, Sarkin Fada who was the king's chief of staff and another official whom hierarchy, job description, and responsibilities were properly spelt out and well defined to avoid any form of duty clash or misunderstanding thereby enhancing a smooth operation of the political system/structure in the north.¹⁷²

The establishment of this hierarchy in the political structure of the North promoted orderliness, fairness, and proper political-administrative structure where a high level of orderliness and streamlined ways of carrying out activities and events were in place.

Islam which was a predominant religion in northern Nigeria was established in Bornu around the eleventh century and in all Hausa land (North) in the fifteenth

¹⁶⁹ Sambo, U., Sule, B., Bello, M. A., & Sa'idu, M. (2021). Colonialism and emasculation of political and religious institutions in Northern Nigeria. *Review of Politics and Public Policy in Emerging Economies*, 3(1), 1-12.

¹⁷⁰ Sambo, U., Sule, B., Bello, M. A., & Sa'idu, M. (2021). Colonialism and Emasculation of Political and Religious Institutions in Northern Nigeria. *Review of Politics and Public Policy in Emerging Economies*, 3(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.26710/ROPE.V3I1.1737>

¹⁷¹ Adeleye, R.A A. (1965). *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1806 – 1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its enemies*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

¹⁷² Abubakar, S. (2004). Borno in the 19th Century. In Ikime, O. (Ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

century.¹⁷³ It is also believed that Islamic religious practice and belief began in Borno in the eleventh century during the reign of the Caliph Umar.¹⁷⁴ The regular contact between the northern businessmen and the Arabian merchants in business relationships gradually paved the way for the embrace of Islam in Borno and Hausa land (North). The Kings (Emirs), their subjects and other persons that hold them in very high esteem accepted Islam in large numbers which gradually turned Islam into an official religion of many palaces in Hausa land (North).¹⁷⁵

The strength of the Islamic religious belief, values, norms, ethics, and the benefits of writing and reading Arabic and “Ajami” (An Hausa Version of Arabic Writing), the use of Arabic as the most accepted language amongst the people (Lingua Franca) for good diplomatic ties and relationship amongst the various components units, the acceptance of Islamic laws as a tool for political integration, the external relationship built with Arab merchants and the respect earned by kingdoms for speaking a foreign language (Arab) and the international recognition attached to it enhanced the acceptance of Islam amongst the ruling class in the north thereby propelling their subjects or subordinates to follow suit.¹⁷⁶

The spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria did not remove the traditional values of the northern region. Islam was highly practiced as a religion in the North but pure was limited to a certain extent in terms of pure practice and spiritualism. It was combined with myths and traditions in Hausa land before the famous Sokoto Jihad of the Nineteenth century.¹⁷⁷ Islam was practiced more in terms of strict adherence in Borno in the Nineteenth century than in Hausa land¹⁷⁸

Before the Sokoto Jihad, there was a total decline in the practice of Islam in the Hausa land which in turn resulted in a reformative movement in the nineteenth century under the guidance and supervision of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio.¹⁷⁹ This occurred when he returned from his educational trip to the West African States of Mali, Timbuktu, and Songhai. Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio returned home and embarked on a radical preaching exercise against the Habe rulers in Gobir and Sokoto provinces for allowing myths and traditional practices to be mixed into

¹⁷³ ibid

¹⁷⁴ ibid

¹⁷⁵ Isiani, M. C., & Obi-Ani, N. (2019). Amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria: Blessing or curse. *International journal of development and sustainability*, 13, 145-158.

¹⁷⁶ Abubakar, S. (2004). Borno in the 19th Century. In Ikime, O. (Ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

¹⁷⁷ Raji, A. Y. (1999). The growth of Islam in pre-colonial Igbomina. *Journal of Muslim minority affairs*, 19(2), 211-221.

¹⁷⁸ ibid

¹⁷⁹ Obayemi, A. (1978). The Sokoto jihad and the'O-kun'Yoruba: A review. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 9(2), 61-87.

Islamic worship against the teaching of the prophet Sunnah.¹⁸⁰ The response of the Habe rulers against this move by Usman Dan Fodio resulted in a serious clash that was violent and later metamorphosed into the famous nineteenth-century Sokoto Jihad.¹⁸¹ This Jihad went deep into the entire Hausa land to the Adamawa Province and some parts of Borno, Ilorin, and central Niger. However, Usman Dan Fodio had lots of lieutenants that worked with him during the Jihad some of these lieutenants were; Yakubu in Bauchi, Bubayero in Gombe, Bayero in Kano, Modibbo Adama in Yola, and others who helped him to conquer several areas including Adamawa areas of Sokoto Caliphate. It is important to note that the Jihad had some consequences.

The consequences were that it led to political and religious reforms that lasted until the emergence of colonial rule which introduced some policies that weakened the influence of Islam and Hausa political structure. The reforms ranged from the installation of the Fulani religious clerics at the head of political leadership in Hausa land and Ilorin since the Jihad to the present date. Additionally, the Jihad set the foundation for the intensive teaching and practice of Islam in a purified manner. The palaces were turned into a court of jurisdiction for Islamic laws. In this instance, Emirs who were also in charge of emirates became judges in the palaces and Islamic scholarship was excellent during this period.¹⁸²

2.1.2 THE COLONIAL ERA IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

The introduction of colonial rule in the northern part of Nigeria faced a lot of resistance from the Sokoto caliphate because of the perceived implication of the colonial system of administration. The British colonialist were able to surmount the resistance till 1902 when the last resistance movement by the Attahiru was surmounted by the West African Frontier Force (WAFF), the British Royal Colonial Force established to capture the West African territory.¹⁸³ The Caliphate system of administration which was predominantly practiced then was completely halted and British colonial rule was introduced thereby diminishing the powers of the Emirs who were in charge of various Emirates and the power of the Islamic law which helped to regulate the activities of individuals was also halted by the introduction of foreign laws by the British colonial masters. It is also important to note that the use of an indirect rule system by the colonialist where indigenous chiefs were used to

¹⁸⁰ Naylor, P. (2021). Stephanie Zehnle, A Geography of Jihad: Sokoto Jihadism and the Islamic Frontier in West Africa. *Islamic Africa*, 11(2), 271-273.

¹⁸¹ Obayemi, A. (1978). The Sokoto jihad and the'O-kun'Yoruba: A review. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 9(2), 61-87.

¹⁸² Tibenderana, P. K. (1987). The Role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria, 1901–1931: The Case of Sokoto Province. *The Journal of African History*, 28(2), 231-257.

¹⁸³ Clarke, F. A. S. (1952). The Story of the Royal West African Frontier Force. *Royal United Services Institution. Journal*, 97(586), 223-229.

control the indigenous population made the Hausa land then still stronger even after the colonial domination.¹⁸⁴

The British colonial masters introduced the indirect rule system of administration to enable the coverage of its colonies due to limited manpower. The indirect rule system of administration was very successful due to the centralized system of political administration that was already in existence in the northern region.¹⁸⁵ During the indirect rule system of administration in the northern part, the colonial governor reinstated the British administrative, political, and religious structure in the north. This was evident in the governor's native law policies in the North.

The governor reassured the northerners that their existing political, religious, and administrative structure will be upheld, honoured, and adequately respected without any form of prejudice or biases.¹⁸⁶ However, in the long run, these statements have not respected the heritage of the Hausa land in Northern Nigeria and also made some negotiations with the Sokoto caliphate leadership in some parts of the north, the gradual relegation of the Emirs as mere subordinates to the colonial administrators and politicians succeeded in eroding their values and positions. The deployment of English law and acceptance of Islamic law to continue to operate where it was not repugnant to modern British law gradually diminished the total application of Islamic jurisdiction especially in matters of civil cases.¹⁸⁷

On religious issues, the British Colonial masters accepted Islam since it was deeply rooted in the system and other missionary activities had also reached some part of the north. This decision was hinged on the fact that their goal is not religious expansion but political and economic expansion. The British colonialists did not find it expedient to continue with the expansion or propagation of Christianity.

However, the introduction of Western English schools in Northern Nigeria contributed to the conversion of some parts of Northern Nigeria into Christianity during the colonial era.¹⁸⁸ The Northern Province was under British influence through its conquest by forceful means. The defeat of the Northern army specifically the Sokoto Caliphate, weaken the forces of law and order in Northern Nigeria, and it also reduced the powers of the Emirs drastically.¹⁸⁹ The British conquest grounded

¹⁸⁴ Miles, W. F. (2015). *Hausaland divided: Colonialism and independence in Nigeria and Niger*. Cornell University Press.

¹⁸⁵ STEWART, W. E. (1970). Indirect Rule and the Political System in Northern Nigeria. *Genève-Afrique/Geneva-Africa*, 9(2), 50.

¹⁸⁶ King, L. D. (2016). The Civilizing Mission and Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria: A Contradiction. *Int'l J. Soc. Sci. Stud.*, 4, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Richardson, S. S. (1961). Training for Penal Reform in Northern Nigeria. *J. Afr. Admin.*, 13, 38.

¹⁸⁸ Ayandele, E. A. (1966). The missionary factor in northern Nigeria, 1870-1918. *Journal of the historical society of Nigeria*, 3(3), 503-522.

¹⁸⁹ Audu, M. S., & Osuala, U. S. (2015). The British Conquest and Resistance of Sokoto Caliphate, 1897-1903: Crisis, Conflicts, and Resistance. *Historical Research Letter*, 22, 29-43.

the chieftaincy stools in Northern Nigeria where the monarchs were brought to their knees by marking them mere subordinates representing their kingdoms or Emirates. During the colonial era in Northern Nigeria, many Emirs were dethroned irrespective of the sacred nature of their stool/throne. In 1906, more than ten Emirs were dethroned by the British colonial masters and replaced with British officials. The removal of these Emirs from the ancestral stools in their Emirate had a significant influence on the Emirate and its mode of administration.

Some scholars have also argued that most Emirs were dethroned because they refused to cooperate with the British colonialists.¹⁹⁰ For instance, it was factually established that Sokoto and Kano wanted to avoid any form of hostilities with the colonialist, but the colonial governor (Lord Lugard) did not make enough efforts to establish peace between these two Emirates. The governor rather preferred a forceful conquest intending to perpetuate British power in the region than any form of negotiation. This is because the colonial governor knew the position of the Emirs in the hearts of Emirate natives. Hence, a forceful conquest will transfer the people's allegiance and loyalty to the British colonial master instead of the Emirs in their Emirates.¹⁹¹

The Emirs under British rule in Northern Nigeria had little power. All the Emirs installed by the British colonialist had to swear an oath of allegiance with the Quran and in the name of Allah and his messenger that they will serve the majesty (the queen) and truly serve the representative of the queen which is the British high commissioner.¹⁹² From the legal perspective, the British colonialist did not abolish the Qadis or the judges representing Islamic courts and Islamic laws, but they introduced the English case law and made it supreme over Islamic law. There was also the Supreme Court in the protectorate headquarters which has the power of judicial precedence over the native courts in the North.¹⁹³

By interpretation, Islamic law was tempered by the British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria, but it was systematically disempowered and relegated to become a second-class law in the land where it was the major source of law. Additionally, the British policy of indirect rule in the North was a matter of convenience due to a shortage of administrative manpower and to cleverly make the natives feel that they are still under the leadership of the Emirs that were in charge of the Emirate system while in

¹⁹⁰ Falola, T. (2009). *Colonialism and violence in Nigeria*. Indiana University Press.

¹⁹¹ Afeadie, P. A. (1994). Adamu Jakada's Intelligence Reports, 1899-1901. *Sudanic Africa*, 5, 185-223.

¹⁹² Ikenga-Metuh, E. (1986). Muslim Resistance to Missionary Penetration of Northern Nigeria, 1857-1960. *Mission Studies*, 3(1), 28-40.

¹⁹³ Ijaodola, J. O. (1970). A Case for the Unification of the Court Systems in Northern Nigeria. *Nigerian LJ*, 4, 136.

its reality, the powers were indirectly expressed through the back doors by the colonial masters. Colonial administrators including the indigenous administrators were revered more by the colonial government than the Emirs. This has a lasting effect on the traditional institution and traditional administrations in Northern Nigeria. It is also worthy to note that the Islamic religion in the North as a major source of law faded to the background mainly due to foreign intervention-colonialism.

The quest to restore Sharia law was found initially during the pre-colonial era and was not only resisted in the colonial era but it was totally frustrated¹⁹⁴. However, there were some movements by some sects like Izalah and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), the Shi'ite to restore Islam to its original nature than the one which has been influenced by the colonial administration where they opined that modern version of pure Islamic teaching cannot place Islamic law or sharia courts back to their pre-colonial position.

The British colonialist introduced several policies after the successful control of the Northern region in 1902 when the caliphate was finally defeated by the colonial army. The policies altered the pre-existing order of religions and political settings.¹⁹⁵ The Emirs were subjugated and forced to surrender to the British administrators who became their supervisors and policymakers. The caliphate system was not totally abolished but it was weakened under the colonial administration. The institutions of politics and administration that were organized and structured according to the indigenous values and culture were replaced with the “strange” British system which made governance in favour of the colonialist despite the flexibility of the indirect rule policy.¹⁹⁶ The colonialist masters were pleasantly surprised and mesmerized with the level of organisation, sophistication, and Islamic religious penetrations in the Sokoto caliphate at the time they had first contact with them, in comparison to many other places in the region, Sokoto caliphate was exceptionally organised.¹⁹⁷

The British colonialist, haven divided the region into protectorates. The protectorates were divided into provinces with each headed by a British resident. The provinces were further regimented into divisions with each diversion under the command of the British district officer who in turn was responsible for the resident. In this process, most of the Emirates fall under divisions of their own. Gradually,

¹⁹⁴ ibid

¹⁹⁵ ibid

¹⁹⁶ Afigbo, A. E. (1991). Background to Nigerian federalism: Federal features in the colonial state. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(4), 13-29.

¹⁹⁷ Mayowa, A. (2014). Pre-colonial Nigeria and the European's fallacy. *Review of History and Political Science*, 2(2), 17-27.

the district officers overpowered every officer in the district including the Emirs.¹⁹⁸ The district officers assured the position of masters in their districts. The district officers turned the Emirs into their subordinates because they were supervising and watching over the affairs of the Emirates as superior officers. The residents were powerful because they were strengthened by the presence of the military in the districts who helped them in the administration process. On the other hand, the natives were not allowed to have armies.¹⁹⁹

However, in the northern province, the British colonial masters created small elites that had power and responsibility over the Emirates. This was alien to the history and culture of Hausa land for centuries. The Emirs, Chiefs, and other title holders lost their right to their throne until they became submissive and loyal to the British colonial administration. The powers of the Sokoto Caliphate were finally buried during the colonial era when in 1903 the Caliph Attahiru Ahmadu was killed Burmi.²⁰⁰ The qualities and charisma of the institutions of the caliphate and the Emirate government were unduly undermined and seriously eroded. The situation was worsened when the newly appointed caliph, Attahiru was denied the title of ‘Sultan’ intentionally. The President’s role of supervising the Emirs and the Emirates ceased to exist since then.²⁰¹

From a religious angle, the colonial policy in Northern Nigeria was an emasculation of Islamic religious supremacy in turn for British supremacy. For example, in the nineteenth century, the Caliph was the political head of state or the caliphate and the religious leader of the northern community as well as the supreme judge of the Sharia whose duties included the appointment of Emirs and the enforcement of Islamic law.²⁰² By 1903, these powers that the Caliph had were gone forever due to the presence of the colonialists, and the Muslim community was left without a leader that can unite their religious and political affairs.²⁰³ The deliberate destruction of the powers of the Caliph and the Caliphate was not a mistake but a reflection of history because the British were aware of the same structure and its impact on the life of the Muslims from their experience with the Ottoman Empire.²⁰⁴ It was a

¹⁹⁸ Tibenderana, P. K. (1983). The emirs and the spread of Western education in Northern Nigeria, 1910–1946. *The Journal of African History*, 24(4), 517-534.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰⁰ Tibenderana, P. K. (1988). The irony of indirect rule in Sokoto Emirate, Nigeria, 1903-1944. *African Studies Review*, 31(1), 67-92.

²⁰¹ *ibid*

²⁰² Boyd, J. (2001). Distance learning from purdah in nineteenth-century northern Nigeria: the work of Asma'u Fodiyo. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 14(1), 7-22.

²⁰³ Tibenderana, P. K. (1988). The irony of indirect rule in Sokoto Emirate, Nigeria, 1903-1944. *African Studies Review*, 31(1), 67-92.

²⁰⁴ *ibid*

targeted and well-planned movement to forever take over the control of the political and economic affairs of the colony.

As a result, the new ruler at Sokoto was titled “Sultan” and just made a first-class Emir whose authority was now confined within the province or districts of Sokoto alone.²⁰⁵ Other rulers were allowed to take over influence in their respective districts. The caliphate was scattered like stranded flocks in the jungle.²⁰⁶ The resultant effects of the decimation of the Sokoto Caliphate were the disconnection of communication flow between the caliphate and each other, they lost control of the will to resist the policies and changes introduced by the British colonialist.²⁰⁷

The policies established by the British colonial administrators in Northern Nigeria had some negative impacts on the already existing policies existing in the North. Some of the policies introduced by the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria were slavery, justice, and taxation.²⁰⁸ The British abolished the legal status of slavery, prohibited slave dealings, and declared all children born after the policy as freed sons. In the judicial reform, the British maintained the Qadi system which was in most cases operating the Maliki school of jurisprudence, they only established the English courts operating at three tiers.²⁰⁹

Each province had a court of jurisdiction over employees of the colonial government as well as over the non-indigenes. A supreme court was established in the protectorates’ capital. In these English courts, the residents and the district officers were not empowered to play a role, they were allowed access to the records of the proceedings and were directed to ensure that certain canonical punishments such as stoning to death for adultery and amputation of limbs for stealing were not implemented.²¹⁰ Such stringent deterrence of the application of the punitive laws was contrary to the belief, practice, and provisions of Islamic law and religion.²¹¹ It was a call to riot and revolt against God’s law upon Muslims by aliens who conquered their land forcefully. Modernity as claimed by the British eroded and superseded the laws of the natives.

²⁰⁵ Abdulqadir, U. A. (2016). Traditional rulers and security administration in Nigeria: Challenges for the 21st century. *Journal of humanities and social science*, 21(8), 1-11.

²⁰⁶ Chafe, K. S. (1994). Challenges to the hegemony of the Sokoto caliphate: a preliminary examination. *Paideuma*, 99-109.

²⁰⁷ *ibid*

²⁰⁸ Pierce, S. (2006). Looking like a state: colonialism and the discourse of corruption in Northern Nigeria. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 48(4), 887-914.

²⁰⁹ *ibid*

²¹⁰ Afigbo, A. E. (1971). The Consolidation of British imperial administration in Nigeria: 1900-1918. *Civilisations*, 21(4), 436-459.

²¹¹ Umar, M. (2005). *Islam and Colonialism: intellectual responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British colonial rule*. Brill.

On the aspect of taxation, certain taxes, and tributes such as Kharaj (land tax), Jizyah (poll tax), and a man (trust) ceased to be paid to the Emirs who used to receive them under the Borno and the Sokoto caliphate.²¹² In the middle Belt (an area that today consists of the north-central Nigeria of Plateau, Niger, Benue, Kogi, Nassarawa, Ilorin, and Abuja), the influence of the powers of the northern Emirs was curtailed and the spread of Islam was halted through the creation of small chiefs who were friendly to the British colonialists and hostile to the Fulani dynasty.²¹³ By 1920, the British had succeeded in limiting the influence and territory of the northern Emirs within the boundaries of the Middle Belt to decrease their powers more except in Ilorin which was controlled earlier by the Sokoto Caliphate²¹⁴

2.1.3 POST-COLONIAL NORTHERN NIGERIA

Colonialism has played a monumental role in shaping the modern history of Northern Nigeria in terms of influencing the religious and political institutions that were founded in the pre-colonial era.²¹⁵ The colonialist did not hesitate in creating artificial boundaries neglecting the homogeneity of the ethnic, religious, linguistic, and geographical identity of the colonized. The Europeans blindly remapped the African Continent carelessly without recourse to the political, social, and cultural background of the colonies. In essence, the colonialists went ahead to alter them unfavourably for the indigenes²¹⁶

There were many attempts to manipulate and negate positive African history and intelligentsia by some European chauvinists in attempting to alter the face of scientific history but that does not hold much water when the negative impact of colonialism is mentioned.^{217, 218}.

It is believed that one of the effects of colonialism in Northern Nigeria is the unintended transformation of the Empire into a colony or political domination and oppression. The colonial encounter in Northern Nigeria depressed the political and religious institutions in the region.²¹⁹ Additionally, the social transformation in terms of classes, power holding, and religious position had unintended consequences for Northern Nigeria in terms of its politics and economy, especially during the inter-

²¹² Duymuş, K. The Economic Policies in the Sokoto Caliphate within the Early Period (1800).

²¹³ Ochonu, M. (2008). Colonialism within colonialism: the Hausa-Caliphate imaginary and the British colonial administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt. *African Studies Quarterly*, 10(2-3), 95-127.

²¹⁴ *ibid*

²¹⁵ Blench, R., Longtau, S., Hassan, U., & Walsh, M. (2006). The role of traditional rulers in conflict prevention and mediation in Nigeria. *Study prepared for the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Nigeria*.

²¹⁶ Miles, W. F. (1987). Partitioned royalty: the evolution of Hausa chiefs in Nigeria and Niger. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25(2), 233-258.

²¹⁷ Meredith, M. (2011). *The State of Africa: A history of the continent since independence*. Simon and Schuster.

²¹⁸ Heussler, R. (1986). *West African Passage: A Journey through Nigeria, Chad and the Cameroons, 1931-1932*.

²¹⁹ Ochonu, M. E. (2009). *Colonial meltdown: northern Nigeria in the Great Depression* (pp. 978-0). Athens: Ohio University Press.

war period of economic depression. The economic recovery in the Northern Nigerian colony was ushered in with the grassroots revenue offensives which did not augur well for the colony and its natives.²²⁰

The many challenges and unpalatable changes brought by colonialism in Northern Nigeria led to responses from various classes and groups. Most northern Nigerian Muslims were constrained by the clear supremacy of colonial rule. In trying to entrench its rule in Northern Nigeria, the British introduced policies that pose great challenges for northern Muslims. One of these challenges is the military challenges where the British forces found it relishing in using mighty force against persuasion.

This created several massacres in the region during the conquest. The second challenge is the political issue via the Indirect Rule where the Northern Emirs found it hard to resist or support the second-class role accorded to them after the establishment of the colony of northern Nigeria. The third challenge is the British control of Islam in the north. As many have seen the British as patronizes and supporters of Islam during colonialism, it was an inadequate argument to accept that because the British found it comfortable to use Islam to control the majority Muslim subjects and their Emirs in the North under the famous Indirect Rule.

One of the ways is the British tax policy in which Lugard stressed that although Islamic taxation law can be applicable, it was not the source of authority for taxation law under British colonialism.²²¹ Besides, there was evidence of intelligence gathering against the *Ulamas* (Islamic clerics) and Islamic Movements in Northern Nigeria by the British Administration, especially on the Sufi order.²²² Furthermore, Islamic law faced the legal challenges of British colonialism. Lugard himself narrated that before the colonial take-over in Northern Nigeria, there were native courts in each capital city, and in many of the principal towns, Islamic law is administered by a native judge called the 'Alkali' who is usually a person of great learning and integrity. In some courts, the Alkali has '*Almajirai*' who learned under him. In some cases, two or more ulama were invited for judgement while in other cases it is appealed to the higher authorities in more learned centres. Having found this system, the British went ahead to draft proclamations and introduced English

²²⁰ *ibid*

²²¹ Gilliat-Ray, S. (2006). Educating the c Ulama: Centres of Islamic religious training in Britain. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 17(1), 55-76.

²²² Adam, S. Y. (2017). Politics and Sufism in Nigeria: the Salgawa and the political history of Kano State, Northern Nigeria 1950-2011. *Journal for Islamic Studies*, 36(1), 140-172.

law as well as provincial supreme courts which clashed with the Islamic law and courts.²²³

The British colonization in Northern Nigeria created the foundation for the agents of modernity in the region through the fragmentation of the sacred authority. The former political institutions were submerged under colonialism and in political independence, under the powers and control of the indigenous Nigerian politicians.

The religion which was an official source of law and judgement in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria became a second-class law under the Sharia courts in the post-colonial period.²²⁴ The puritanical movement of the *Izalah* sects in post-colonial northern Nigeria failed to restore religion to its sacred sanctity as an official legal provision for judgment.²²⁵ Consequently, colonial policies on Islam in Northern Nigeria created a future chasm with the Christian counterparts in post-colonial Northern Nigeria. Evidence supported the fact that the pre-colonial Northern Nigerian Islam lived peacefully with the minority Christians and traditional worshippers before the divide-and-rule colonial policies set them apart in later years leading to post-colonial violent clashes and conflicts.²²⁶

The political and religious crises in Northern Nigeria could have been averted if there was no diplomacy or partition by Britain and France in West Africa. A lack of geographical consideration of cultures and identities or a deliberate attempt at division led to this policy.²²⁷ The aftermath of such a partition is the deepening political and religious crises in Northern Nigeria. The southern counterparts could not cope with or accept the sophisticated complex political and religious organization of the North and that left the British with the option of slowing and altering the political and religious institutions in the North to reduce the parity in the colony.²²⁸

The structure of Northern Nigerian politics, administration, and religious institutions was dealt a permanent blow emanating from the single-handed efforts of Lugard during his administration as the Governor of the Nigerian Colony. These political and religious institutions were never recovered again even in the post-colonial

²²³ Umar, M. (2005). *Islam and Colonialism: intellectual responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British colonial rule*. Brill.

²²⁴ Sanusi, S. L. (2007). Politics and Sharia in northern Nigeria. *Islam and Muslim politics in Africa*, 177-188.

²²⁵ *ibid*

²²⁶ Oladiti, A. A. (2014). Religion and Politics in Pre-Colonial Nigeria. *Cogito-Multidisciplinary research Journal*, (2), 72-84.

²²⁷ Ahmad, A. (2005). Extension of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria: Human Rights Implications for Non-Muslim Minorities. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 2(1).

²²⁸ Hirschfield, C. (1979). *The Diplomacy of Partition: Britain, France and the Creation of Nigeria, 1890-1898* (Vol. 2). Springer Science & Business Media.

period.²²⁹ The British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria disregarded the fact that Islamic legal provisions on certain issues and punishments were God's enjoinder and that one cannot forcefully push a believer into disbelief. A Muslim believer who submitted himself for amputation or stoning to death is doing so at his own will. Yet, the British went ahead to sanction and regulate this aspect which weakened the Sharia law in the region.²³⁰

The British could not tolerate opposition from the internal rulers who felt that their mandate of leadership was forcefully robbed in broad daylight. This created the scenario of deposing some rulers which later was to continue even under the indigenous leadership in the name of politics. While in Yorubaland there was such a provision under the Oyo Kingdom that if the Alaafin is deposed, he is expected to go and die, in the colonial period, he is to have vanished which countered the culture of the kingdom. In Northern Nigeria, rulers were not deposed. They either die or they are removed for corruption, or they had their throne transferred as a punishment where they would be taken to a less influential emirate instead of their own. It was the colonialist that introduced the issue of deposing kings who had opposed their colonial ambition.²³¹

The resistance to colonial movement and revolt against the British colonial rule in Sokoto Caliphate was an anticipated defence against the obliteration of the political and religious systems that the colonialists met on the ground which were flourishing and prosperous in their operation. The institutions were internally built and were sustained according to the native culture and history.²³² However, all the resistances were surmounted by the mightier British force which led to the undesired changes on the part of the Northern Nigerian politics and religion even in the post-colonial era.²³³

It is quite clear that the British did not come to Northern Nigeria just for economic exploitation or political emasculation as some academics are advancing. Neither did they come to civilize or set the foundation for modernizing our societies as some of their writers are working hard in vain to make the world believe. Behind the mask of their motive were the subterranean distortions and manipulation of our inherited

²²⁹ Apata, Z. O. (1990). LUGARD AND THE CREATION OF PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA 190Q-19180L. *African study monographs*, 11(3), 143-152.

²³⁰ *ibid*

²³¹ Oduwobi, T. (2003). Deposed rulers under the colonial regime in Nigeria: The careers of Akarigbo Oyebajo and Awujale Adenuga. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 171(3), 553-571.

²³² *ibid*

²³³ *ibid*

political institutions and religious practices.²³⁴ They disguised their motive through Indirect Rule and the creation of the Native Administration. They exhibited friendly gestures towards Islam in the North. However, gradually, unnoticed, and unable to counter the progress, they keep on introducing laws and proclamations that ensure that the political institutions were subjected to their wish, the religious practices were curtailed and capsized until they became lame in the process.²³⁵ This has affected the current Northern region in its politics, religious practices, and economy.

A cursory look at the history of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras, shows that the presence of the British colonial masters in the northern part of Nigeria brought a lot of changes and reformations in the way things were done in the region.²³⁶ The natives already had an existing political structure, administrative structure, and religious structure which has been in existence for decades. Colonial administration distorted the political, administrative, and religious structures that were already in existence in the Northern region.²³⁷

In the long run, the well-planned, organized, programmed, and well-articulated political structure in Hausa land (Northern region) which the British colonialist met gradually became weakened and diminished until they lost their relevance to the colonialists thereby making the heads of these political and religious structures to be mere ceremonial heads in their kingdoms.²³⁸

Islam was a major source of law, judgment, and spiritual practices. The influence of colonialism made Islam lose its potency and relevance. Islamic principles which were hitherto the guide for moral behaviours and practices in society were so much neglected to the extent that they could not regain their status as it was during the pre-colonial era. The political structure was also affected where the previous kingmakers, kings, and Emirs were reduced to mere subordinates of the resident British colonialist. It was finally concluded that colonial rule seriously influenced the northern part of Nigeria. To correct those anomalies of cultural erosion brought by colonial intervention, emphasis should be on the need to revive the traditional laws that promoted morals, values, and better understanding in the society before the

²³⁴ *ibid*

²³⁵ *ibid*

²³⁶ Ali, S., & Mohammed, I. (2013). The use, Misuse of Religion and Implications in Nigerian politics.

²³⁷ Mustapha, A. R., & Bunza, M. U. (2014). Contemporary Islamic sects and groups in northern Nigeria. *Sects & social disorder: Muslim identities & conflict in northern Nigeria*, 54.

²³⁸ Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press.

colonialist came. The powers of the Emirs and the heads of other traditional institutions should be adequately restored as it was before the colonialists arrived.

The British could not tolerate opposition from the internal rulers who felt that their mandate of leadership was forcefully robbed in broad daylight. This created the scenario of deposing some rulers which later was to continue even under the indigenous leadership in the name of politics.²³⁹ While in Yorubaland there was such a provision under the Oyo Kingdom that if the Alaafin is deposed, he is expected to go and commit suicide, in the colonial period, he is merely only made to disappear from the kingdom which countered the culture of the kingdom. In Northern Nigeria, rulers were not deposed.

They either die or they are removed for corruption, or they had their throne transferred as a punishment where they would be taken to a less influential emirate instead of their own. It was the colonialist that introduced the issue of deposing kings who had opposed their colonial ambition.²⁴⁰ The resistance to colonial movement and revolutionary defence against the British colonial rule in Sokoto Caliphate was an anticipated defence against the obliteration of the political and religious systems that the colonialists met on the ground which were flourishing and prosperous in their operation.²⁴¹

The institutions were internally built and were sustained according to native culture and history.²⁴² However, all the resistances were surmounted by the mightier British force which led to the undesired changes on the part of the Northern Nigerian politics and religion even in the post-colonial era.²⁴³ It is quite clear that the British did not come to Northern Nigeria just for economic exploitation or political emasculation as some academics are advancing. Neither did they come to civilize or set the foundation for modernizing the society as some European writers espouse even to this day. Behind the mask of their motive were the subterranean distortions and manipulation of indigenous inherited political institutions and religious practices.²⁴⁴

They disguised their motive through Indirect Rule and the creation of the Native Administration. They exhibited friendly gestures toward Islam in the North. However, gradually, unnoticed, and unable to counter the progress, they keep

²³⁹ Ibid see also,

²⁴⁰ Oduwobi, T. (2003). *Deposed Rulers under the Colonial Regime in Nigeria: The Careers of Akarigbo Oyebajo (1891–1915) and Awujale Adenuga (1925–29)*.

²⁴¹ Ibid

²⁴² Ibid

²⁴³ Ibid

²⁴⁴ Ibid

on introducing laws and proclamations that ensure that the political institutions were subjected to their wish, and the religious practices were curtailed and capsized until they became lame in the process. This has affected the current Northern region in its politics, religious practices, and economy.

The history of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria during the pre-colonial era, colonial era, and post-colonial era shows that the presence of the British colonial masters in the northern part of Nigeria brought a lot of changes and reformations to the way things were done in the region. The natives already had an existing political structure, administrative structure, and religious structure which has been in existence for decades.²⁴⁵

Colonial administration distorted the political, administrative, and religious structures that were already in existence in the Northern region.²⁴⁶ In the long run, the well-planned, organized, programmed, and well-articulated political structure in Hausa land (Northern region) which the British colonialist met gradually became weakened and diminished until they lost their relevance to the colonialists thereby making the heads of these political and religious structures to be mere ceremonial heads in their kingdoms and domains.²⁴⁷

Islam which was a major source of law, judgment, and spiritual practices also lost its potency and relevance. Islamic principles which were a guide for moral behaviours and practices in the society were so much neglected to the extent that they could not regain their status as it was during the pre-colonial era.²⁴⁸ The political structure was also affected where the previous kingmakers, kings, and Emirs were reduced to mere subordinates of the resident British colonialist. The judicial system which was done through the tenets of Sharia law was now replaced with foreign laws from Britain.

2.2.1 THE YORUBA ETHNIC GROUP (WESTERN NIGERIA)

Western Nigeria is occupied by predominantly Yoruba people. In the traditional Yoruba system, religion helped to model the lifestyles and character of the people due to their reverence for the creator of the universe often referred to as Olodumare who is believed to be the creator of the Universe.²⁴⁹ Politics on the other hand helped to galvanise the people in terms of leadership and administration, it should be noted

²⁴⁵ *ibid*

²⁴⁶ Yadudu, A. H. (1992). Colonialism and the Transformation of Islamic Law: In the Northern States of Nigeria. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 24(32), 103-139.

²⁴⁷ *ibid*

²⁴⁸ *ibid*

²⁴⁹ Bewaji, J. A. (1998). Olodumare: God in Yoruba belief and the theistic problem of evil. *African studies quarterly*, 2(1), 1-17.

that the Yorubas, though united by a common language, were administratively subdivided into about seven administrative units.

These subunits are sometimes referred to as communities.²⁵⁰ Although they all speak the same language, there seem to be some noticeable differences in the native dialects. Islamic religion and education were the first foreign cultures introduced to the region before Christianity and Western education were introduced around 1840.²⁵¹ In modern Nigerian history and politics, Islam is still a significant religion in the region featuring most prominently in five of the communities that have now metamorphosed into states that make up the thirty-six administrative states in modern Nigeria.²⁵²

2.2.2 PRE-COLONIAL WESTERN NIGERIA

In pre-colonial western Nigeria, religion played a significant role where there was a strong belief that there is a supreme being that created everyone and rules over the affairs of humanity. Such a Being was recognized and given a premier position or status in their religions. Various scholars have also identified some of the attributes of the Supreme Being within the indigenous African religions that they have studied.

Some of these attributes have been very similar to those projected in the Christian religious understandings of the Supreme Being--omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, benevolence, divinity, creator, etcetera.²⁵³ Their works have provided starting points for further research and discussion, but most students of religion have ignored this aspect of their worthy contribution to scholarship and have rather taken their works as definitive and beyond question.²⁵⁴

Even when contrary views are aired, the pioneering works of these first African theologians, religious scholars, and anthropologists are often cited as authorities to uphold a point of view that was fast losing credibility. The Africans, particularly the Yoruba, possess a conception of a Supreme Deity.²⁵⁵ In fact, this Supreme Being has many superlative attributes, but the possession of these qualities does not lead to the type of impasse or contradiction that arises within theistic Christian religion; namely, the irreconcilability of the existence of God and evil in the universe.

²⁵⁰ *ibid*

²⁵¹ Fafunwa, A. B. (1974). Education in the mother tongue: A Nigerian experiment. *Journal of African studies*, 1(3), 285.

²⁵² *ibid*

²⁵³ Klem, H. V. (1975). Yoruba Theology and Christian Evangelism. *Missiology*, 3(1), 45-63.

²⁵⁴ *ibid*

²⁵⁵ *ibid*

In the context of western Nigeria, Olodumare, the supreme being among the Yoruba is highly revered. Olodumare (God) has other attributes such as transcendence, immanence, self-existence, pre-eminence, greatness, causal powers, immateriality, mysteriousness, unity, eternity, plurality, mercifulness, kindness, love, faithfulness, and goodness.²⁵⁶ Olodumare is generally believed to be the Creator.

He is the Origin and Giver of Life, and in that capacity, He is called Elemi-- "the Owner of Spirit", or "the Owner of Life".²⁵⁷ The evidence that Olodumare is the creator of everything is displayed in virtually all accounts of the relationship between Olodumare and the Universe. Where He did not directly cause or create, He instructed the divinities to create, and He supervised the creation work.²⁵⁸

So, he created both the good and the bad, the well-formed and the deformed, the rainy season and the drought. Through Him must be sought the cause of all things. And everything there is has a rationale and can be understood and used by the thoughtful and gifted like the herbalists and medicine men. Olodumare is the Most Powerful Being for Whom Nothing is too great or too Small, Below or Beyond to Accomplish: Here the powers of obas, ancestors' elders, witches, herbalists, medicine men, divinities, etc., are all derived from Olodumare and are limited and limitable by Him.²⁵⁹ Olodumare's Knowledge is Incomparable and hence has no equal.

There is no disputing the fact that Olodumare has the greatest knowledge. However, the fact that some things happen "behind Him" or "without His direct awareness" was highly disputed because He was all-knowing and cannot be taken unawares, hence nothing happens without His permission.²⁶⁰

In western Nigeria, Esu is one of the major divinities among the Yoruba people. According to Idowu,²⁶¹ Esu is primarily a "special relations officer" between heaven and earth, the inspector general who reports regularly to Olodumare on the deeds of the divinities and men, checks and makes sure reports on the correctness of worship in general, and sacrifices in particular.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Igboin, B. O. (2014). Is Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief, God?. *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, 4(2), 189-208.

²⁵⁷ ibid

²⁵⁸ Gbadegesin, E. O. (2018). Olodumare: The hidden but relevant God in the Yoruba religious imagination. In *Religion and social reconstruction in Africa* (pp. 44-55). Routledge.

²⁵⁹ Falola, T. (1993). GE Simpson, "Yoruba Religion and Medicine in Ibadan"(Book Review). *Journal of Religion in Africa/Religion en Afrique*, 23, 355.

²⁶⁰ Gbadegesin, E. O. (2018). Olodumare: The hidden but relevant God in the Yoruba religious imagination. In *Religion and social reconstruction in Africa* (pp. 44-55). Routledge.

²⁶¹ Idowu, E. B. (1962). Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief (London, 1962). *Idowu160Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief1962*, 160-i6i.

²⁶² ibid

This clearly shows that there was a divinity capable of doing his duties as charged by Olodumare, Esu occupies a prominent position among the divinities. He discharges these duties without fear or favor. Thus, Esu is a good minister of God. He is the enforcer who ensures that due reward and punishment ensue on any action. He is, therefore, courted and even bribed. When such overtures fail to mitigate punishment, Esu is then given a bad name. This has even been more so with the advent of Christianity and Islam in western Nigeria today. The new religions sought for equivalence of the Devil and Satan and found Esu as a convenient one because all those who force people to do the right things are always unpopular.

Some scholars argue that there is an unmistakable element of evil in Esu, and for that reason, he has been predominantly associated with evil things.²⁶³

There are those who say that the primary function of Esu in this world is to spoil things. But even so, Esu cannot be directly called the devil because some of the elements of "evil" that was in Esu can be found also to some degree in most of the other divinities. Yorubas (western Nigeria) hold that originally Esu was not intrinsically evil, but he was disobedient and proud and became the embodiment of evil, always opposing and destroying that which is good.²⁶⁴ Yorubas (western Nigeria) put the responsibility for all evil and suffering elsewhere instead of with Olodumare, then Esu must be the cause, along with his agents.

Since Esu is overwhelmingly versatile and capricious, his evil nature overshadows his good. The religions sought for equivalence of the Devil and Satan, found Esu as the convenient one because all those who force people to do the right things are always unpopular.²⁶⁵ There is an unmistakable element of evil in Esu, and for that reason, he has been predominantly associated with evil things. There are those in Yoruba land who believe that the primary function of Esu in this world is to spoil things. But even so, he cannot be called the Devil.

However, there are grounds for equating Satan with the Yoruba divinity called Esu. These are: Esu is Satan because the Christian and Muslim Scriptures say so.²⁶⁶ The Yoruba people seem to have accepted the equivalence by Christians and Muslims, the Yorubas hold that originally Esu was not intrinsically evil, but he was disobedient and proud and became the embodiment of evil, always opposing and destroying that which is good. Since the Yorubas put the responsibility for all evil

²⁶³ Idowu, E. B. (1970). Olodumare: god in Yoruba belief.

²⁶⁴ ibi

²⁶⁵ ibid

²⁶⁶ Bewaji, J. A. (1998). Olodumare: God in Yoruba belief and the theistic problem of evil. *African studies quarterly*, 2(1), 1-17.

and suffering elsewhere instead of with Olodumare, then Esu must be the cause, along with his agents, since Esu is overwhelmingly versatile and capricious, his evil nature over-shadows his good.²⁶⁷

2.2.3 POLITICS IN PRE-COLONIAL WESTERN NIGERIA

The Yorubas trace their origins to a common ancestor known as Oduduwa.²⁶⁸ In fact, Yoruba mythology argues that Oduduwa founded the city of Ile-Ife, in the present-day Osun state, one of the federating units in Nigeria. Today, the city is still regarded as the cradle of Yoruba civilization or simply the source. The founder of the ancient city, Oduduwa, dispatched his sons to establish cities and kingdoms around Ile-Ife. At the end of the sixteenth century, the political organization of most Yoruba kingdoms was complete and broadly similar.²⁶⁹ Each kingdom consisted of a capital town, a number of subordinate towns, villages, markets, and farmlands and kingdoms whose rulers' claimed descent from Oduduwa and ruled a clearly defined territory.

However, with the passage of time, some of these cities became very large and even surpassed Ile-Ife in terms of power and prestige. At this point in history, Ile-Ife, like Rome of antiquity, became the spiritual rallying point for all Yorubas.²⁷⁰ Oyo, which is one of the cities founded by the children of Oduduwa, became the most powerful and prominent.²⁷¹ Records had it that it came into existence in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.²⁷² Its capital was old Oyo, which was located in the savannah area close to the river Niger. The Oyo empire expanded in all directions through wars and conquests of various dimensions.

By the sixteenth century, it had evolved as a unique political system under the rulership of an Alaafin now referred to as the Alaafin of Oyo, who was assisted in the day-to-day administration by a council of state called the Oyomesi.²⁷³ Part of the Oyomesi were other organs that assisted the paramount head, the Alaafin, in the daily administration of the empire: secret societies, age grades, and war councils.²⁷⁴

Within the city, the Alaafin-in-council was complemented in the discharge of its administrative duties by sectional/ward heads. These subordinate chiefs were in

²⁶⁷ *ibid*

²⁶⁸ *ibid*

²⁶⁹ Law, R. C. (1973). The heritage of Oduduwa: traditional history and political propaganda among the Yoruba. *The Journal of African History*, 14(2), 207-222.

²⁷⁰ *ibid*

²⁷¹ Ajayi, J. A. (1998). Samuel Johnson and Yoruba Historiography. *The Recovery of the West African Past. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien*, 57-68.

²⁷² *ibid*

²⁷³ Smith, R. S. (1988). *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*. Univ of Wisconsin Press.

²⁷⁴ Agiri, B. A. (1975). Early Oyo history reconsidered. *History in Africa*, 2, 1-16.

charge of the various minor provinces. Indeed, in each of the established kingdoms, the Oba was assisted by the council of chiefs and other agencies who assisted in administering the kingdom.²⁷⁵ However, the Oba had to pay homage to the Alaafin through tributes and taxes. In view of this illustration, it can be said that the political system was well structured.

This means that the authority of the Alaafin was not only limited to the city centre where he reigned but permeated all the nooks and crannies of the empire.²⁷⁶ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Old Oyo Empire was the dominant political power because it succeeded in incorporating all kingdoms in Yorubaland into a single political system.²⁷⁷ However, by the early nineteenth century, things fell apart, the empire like the great Roman Empire, disintegrated due to a combination of internal and external factors. The disintegration of the empire had monumental implications for its people. It specifically led to the displacement of so many persons which ultimately altered the demographic pattern of the area.²⁷⁸

During this period, the Old Oyo city centre became desolate. In the process, new towns developed.²⁷⁹ In the absence of the ‘head’ following the collapse of the empire, the whole of Yorubaland was at war against another as each tribe attempted to ensure its supremacy over others. Records have it that the sixteen years of inter-tribal war disrupted the socio-political and economic fabric of the area.²⁸⁰ However, by 1886, an agreement that was developed by the British authorities brought peace among the various warring groups.²⁸¹ By this period, the socio-economic and political landscape of the area began to be transformed, first by the British traders and later by the colonialists. The whole of Yorubaland in addition to other areas around the Niger came under direct British colonial control. This development launched the Yoruba into a new form of politics.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ Osadola, O. S., & Adeleye, O. A. (2020). A Re-Assessment of Government and Political Institutions of Old Oyo Empire. *Quaestus*, (16), 19-31.

²⁷⁶ *ibid*

²⁷⁷ *ibid*

²⁷⁸ Wiens, A., Lovejoy, H. B., Mullen, Z., & Vance, E. A. (2022). A modelling strategy to estimate conditional probabilities of African origins: The collapse of the Oyo Empire and the transatlantic slave trade, 1817–1836. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*.

²⁷⁹ Awe, B. (1965). The End of an Experiment: The Collapse of the Ibadan Empire 1877-1893. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 3(2), 221-230.

²⁸⁰ *ibid*

²⁸¹ Balogun, Y. R. (2016). The emergence and contributions of Christian missions to the civilization of Yoruba kingdoms in the old Oyo Empire. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 9(4), 21.

²⁸² *ibid*

2.2.4 COLONIAL ERA IN WESTERN NIGERIA

To understand the dynamics of Yoruba politics during the colonial era, there is a need to understand the nature of politics in Nigeria at this time. The major feature of politics in Nigeria then was that it was identity-based, such that all major political issues considered fundamental to the existence and legitimacy of the state such as control of state power, resource allocation, and citizenship are contested along the lines of complex ethnic, religious, and regional divisions in the country.²⁸³

In pursuing identity-based politics, various groups have tended to adopt a winner-take-all mentality that has made politics one involving mutually antagonistic groups that are in constant opposition to each other.²⁸⁴ Colonialism, through a set of policies, is the most important factor in the formation of the exclusive and antagonistic nature of contemporary identity politics. Colonialists pursued divide-and-rule policies that enhanced segmentation and polarization in Nigeria.²⁸⁵ The British, by cobbling the different groups in the regions into a culturally artificial political entity stimulated intergroup competition and mobilization for power and resources in the new state as a means to handle the insecurity, instability, alienation, and competitiveness of colonial urban life.²⁸⁶ The British policy of ruling indirectly through indigenous political institutions or native authorities led to the formation of local tribal political institutions and loyalties.²⁸⁷

British colonial policy fostered socioeconomic and political development and the integration of the various regions. For example, the exclusion of Christian missionary activity and the highly prized mission-sponsored schools from the predominantly Muslim areas of the North created a huge imbalance in westernization between the North and South.²⁸⁸ Dominant identity groups have deployed mobilization strategies that further their objective of dominating the region, that is, one-party state and state-centered economic development strategies, that concentrate power at the centre while minor groups on their part have favoured mobilization strategies that promoted the political and economic development of the region, that is, revenue allocation policies that favour derivation and federalist political principles.

²⁸³ Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A history of identities, violence and stability in Nigeria* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford.

²⁸⁴ *ibid*

²⁸⁵ Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A history of identities, violence and stability in Nigeria* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford.

²⁸⁶ Berry, S. (1992). Hegemony on a shoestring: Indirect rule and access to agricultural land. *Africa*, 62(3), 327-355.

²⁸⁷ *ibid*

²⁸⁸ *ibid*.

These mobilization strategies have only succeeded in fuelling the antagonistic nature of identity politics in Nigeria. Colonial policies have bestowed a fatal legacy of insecurity, instability, alienation, and unhealthy competitiveness on the Nigerian people. These characteristics have brought about a rigid, non-negotiable winner-takes-all model of politics that fosters corruption and poor governance in general. It also challenges the existence of the state and the legitimacy of the ruling class, all of which lead to the crisis of control of state power, resource allocation, and the rule of law. The death of the rule of law or equality before the law often leads to violence and ethnic tensions.

2.2.5 POST-COLONIAL ERA IN WESTERN NIGERIA

At the dawn of independence from British colonial rule in 1960, all ethnic groups in the country seemed to be working together for the common good of the nascent state. For a while, it seemed like the struggle for independence united the different ethnic nationalities. But this perceived unity was hardly sustainable, as just within seven years after independence, the country was engulfed in a brutal civil war. The Igbos in Eastern Nigeria prepared to declare independence, taking with them virtually all the resource-rich community in the Niger Delta under the newly created country of Biafra. To this day, many analysts still believe that the ghost of the Biafran war still hunts Nigeria in many ways.

The war was seen as mainly between the Hausa Fulani in the north and the Igbos in the east, but realistically, the war was mainly between the Nigeria state and the secessionists in the east. Some war historians even argued that some Igbos that did not affirm the message of the secessionists also fought on the side of one Nigeria against the wishes and aspirations of their tribes' men.

The perceived roles played by the Yorubas in the years leading to and during the war marked the central foci of the contributions of the region to the history of Nigeria. It is also worthy of note, to understand that this struggle continues to this day in Nigeria, but it is also pertinent to understand that the Biafran war laid the foundation or put more succinctly, the war exposed the disunity of the country and especially the distrust among the three major ethnic groups of Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba.

Although an in-depth analysis of the role of the Yoruba political culture in the years following the independence of Nigeria is outside the purview of this study, indeed, that argument in itself has generated some interesting debates among historians and scholars that continue to this day. However, a quick summary would be helpful in

helping us understand the dynamics of politics and religion in this region, within this period.

In 1959, Samuel Akintola and Obafemi Awolowo both prominent members of the dominant political party in Nigeria at the time, Action Group (AG), had conflicting interests, which led Samuel Akintola to ally himself with Northern People's Congress (NPC) party, this move is often credited as the beginning of ethnic politics in Nigeria. This move made Akintola highly unpopular in his region and among his Yoruba brethren, he became so unpopular that he was nicknamed Judas, for betraying his tribe. Awolowo on the contrary was a very popular politician in Yorubaland, his universal basic education programme had endeared him to his people, but he was struggling to gain prominence in other regions of the country outside the southwest.

Akintola's perceived betrayal sealed Awolowo's fate as a regional politician that could not excel beyond being the premier of the western region²⁸⁹ and therefore, he could not realise his dream of becoming either the prime minister or the president, as Nigeria practiced mixed form federalism under a parliamentary system loosely modelled after the British system. Akintola's 'sins' was to lead to his death in 1966 as he was one of the 'traitors' murdered in the 1966 coup d'état²⁹⁰, by young officers in the military, mostly of Igbo extraction that were uncomfortable with the 'Northernisation' and poor governance of the country.

Subsequently, with the dominant trend in Yoruba politics, the politics of opposition had been diluted in a great way by the effects of intense factionalism within the political class, Yoruba opposition politics was subjected to manipulations by the Hausa Fulani political class. This was evident in the cancellation of the June twelve presidential elections won by a Yoruba politician Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola and serious repression by the Abacha regime between 1994 - 1998.²⁹¹

But the political organizations continued to provide Yoruba elites with the ability and flexibility to undertake the series of manoeuvres, resistances, and appropriations required to avoid and negotiate the constraints of domination within the Nigerian state as expressed in the formation of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC).²⁹² OPC was established as an ethnic pressure group, in response to the inadequacy of the

²⁸⁹ Ojo, E. O. (2016). The Awolowo–Akintola Leadership Tussle: A Reinterpretation. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5(1), 76-90.

²⁹⁰ Mordi, E. N. (2018). The Role of the Press in the Democratic Process: The Example of Nigeria's First Republic, 1960-1966. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 26(3).

²⁹¹ Haynes, J. (2003). Mobilising Yoruba popular culture: Babangida must go. *Africa*, 73(1), 77-87.

²⁹² Akinyele, R. T. (2001). Ethnic militancy and national stability in Nigeria: a case study of the Oodua People's Congress. *African Affairs*, 100(401), 623-640.

non-violent strategies and mechanisms (negotiations, litigations, and public denunciations) deployed by Yoruba political elites to oppose the government in power at the time.²⁹³

The formation of the Oodua People's Congress introduced for the first time, an organisation, comprised of youths, drawn from classes within various Yoruba societies into the top ranks of Yoruba politics and ensure that Yorubas demand greater levels of equity and access to power and resources in the nation as well as greater levels of autonomy in managing local affairs/resources, this quest for regional 'resource control'²⁹⁴ is still a dominant theme in Nigerian politics till this day.²⁹⁵

Though Yoruba opposition experienced a very low period during the Abacha regime. Its main demand during the period for 'true federalism' became the mantra of opposition forces nationwide immediately after the death of General Abacha in June 1998, thus pushing the Yoruba into the leadership of progressive opposition to the military regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar.²⁹⁶ The refusal of the Abubakar regime (1998 - 1999) to give in to the demands of opposition for cancellation of the Abacha instituted transition programme and installation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) and Sovereign National Government (SNC) to resolve the demands of true federalism pushed the opposition into a series of political tactics that resulted in the Yoruba producing the two presidential candidates at the elections and the prominent role Yoruba opposition were to play in the resulting fourth republic.²⁹⁷

The fact that the Yoruba had to be compensated for their loss of the presidency through the cancellation of the results of the June twelve presidential elections by the Ibrahim Babangida military government in 1993 meant that any party which hoped to win elections in Yorubaland and beyond had to present a Yoruba presidential candidate. The centrality of the Yoruba to electoral success was further reinforced by Afenifere's²⁹⁸ injunction to its members to join only those parties that canvassed for true federalism. The refusal of Afenifere to join parties that refused its

²⁹³ ibd

²⁹⁴ Ekeuwei, T. A., & Akpan, I. M. (2022). Fiscal Federalism and Resource Control in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance (AKSUJACOG), 2(1), 89-108.

²⁹⁵ ibid

²⁹⁶ Anegbode, J. E., & Igbafen, M. L. (2007). Ethnic militia violence in Nigeria: the case of the O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC). The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies, 32(2), 131.

²⁹⁷ OKWUCHUKWU, A. C. (2013). MILITARY RULE AND POLITICAL TRANSITION IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF ABACHA REGIME (1993-1998).

²⁹⁸ Afenifere is a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural ethnic group. See for instance,

claim had two major consequences for the politics of opposition during the Fourth Republic.²⁹⁹

First, it resulted in the formation of a basically regional political party, the Alliance for Democracy (A.D), which regrouped the majority of the supporters of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and progressives from other parts of the federation and were to be known as the vanguard of opposition in the fourth republic. Secondly, the demands of the Yoruba for true federalism and a Sovereign National Conference were unacceptable to northern politicians, as it would have led to a complete restructuring of the existing power structure in the Nigerian federation, a power structure that worked in their interest.³⁰⁰

But recognizing that to win they needed a Yoruba as their presidential candidate, the northern opponents of the Yoruba sought a candidate from the Yoruba ethnic group that would agree to the maintenance of the power status quo in return for occupying the seat of the president in the fourth republic.³⁰¹ Thus, two men from Yorubaland, Olu Falae for the AD/ANPP coalition and Olusegun Obasanjo for the Northern-dominated PDP produced as presidential candidates of the two major electoral coalitions.³⁰²

The vote of the Yoruba went to Olu Falae during the presidential elections as Olusegun Obasanjo was seen as the candidate of the northern oppressors of the Yoruba while Olusegun Obasanjo won the elections due to the support he received from other parts of the country. Though their candidate lost, the status of Yoruba opposition did not diminish as their party, the AD won all the states in Yorubaland and their allocation of seats at the national assembly.³⁰³

Though the ANPP was the second largest party in the country it is seen as having no credibility due to dominance by northerners within the party hierarchy. Furthermore, the internal dynamics of Yoruba politics also play a major positive role in the success of Yoruba opposition politics in the Fourth Republic.³⁰⁴ The acceptance by the Afenifere to adopt a position of agreement with the Abubakar regime through participation in its transition programme had great ramifications within the leadership of the OPC dominated by individuals drawn from lower political class.

²⁹⁹ Albert, I. O. (2010). When the State Kills: Political Assassinations in Abacha's Nigeria. *Encountering the Nigerian State*, 199-215.

³⁰⁰ Adenuga, G., Adenuga, A., & Oderinde, O. (2021). Intra-Party Conflicts and Party Stability in Nigeria: A Study of the Alliance for Democracy (AD). *Annals of Management and Organization Research*, 3(2), 141-151.

³⁰¹ *ibid*

³⁰² Olarinmoye, O. O. (2007). Yoruba politics 1999-2003. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 1(2), 20.

³⁰³ *ibid*

³⁰⁴ Cheri, L. (2014). National conference: Answering the Nigerian national question. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(5), 36-39.

The struggle within the OPC provided an interesting background to the activities of the Yoruba elites in Afenifere. The existence of the two factions did not in any way militate against their political calculations, rather it actually strengthened them as the existence of either a moderate or radical OPC sent a signal to Yoruba opponents that the status quo must change, and that the Yoruba had the capacity to effect it.³⁰⁵

The major reason for the Yoruba electoral success was further enhanced by the establishment of Afenifere.³⁰⁶ This group refused to join other political parties so that it can achieve the objective in which it was established. Its refusal resulted in the formation of a basically regional party, the Alliance for Democracy, A.D. which regrouped the majority of those that were loyal to chief Obafemi Awolowo who were also progressives from other parts of the federation and was to be (as mentioned earlier) recognized as the vanguard of opposition in then.³⁰⁷

The demands of the Yoruba for true federalism and a Sovereign National Conference proved unacceptable to northern politicians, as it would have led to a complete restructuring of the power structure in the Nigerian federation, a power structure that worked in their interest.³⁰⁸ But recognizing that to win they needed a Yoruba as their presidential candidate, the northern opponents of the Yoruba sought a candidate from the Yoruba ethnic group that would agree to the maintenance of the power status quo in return for occupying the seat of the president in the fourth republic, OPC attacks against the Hausa Fulani in Yorubaland concentrated on supporting, through use of violence, attempts by Yoruba traders, drivers, and stevedores to wrestle control of economic associations controlling markets, from the Hausa-Fulani.³⁰⁹

Subsequently, most OPC-Hausa/Fulani clashes centred on markets and major trading points in Yorubaland such as Sagamu, southern terminus for the kola nut trade,³¹⁰ Ketu/Mile 12 which is a major food market in Lagos, as well as Oko-Oba abattoir and Ajegunle food market also in Lagos. Others include Bodija market, which is a major food market in Ibadan, Oyo state.³¹¹ OPC actions against the Ijaw were directed at stopping the Ijaws from encroaching on the sources of natural

³⁰⁵ *ibid*

³⁰⁶ Abdulazeez, Y. (2013). O'odua People's Congress and the Changes in Nigeria's Political and Security Structures. *Social Movement Studies*, 12(2), 235-243.

³⁰⁷ *ibid*

³⁰⁸ Adams, G. (1999). The Yoruba, Nation and Self-Determination. In *Text of the Press Conference Addressed by the Oodua Peoples Congress on the 26th October*.

³⁰⁹ Olarinmoye, O. (2010). The subaltern encounters the state: OPC-state relations 1999–2003. *Encountering the Nigerian state*, 139-154.

³¹¹ *ibid*

resources in the region such as petroleum depot in Ilaje in Ondo state. Attempts were also made to eject the *Ijaws* from any other economic sites that they controlled in Yorubaland before May 1999, one of such sites was the Apapa Ports in Lagos.³¹² These ethnic tensions clearly show the fractured state of Nigerian federalism and highlights the weaknesses of many African states. Many western analysts, often due to unmitigated hubris, often summarise the challenges of African states with one word “corruption” but the reality is that the problem is structural as many African states do suffer from a great deal of institutional weaknesses occasioned by the origin of those state.

The OPC saw the *Ijaws* as economic opportunists who had exploited Yoruba hospitality and weakness due to state oppression between 1994 - 1998 to advance claims to resources in Yorubaland.³¹³ The OPC directed violence at the police because they saw them as oppressors and tools in the hands of the Hausa Fulani and hence legitimate targets to be contained in order to protect Yoruba interests.³¹⁴

The OPC views of the police were born out of their displeasure about how the police was used by the Abacha regime between 1994-1998 to repress Yoruba's agitations for the de-annulment of the June 12 presidential elections.³¹⁵ OPC action also focused on vigilante action against hoodlums on Yoruba territory who were seen as a threat to the peace and prosperity of Yoruba land and whose unchecked actions could lead to encroachment of the federal government in the form of an imposition of a state of emergency and suspension of Awoist controlled state governments in Yorubaland.³¹⁶

In sum, OPC violent actions involved the targeting of members of ethnic groups seen as either directly linked with what they constructed as the hated Hausa-Fulani oppressor state and identified as the Hausa Fulani residents in Yorubaland and the Police: or those they saw as having benefited from Yoruba political marginalization.³¹⁷ For the OPC, the *Ijaws* and hoodlums belonged in this category. On the other hand, the Afenifere deployed constitutional methods channelled through the actions of the six governors of the Southwestern states and their elected members of the National Assembly. Afenifere activities during the period under

³¹² *ibid*

³¹³ Ikelegbe, A. (2005). State, ethnic militias, and conflict in Nigeria. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 39(3), 490-516.

³¹⁴ *ibid*

³¹⁵ *ibid*

³¹⁶ *ibid*

³¹⁷ Ajala, A. S. (2006). Cultural Nationalism, Democratization, and Conflict in Yoruba Perspectives: Focus on O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in Nigerian Politics. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 4(2), 131-144.

review fell into three categories, the first focused on agitations for reforms in the federal structure of the state, the second on reforms in the Revenue Allocation Formula and the third on agitations for the abolition of the 2001 electoral bill.³¹⁸

The struggle for reform of federal structure was pursued through the medium of the Southern Governors Forum whose crucial meetings were hosted by governors of the Afenifere and Alliance for Democracy-controlled states.³¹⁹ During which the governors reached a consensus on the need for true federalism and by implication, fiscal federalism, Balanced Revenue Allocation, National Security, the National I.D Card Project, reforms of the Sharia Legal System, Universal Basic Education, UBE, Local Government under the federal constitution and Joint Economic Ventures.³²⁰

Afenifere/Alliance for Democracy-led demands for equitable distribution of revenue from the federation account pushed the federal government to institute a suit at the Supreme court where it sought to know: “who controls the resources accruing from the natural endowment at the nations offshore, FG or State government”. Astute use of the mass media to publicize policies of the government to which the National assembly was perceived to be hostile to.³²¹ Through such publicity, the executive was able to apply pressure on the National Assembly to pass such bills so as not to lose face with the public. For example, on the issues of the Niger-Delta Development Commission bill and the Anti-corruption bill on which the National Assembly proved hostile, the government took the matter to the court of public opinion through the mass media and was able to generate positive public support for the bills that forced the National Assembly to toe the government line.³²²

The actions of the President transformed the Obasanjo executive into the main opposition movement to the PDP-dominated National Legislature, even though Chief Obasanjo had been elected president on the platform of the PDP. The opposition activities carried out by the three different Yoruba opposition groups were carried out simultaneously at different levels, with the OPC operating at the local level, the Afenifere at the state and national assembly levels and the President at the national level.³²³ They were all united by a desire to end Yoruba marginalization vis-à-vis the north.

³¹⁸ Ajala, A. S. (2006). Cultural Nationalism, Democratization, and Conflict in Yoruba Perspectives: Focus on O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in Nigerian Politics. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 4(2), 131-144.

³¹⁹ Adejumobi, S. (2004). Civil society and federalism in Nigeria. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 14(2), 211-231.

³²⁰ Chi, E. V., & Phinos, N. A. Asaba Declaration: An Urgent Call by the Southern Governors to Fix Contemporary Nigeria.

³²¹ *ibid*

³²² *ibid*

³²³ REMI, E. (2004). Constitutional and Institutional Basis of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) in Nigeria. *Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria*, 25.

Though the goals of the different Yoruba opposition groups within Yoruba society were antagonistic, there was active collaboration between them. Thus, the OPC received support from Afenifere and governors of southwestern Nigeria in its clashes with the police and federal government.³²⁴

The Afenifere rejected the shoot-on-sight order to the police against the OPC claiming, that Afenifere portrayed the order as “presidential lynching” as it portrays Nigeria as an uncivilized polity with no rule of law, governed by men with a stone-age mentality.³²⁵ In the inception of the 4th republic³²⁶ in 1999, Afenifere sent a congratulatory message to President Obasanjo immediately after his swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29 1999.³²⁷

The message, signed by Mr Ayo Opadokun, secretary of Afenifere, emphasized the willingness to cooperate with the administration of President Obasanjo in order to assist him in taking the urgent and critical steps towards national restructuring and rebirth. The Fredrick Fasehun³²⁸ faction of the OPC in an article in some of the national newspapers described the impeachment moves of the national assembly as a plot, as nothing other than political treachery compared to the inglorious annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential polls results.

The desire of the various groups dominant within Yoruba politics, the Afenifere, the OPC and the Obasanjo groups to control the Yoruba politics pushed all of them into pursuing the Yoruba agenda of ending the group's marginalization in Nigeria's politics and end Hausa Fulani domination of the federation as only such a move could legitimize their claims to Yoruba leadership.³²⁹ Trouble in the house of Oduduwa: the decline of Yoruba politics 2000-2003 As pointed out earlier, Yoruba politics is characterized by intense factionalism.³³⁰ It is from the close interaction between the struggle for the political leadership of the Yoruba ethnic group and the intense fictionalisation of the dominant political grouping, the Awoists³³¹ that the explanation for the decline of Yoruba opposition politics emerges.³³² A renewed

³²⁴ *ibid*

³²⁵ Buhari, L. O. (2018). SEPERATISTS'AGITATIONS AND QUEST FOR STATE POLICE IN NIGERIA. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*.

³²⁶ Nigeria's 4th attempt at democratic rule. See also,

³²⁷ Mohammed, A. S. (2010). The masquerade unmasked: Obasanjo and the third-term debacle. *Governance and Politics in Post-Military Nigeria: Changes and Challenges*, 173-205.

³²⁸ Anegbode, J. E., & Igbafe, M. L. (2007). Ethnic militia violence in Nigeria: the case of the O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC). *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, 32(2), 131.

³²⁹ *ibid*

³³⁰ *ibid*

³³¹ A group of Mostly Yoruba Politicians that believe in the political philosophy of Obafemi Awolowo's Progressive political philosophy.

³³² *ibid*

season of fictionalisation within the Awoists core began early in 2000 over which group, Adesanya leader of Afenifere and Ige deputy leader of Afenifere would control the ethnic movement, Afenifere and the ethnic-based political party, the Alliance for Democracy.³³³

The disarray among the Awoists was aggravated by the reluctance of the state governors to take orders from the Adesanya group due to the perceived support the group was given to persons suspected of harbouring hostile intentions against the governors.³³⁴ The governors on their own part had increasingly lost favour with their citizens due to their non-performance in office and their corrupt activities.

The OPC saw its legitimacy reduced as its efforts were undermined by the Yoruba romance with and appropriation of *Olaju* (enlightenment), which is closely linked to *Iwe* (book or learning) as preconditions for the individual as well as communal advancement". It meant that while the majority of Yoruba agreed with their objective of revitalizing Yoruba identity, the manner in which they went about it (violence) soon became abhorrent and they quickly lost favour.³³⁵

Fearful of a possible loss in the 2003 elections due to a possible refusal of the Afenifere to support the OPC in light of public hostility and the successful implementation of the Yoruba agenda by the Obasanjo group at the federal level, the governors entered into a deal with Obasanjo which supposedly guaranteed their re-elections as governors (as the PDP would guarantee that it would not put forward candidates to challenge the governors) and gave the Yoruba vote for the presidency to Obasanjo.³³⁶ The Obasanjo group reneged on the agreement using its newfound status as a champion of Yoruba interest and federal control of armed forces, bureaucracy, and police to wrestle, and successfully control the western region from the Awoists.³³⁷

In a case instituted by the Afenifere-led opposition against the Electoral Bill in the early 2000s, the Supreme Court of Nigeria on March 28, 2002 clarified that the legislators confused their limitations with the provisions of the constitution.³³⁸ Thus, as a result of this, the electoral act as a whole is a mix-up causing confusion because the National Assembly seems to have treated its legislative powers with respect to

³³³ Olasupo, F. A. (2015). Impeachment at States' Level in Nigeria: Osun State as a Case Study. *Beijing L. Rev.*, 6, 28.

³³⁴ Ololade, O. O. (2007). Political elite in Nigeria: the Yoruba example. *The Constitution*, 7(3), 70-86.

³³⁵ *ibid*

³³⁶ Popoola, I. S. (2004). Culture, good government and democracy: A political communication commentary on the political behaviour of the Yoruba tribe in South-Western Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(2), 95-103.

³³⁷ Magbadelo, J. O. (2015). Yoruba Elites and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo and Corporate Agency. *African Studies Quarterly*, 15(4), 84.

³³⁸ Olarinmoye, O. O. (2007). Yoruba politics 1999-2003. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 1(2), 20.

federal elections as if the national assembly controls both federal and local electoral commissions which is not the case. Concerning the eligibility of governors who had previously been elected to the same post under elections annulled by the military to seek re-election, the court ruled that the National Assembly was incompetent to repeat in a law such things as qualification and disqualification of candidates for elections already provided in the constitution.³³⁹

Making provisions pertaining to local government elections are also not matters of procedure and so all the sections were judged incompetent and struck out.³⁴⁰ Obasanjo on his part used a mixture of force and constitutional manoeuvring to achieve the Yoruba agenda at the national level. His campaign focused on federal restructuring, and on creating a Nigerian federation not characterized by the domination of any ethnic group.³⁴¹ His task was most difficult as the means through which he sought to effect the desired changes in the Nigerian federation and create a more equitable Nigerian federation, the military, judiciary, executive, legislature, police, his political party, and PDP were all controlled by those who were the least disposed to allow such politics to emerge, the north.³⁴²

Obasanjo supporters claimed, he was a member of the systems, who understood how the system work, and so was the best person to create a new equitable federation favourable to the interest of the Yoruba.³⁴³ Through a series of sweeping reforms, Obasanjo transformed the Police, the Bureaucracy, the Armed forces, and the federal executive council into organizations that reflected the federal nature of Nigeria. He went on to attack the inequitable distribution of federal parastatals among the states of the federation and the attendant corruption that had fuelled domination of the federation institution by the Hausa-Fulani tribe.

The main opposition to Obasanjo's campaign for federal restructuring came from the legislature and so he deployed a series of moves to neutralize northern opposition in the National Assembly.³⁴⁴ For example, on the issues of the Niger-Delta Development Commission bill and the anti-corruption bill on which the National Assembly proved hostile, the government took the matter to the court of public opinion through the mass media and was able to generate positive public support for the bills that forced the National Assembly to toe the government line.³⁴⁵ The actions

³³⁹ *ibid*

³⁴⁰ *ibid*

³⁴¹ *ibid*

³⁴² Kraxberger, B. M. (2003). *Regional strategies and shifting boundaries: new state creation in Nigeria*. The University of Iowa.

³⁴³ Gillies, A. (2007). Obasanjo, the donor community, and reform implementation in Nigeria. *The Round Table*, 96(392), 569-586.

³⁴⁴ *ibid*

³⁴⁵ *ibid*

of the President transformed the Obasanjo executive into the main opposition movement to the PDP-dominated National Legislature, even though Chief Obasanjo had been elected president on the platform of the PDP. The opposition activities carried out by the three different Yoruba opposition groups were carried out simultaneously at different levels, with the OPC operating at the local level, the Afenifere at the state and national assembly levels and the President at the national level.³⁴⁶

They were all united by a desire to end Yoruba marginalization vis-à-vis the north. Though the goals of the different Yoruba opposition groups within Yoruba society were antagonistic, there was active collaboration between them.³⁴⁷ Thus, the OPC received support from Afenifere and governors of southwestern Nigeria in its clashes with the police and federal government. The Afenifere rejected the shoot-on-sight order to the police against the OPC.

They gave as reasons for their conclusion the following points, “At what point were these so-called OPC members trained in what appears like guerrilla warfare”, “Who is funding these hoodlums masquerading as OPC”, “Who is arming these groups with sophisticated weapons? On the other hand, Afenifere and OPC gave support to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in his struggle with Hausa Fulani legislators opposed to his federal restructuring campaign. For example, The Afenifere sent a congratulatory message to President Obasanjo immediately after his swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999. The message, signed by Mr Ayo Opadokun, secretary of Afenifere, emphasized the willingness to cooperate with the administration of President Obasanjo in order to assist him in taking the urgent and critical steps towards national restructuring and rebirth.

The Faseun faction of the Oodua People’s Congress (a Yoruba nationalist organisation) in an article in one of the Nigerian daily newspapers described the impeachment moves of the national assembly as nothing other than political perfidy, comparing it to the inglorious annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential elections where a Yoruba politician was denied the presidency after he legitimately won the presidential elections.³⁴⁸

The desire of the various groups within Yoruba politics such as Afenifere, OPC, and the Obasanjo groups to control the Yoruba politics pushed all of them into pursuing

³⁴⁶ Sklar, R. L., Onwudiwe, E., & Kew, D. (2006). Nigeria: completing Obasanjo's legacy. *Journal of democracy*, 17(3), 100-115.

³⁴⁷ *ibid*

³⁴⁸ Ojukwu, C., & Oluwole, O. E. (2016). June 12 saga and the re-visitation of Igbo-Yoruba Cold War in Nigeria. *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 5(2), 11-26.

the Yoruba agenda of ending the group's marginalization in Nigeria's politics and end the so-called Hausa/Fulani domination³⁴⁹ of the federation as only such a move could legitimize their claims to Yoruba leadership. Trouble in the house of Oduduwa: the decline of Yoruba politics 2000-2003 as pointed out earlier, Yoruba politics is characterized by intense factionalism. It is from the close interaction between the struggle for the political leadership of the Yoruba ethnic group and the intense fictionalisation of the dominant political grouping, the Awoists that the explanation for the decline of Yoruba opposition politics emerges.

2.3.0 THE BENIN ETHNIC GROUP (SOUTHERN NIGERIA)

The Benin empire is traced historically to the *Ogiso* era. The first Ogiso of the kingdom is widely believed to be called Igodo from which the name *Igodomigodo* (land of Igodo people) was formed. Hence the earliest history of the kingdom is often traced to the Ogiso era or the Igodomigodo era. However, what used to be called *Igodomigodo* is now called Benin in present-day Edo state in Nigeria.³⁵⁰ Historically, the Benin Empire was made up of small communities that were connected by geography and language. Unlike the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, namely Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, Benin is relatively in comparison. Despite its uniqueness in terms of size, the Benin kingdom was famous for its organisational structure and administrative efficiency.³⁵¹

The Benin kingdom also has access to the sea and is credited to have played host to the first Europeans (the Portuguese) to have arrived in what is now present-day Nigeria.³⁵² The Benin kingdom is also famous for its arts some of which were mostly looted during the British punitive expedition of 1897. The earliest European that had contact with the Benin kingdom called the administrative headquarter of the kingdom a 'city' comparable to its counterparts in Europe, notably Amsterdam.

The story of precolonial politics and religion in Nigeria would be incomplete without the story of the Benin Kingdom. The Benin Kingdom was also famous for its proud culture, philosophy, and religion.³⁵³ The sophisticated structure of the Benin kingdom still draws rest among scholars to this day.

³⁴⁹ Ugbem, E. C., Omobowale, A. O., & Akinpelu, O. O. (2019). Racial Politics and Hausa-Fulani Dominant Identity in Colonial and Post-colonial Northern Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 17(1), 87-102.

³⁵⁰ Ekeh, P. P. (2000). Contesting the History of Benin Kingdom.

³⁵¹ Edo, V. O. (2010). The Changing Phases of Power and Civil Administration in Benin Empire before Colonialism. *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*, 3(1), 5.

³⁵² *ibid*

³⁵³ *ibid*

The European intervention particularly the British push for colonialism and forceful administration, amalgamation and exploitation of the region which vastly deviated from the Portuguese model of mutual respect and diplomatic cross-cultural relationship, marked the end of the Benin empire. With the punitive expedition of 1897 being the final nail in the coffin.

The Ogois era is largely believed to have ended around the beginning of the 18th century making way for a more advanced and organised monarchical structure. With the head of the kingdom now called Oba. The first oba was Oba Ewuakpe, who historians claim ascended the throne around 1712.³⁵⁴

The Benin Empire practised a monarchical system with the following political structure: the *Oba* (King), the *Enogies* (village heads) and the *Ekhaevben* (chiefs or title holders) of different categories. The role of the Oba was to oversee the entire kingdom, at the district level and village level, the Oba was aided by the “*Enogie*” and the titled chiefs who had distinct functions or responsibilities allocated to them by the Oba who was the overall head in the empire.³⁵⁵ The officials in the political and administrative structure of the Benin Empire were the holders of titles known as “*Enogie*”.³⁵⁶ However, three major categories of titleholders that helped in the political administration of the empire were: *Uzama n’ihiron*, the *Eghaevbo n’ogbe* (palace chiefs) and the *Eghaevbo n’ore* (town chiefs).³⁵⁷

The Oba was both the head of the government and the head of the state in the empire during the pre-colonial era of the ancient Benin empire. Therefore, he played a triple role as the head of the judiciary, legislature, and executive arms of government. Power revolved around him as the head of the empire. However, the three main groups of titleholders or chiefs in the empire acted as checks on the authority and powers exercised by the Oba in various matters/issues within the empire.³⁵⁸

The most important political and non-political offices in the Benin empire are connected with the titles known as *Enogie*. The *Enogies* were organized into a complex system of grades and diverse ranks.³⁵⁹ The *Uzama*” titleholders in the

³⁵⁴ Edo, V. O. (2010). The Changing Phases of Power and Civil Administration in Benin Empire before Colonialism. *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*, 3(1), 5.

³⁵⁵ Osagie, J. I., & Ikponmwosa, F. (2015). Craft Guilds and the Sustenance of Pre-Colonial Benin Monarchy. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4(1), 1-17.

³⁵⁶ Osadola, O. S., Olofinsao, O. M., & Ajisafe, I. O. (2021). Fact or Mythology-Yoruba and Benin Historical Correlation. *Fact or mythology-Yoruba and Benin historical correlation*, 87(1), 12-12.

³⁵⁷ Maliphant, G. K., Rees, A. R., & Roese, P. M. (1976). Defence systems of the Benin empire: Uwan. *West African Journal of Archaeology*, 6, 121-130.

³⁵⁸ Edo, V. O. (2008). The Changing Phases of Power and Civil Administration in Benin: From Inception to 1987. *Nebula*, 5(1), 164-173.

³⁵⁹ *ibid*

empire were seven in number. They were the earliest and highest-ranked chiefs in the empire that also assisted the Oba in administering the empire. They performed political functions in the empire, but their main duty was the installation or the enthronement of a new Oba in the empire.³⁶⁰ The “*Ezomo*” who was also a member of the “*Uzama*” conducts war on behalf of the Oba in a crisis or war-like situations within or outside the kingdom.³⁶¹ This helped in providing protection to the Oba and enhancing his respect amongst the kings of various kingdoms within the African space because he doesn’t involve in war or warlike situations regularly thus, increasing the Oba’s values and worth.

2.3.1 PRECOLONIAL BENIN EMPIRE

The ancient Benin Empire is an empire that stands out amongst other kingdoms and empires in Africa due to its rich tradition, culture, politics, and religious heritage in pre-colonial Nigeria and indeed West Africa. The influence of the kingdom extended to Dahomey Basin which includes present day Benin republic.³⁶² It was known for its crafts of various shapes and designs which were the brainchild of its skilled and talented craftsmen. Traditional religion, politics and administration interplayed in the precolonial Benin Empire where religious beliefs, laws and values were interwoven into the political and administrative structure of the empire.

The empire which is popularly referred to as the “Benin kingdom” by many scholars today was located in the equatorial rain forest that is in today’s southern Nigeria. It has rich vegetation that promotes agriculture and raw materials for art and craft, particularly copper, brass, and ivory. This kingdom was one of the oldest kingdoms in West Africa.³⁶³ The precolonial Benin empire was also popular amongst other kingdoms in West Africa and had a very strong monarchical structure.

The popular monarch was fondly called “Oba Edo” (Oba of Benin) by his subjects. The kingdom was quite famous and had well established administrative structure. The Oba was not a despot he benefitted from the inputs of numerous chiefs and title holder that assisted in the management and administration of the kingdom. These chiefs comprised of palace chiefs who were known as “eghaevbo n’ogbe” and two other chiefs who were referred to as “egbaevbo n’ore”. The Benin empire was also

³⁶⁰ ibid

³⁶¹ Ojo, I., & Ekhaton, E. (1897). Precolonial Legal System in Africa: An Assessment of Indigenous Laws of Benin. *Idahosa Osagie Ojo and Eghosa O. Ekhaton, Precolonial Legal System in Africa: An Assessment of Indigenous Laws of Benin before*, 5(2020), 38-73.

³⁶²Ekeh, P. P. (2016). Benin, the Western Niger Delta, and the Development of the Atlantic World. *Umẹwāen: Journal of Benin and Edo Studies*, 1, 4-41.

³⁶³ Bradbury, R. E. (2018). The kingdom of Benin. In *West African kingdoms in the nineteenth century* (pp. 1-35). Routledge.

popular in the then Southern region due to the nature of its trade, crafts, culture, and other activities that made it unique during the pre-colonial era.³⁶⁴

The Benin kingdom had a lot of craftsmen who worked as blacksmiths, carpenters, and masons. Other forms of crafts that were popular in the kingdom at the time. These craftsmen in the Benin kingdom were so united that they formed associations known as “guilds” to protect their mutual interests. These craft guilds ‘out’ organized, fashioned, and sold their crafts in the kingdom with strict royal regulations and patronage.³⁶⁵ These craftsmen contributed to enhancing the well-being of the “Oba” and of the Benin Empire by ensuring that some of the specific needs of the “Oba” such as material needs were met in return for monopoly rights in their respective trades in the empire.³⁶⁶ Under the guild system, various artisans or professionals were encouraged to form associations which will enhance their monopoly rights to produce and market their products or crafts.

This enhanced trade and market regulation thereby guaranteeing patronage and high quality of products in the empire.³⁶⁷ The guild system during the pre-colonial era promoted the economy and enhanced the growth of the empire and made the monarch popular. There was a fusion of traditional religion and politics in the pre-colonial Benin empire. The religious laws of the empire were closely tied to the judicial laws making religious practices inseparable from the law of the empire.³⁶⁸

The deities, gods and goddesses played significant roles in providing penalties to offenders at various stages of offences committed against the gods of the land especially when the culprit is not known and cannot be determined by any means.³⁶⁹ For instance, the following gods and goddesses were responsible for certain levels of offences, “Ogun” took care of theft, ‘*Olokun*’ took care of land theft, dodgy magic, and fertility of the soil, “Ovia” took care of witchcraft, ‘*Okhuaihe*’ took care of diseases affecting both young and old as a consequence of the evil schemes of the wicked.³⁷⁰

In a situation where an individual commits an offence that has no “god” assigned to punish such offender, divination can be made to the “ancestors” to ascertain the actual punishment that will be given to the offender so as to serve as a deterrent to

³⁶⁴ ekine, g. V. Proximity and extremity—discourse on the linkage history of Ekpeye people from the Benin Empire.

³⁶⁵ Fagbayibo, B. (2021). Studying the past in present tense: international law in the Benin empire. *Politikon*, 48(3), 468-485.

³⁶⁶ Osagie, J. I., & Ikponmwoosa, F. (2015). Craft Guilds and the Sustenance of Pre-Colonial Benin Monarchy. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4(1), 1-17.

³⁶⁷ *ibid*

³⁶⁸ *ibid*

³⁶⁹ Dark, P. J. C. (1973). *An introduction to Benin art and technology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

³⁷⁰ *ibid*

any individual or persons that would want to commit such offence or offences and enable the offenders to make confessional statements either consciously or unconsciously.³⁷¹

Religion and politics were interconnected and interplayed in the Benin Empire during the pre-colonial era because the citizens were highly religious, and religion was part of the formation of the culture and government. Their religious practices also formed their belief system where achievements, successes and failures were given various forms of religious explanations. For instance, success in a war situation, a good harvest in a farming year, good health and others were seen as a product of the acceptance of different sacrifices offered to the gods of the empire while failures in wars, sicknesses, epidemics in communities, drought and any form of famine were either seen as consequences of an offence or offences committed in the society or the non-acceptance of sacrifice or sacrifices offered to the gods or goddesses of the land. It could also be interpreted to mean punishment by the forefathers or the ancestors.³⁷²

It was believed in the pre-colonial Benin empire that the worship of deities enables the effective leadership of the Oba and other chiefs in the land, as they use the influence of these deities to provide strong oversight on the land and their subjects. The religious practice in the empire also believed that the ancestors were particularly interested in the solidarity of the community thereby promoting peace and the administration of justice. The law itself was believed to have the moral backing of the ancestors which was a powerful tool that enhanced strict compliance.³⁷³

Those who were custodians of the laws of the empire were also seen as the representatives of the gods and ancestors. It was believed that they were highly impartial in their duty as the custodians of the laws and mouthpieces of the gods and the ancestors. The belief in the power of deities and ancestors by those in authority helped to regulate their actions and mode of operation irrespective of the power they had in the Benin Empire during the pre-colonial era. This belief also helped in the effective administration of the justice system in the pre-colonial Benin empire.³⁷⁴

In the pre-colonial Benin empire laws, rules and guidelines that were used in the political structure and administration had the backing of the deities, gods and

³⁷¹ *ibid*

³⁷² Afigbo, A. E. (1982). *Colonial Administration in Benin - Benin under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom 1897–1938*. By P. A. Igbafe. London: Longman, 1979. Pp. xvi 432. *The Journal of African History*, 23(1), 136–138.

³⁷³ *ibid*

³⁷⁴ *ibid*

goddesses worshipped in the empire thereby enhancing effective compliance with the subordinates' instructions given by those at the helms of affairs in the empire.³⁷⁵ This compliance by the subordinates or the indigene of the empire enhances smooth and effective political administration. Some priests were also incorporated into the political structure and administration of the empire. For instance, the priests known as 'Ohen' were held in very high esteem to the point that it was extended to their properties and places of dwelling, nobody could enter their sacred forests uninvited and anyone that ventured into the sacred forest would be punished and compelled to make some atonement.³⁷⁶

In general, mob justice was hardly ever practiced, this shows the advanced stage of the judicial system and the organizational skill of the leadership of the empire. Judicial cases often passed through hearings by the authorities charged with the responsibility of resolving disputes.³⁷⁷ This is a sharp contrast with the current situation in postcolonial Nigeria where there is little faith in the judicial system and frequent cases of mob violence.

There were regulations in the empire that recognized the societal status/social status of an individual. The social status and the economic status of an accused person or offender were also taken into consideration in a bid to punish the person for the offense committed. Since there was special attention and recognition of an individual's status in society both politically and economically, people worked very hard in ensuring that their status in society is high so as to enjoy some benefits that the lower class in the empire did not enjoy.

This means that a poor member of the society that is aggrieved by any form of injustice suffered at the hand of the powerful chiefs and such poor fellow would best be represented by a chief equally powerful to have any chance of obtaining substantial justice, this is akin to hiring a lawyer and having a legal representation. This also implies that family or compound issues/problems cannot be taken to the council of elders by a low-class personality but by the family head who has some level of societal recognition and is well respected amongst the elders in the council.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ Bradbury, R. E. (1959). Chronological problems in the study of Benin history. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 1(4), 263-287.

³⁷⁶ *ibid*

³⁷⁷ Fagbayibo, B. (2021). Studying the past in present tense: international law in the Benin empire. *Politikon*, 48(3), 468-485.

³⁷⁸ Bondarenko, D. M., & Roese, P. M. (2004). Between the Ogiso and Oba Dynasties: An Interpretation of Interregnum in the Benin Kingdom. *History in Africa*, 31, 103-115.

Also, a commoner and a highly respected member of society cannot be tried or punished in the same way for any given offense. The commoner, for instance, would be expected to kneel down when being tried for an offense such as sacrilege, while highly recognized and respected members of the society would not kneel down during their trial even for the same offense. Chiefs and highly ranked priests were exempted from kneeling down when they are up for a trial of any kind. Sometimes they are permitted to sit down before the Oba in his palace while their cases are heard and judged.³⁷⁹

Other high-profile individuals were given preferential treatment irrespective of the enormity or gravity of the offense that they committed. These individuals were members of the *Egbaevbo* or *Uzama* groups of titleholders whose positions are highly respected and regarded in the Benin empire, therefore, they cannot be treated as criminals or executed as criminals despite their offenses.³⁸⁰ In a situation where they are found guilty of offenses that are punishable by death, as a Benin man that was well respected in the Empire, they will be handed over to the public executioner for a dignified and sometimes secret execution. They seldom ever get executed like the commoner, this is done to respect the office they once occupied and not them as an individual. In some situations, the Oba could instruct the individual to leave his palace and commit suicide immediately as a punishment for the offense committed.

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2.3.2 THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE BENIN EMPIRE

The Benin Empire during the pre-colonial era practiced the law of primogeniture which helped to stabilize the empire to a great extent, especially during the period between the death of one Oba and the emergence of a new Oba.³⁸² This law has been in existence in the Benin Empire from the beginning of time and for as long as the monarchy has existed. However, it was strengthened by Oba Ewuare and Oba *Ewuakpe* in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively.³⁸³

Another aspect of the Benin Empire that enhanced its political administration and religious belief was the “Guild system”. The origin of the guild system in the empire dates back to the earliest rulers of the kingdom who were called *Ogisos* who were the rulers of the first dynasty in the empire before the current dynasty that came into

³⁷⁹ Dark, P. J. C. (1973). *An introduction to Benin art and technology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

³⁸⁰ AMENAGHAWON, F. Portrayal of British Expedition to Benin Kingdom in the Nollywood Film “Invasion 1897”.

³⁸¹ Egharevba, J. (1968). A short history of Benin, Ibadan. *Egharevba A Short History of Benin 1968*.

³⁸² Ojo, I., & Ekhaton, E. (1897). Precolonial Legal System in Africa: An Assessment of Indigenous Laws of Benin. *Idahosa Osagie Ojo and Eghosa O. Ekhaton, Precolonial Legal System in Africa: An Assessment of Indigenous Laws of Benin before*, 5(2020), 38-73.

³⁸³ *ibid*

existence in the 19th century.³⁸⁴ The guild system was an association of specialized craftsmen who were very skilled in their arts such as blacksmith, sculpture, ironwork, and so on. Some of these crafts have been in existence before the introduction of the monarchical system of leadership in the empire.³⁸⁵ The craftsmen were domiciled in different communities that existed before the *Ogiso* dynasties came into place in the empire.

The *Ogiso* dynasties were autonomous communities that were headed by the oldest man in the community called ‘*Odionwere*’ who was assisted by the village council that comprised the heads of various families in the village or communities while the craftsmen paid allegiance to the heads of the communities where they lived.³⁸⁶ However, before the ‘*Ogiso*’ system, the Benin Empire was made up of thirty autonomous communities/villages. This implies that there was no central government in the empire that all the indigenes in the various communities/villages paid allegiance. Inter-communal issues were resolved through a council then known as “*Iko-Odionwere*” whose meetings were occasional and were presided over by the most elderly male in the society often referred to as *Odionwere*.³⁸⁷

The foundation of the monarchical system of administration in the Benin Empire brought to bear the centralized system of administration that was alien to the indigenes of the empire thereby disorganizing the autonomous community system that was in place then. Consequently, various craftsmen in the then “autonomous communities” were not used to the centralized system of administration where they continued their allegiance to the then heads of the autonomous communities thereby disregarding the monarchical system that was in place.³⁸⁸ This was seen as an affront to the monarch because the community heads appear to still have some level of control over the indigenes of their communities thereby disregarding the power of the monarch (Oba).

To prove their allegiance to the monarch in the empire who is now the centralized and recognized head of the Benin empire, the guilds in the empire which was a body of craftsmen decided to make the monarch (the palace) their first point of their products supply thereby diminishing the power of the community/village heads and

³⁸⁴ *ibid*

³⁸⁵ *ibid*

³⁸⁶ Bondarenko, D. M., & Roese, P. M. (1998). *Pre-dynastic Edo: The independent local community government system and socio-political evolution*. *Ethnographisch-Archäologische-Zeitschrift*.

³⁸⁷ *ibid*

³⁸⁸ Agbontaen, K. A. (1997). An Assessment of Four Centuries (15th-19th) of Benin Art Production in Evaluating the Role of the Craft Guild System in Benin Polity. *African Study Monographs*, 18(1), 45-58.

ultimately enhancing and securing the recently established monarchical system of leadership in the empire.³⁸⁹

The support and provisions made to the monarch (Oba) by the craftsmen enhanced the socio-economic sphere of the Oba, the palace, and the kingdom. This is created as the major reason for the long survival of the monarchical system in the kingdom.³⁹⁰ For instance, the guilds of architects and sculptors sometimes can be mobilized to embark on various building projects in the palace or maintenance and painting of the palace wall or its environs. Similarly, the guild of blacksmiths always provided the iron materials that were needed and used in the palace while those in charge of bronze provided state-of-the-art materials that were used in beautifying the palace thereby giving the empire a facelift.³⁹¹

The Benin empire during the pre-colonial era was one of the strongest and most populous empires in sub-Saharan Africa.³⁹² It was known for its beautiful artwork which was made possible by its skilled and wonderfully talented craftsmen who were specialists in blacksmith, architecture, painting, and other crafts. The monarch who was known as the “Oba of Benin” was also popular due to the power he had and the loyalty he commanded among his subjects.

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³⁹⁰ work, g. T. (n.d) The British invasion of Benin and its aftermath.

³⁹¹ E.B. Eweka, Evolution of Benin Chieftaincy Titles,(Benin City:Uniben Press,1992), pp 1-9.

³⁹² Crow, B. (1983). Melodrama and the" political unconscious" in two African plays. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 14(3).

3.0 Chapter Three

3.0.1 THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS SALIENCE IN SOME SELECTED PUBLIC SECTORS IN NIGERIA

3.0.2 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Social science scholars often define civil service as the body of government bureaucrats who engage in civil operations, that are neither political nor judicial but mostly social and on behalf of the political class. In many countries, the term refers to employees that are selected and promoted on the basis of merit, although this is hardly the case in most developing countries such as Nigeria.³⁹³ Merriam-Webster defines civil service as the administrative service of a government body or international organization exclusive of the armed forces.

Others like Anazodo³⁹⁴ defined the civil service as the administrative bureaucracy occupying an important place in the political system of many nations. The civil service as a bureaucratic organisation defines work responsibilities very clearly with the aim of making everyone understand what is expected of them. This is important, as individuals might swerve off the expected standard of conduct, probably because of personal or exogenous reasons.³⁹⁵

Recruitment

Banjoko³⁹⁶ defined recruitment as the process of searching for or reaching out, and attracting personnel from the multitude of interested recruits from which the establishment can pick and choose those it considers appropriate or best qualified for the position. Recruitment and selection exercise deals with the search for qualified candidates suitable for the vacancy as indicated in the job specification.³⁹⁷

The recruitment exercise is a vital element of human resources involving identification and attracting qualified candidates to fill up vacancies in an organization with corresponding roles.³⁹⁸ According to Anitha & Kiruba,³⁹⁹ recruitment links job providers and job seekers. For the purpose of this work

³⁹³ Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American journal of social and management sciences*, 3(1), 17-29.

³⁹⁴ Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American journal of social and management sciences*, 3(1), 17-29.

³⁹⁵ Asifat, O. D., & Adisa, A. L. (2020). Influence of Religious Affiliation on the Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics in Osun State. *Ifè Social Sciences Review*, 28(1), 1-15.

³⁹⁶ Banjoko, S. A. (2002). *Human Resource Management: An Expository Approach*. Lagos: Pumarck Nigeria Ltd.

³⁹⁷ Iasisi, O. I., & Asa, K. J. (2020). Recruitment process: a catalyst for Employees' performance in the Nigerian Public Service. Empirical Evidence from the Lagos state internal revenue service.

³⁹⁸ Peretomode, V. F., & Peretomode, O. (2001). *Human resources management*. Lagos: O and O Publisher Ltd.

³⁹⁹ *ibid*

recruitment will be defined as the process of evaluating potential employees in a manner that ensures the best and well-suited candidates for the job roles are selected.

Recruitment takes place in two different sources which are internal and external. These sources of recruiting employees in an organization rest on the nature of the organization and its philosophy. Internal recruitment happens when employees who have already gained employment within an organisation seek to move from one job level to another within the same organisation. When employees are recruited into a new position internally, it promotes such employee morale and also increases their performance thereby boosting productivity.⁴⁰⁰ In the majority of organizations be it public or private, most external recruitment is used to bring in employees who will occupy the lower cadre which is the entry-level in most organizations.

Training

Training is the act of teaching another a particular set of skills and/or imparting some knowledge/Know-how to people. It may also refer to the teaching of a type of behaviour to be adopted by a person or people. It aims to improve and sharpen a person's capacity to execute various tasks with which the training was targeted, capability, and enhance the trainee's performance, and or productivity.

Promotion

Promotion is the upward movement of an employee within an organization. Put differently, promotion refers to the movement of an employee from one job role to a higher job role. It is usually accompanied by an increase in status, responsibilities and more often than not increase in salary/wage. Promotion may also be temporary or permanent.

Religion

The concept of religion has been variously defined by different scholars. Thus, there are many definitions of religion as there are scholars. Religion is a way of thinking and behaving that is shared by a community or organization. It helps to define and express the values, norms, ethics, and traditions of that community or organization. In other words, religion is a social institution that helps to define and express the values, norms, ethics, and traditions of a community or social organization.⁴⁰¹ Some other scholars are of the opinion that religion is as natural to humans as other

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid*

⁴⁰¹ Etim, N. A. A., & Thompson, D. (2021). Religious institutions and poverty reduction: Evidence from Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. *Journal La Sociale*, 2(6), 31-38.

important aspects of our lives, such as our emotions and our instincts.⁴⁰² Religion is often seen as the practices of faith that involve the relationship between humans and the sacred omnipotent.

Religion is also often referred to as an integral relationship between humans and divine beings. In other words, religion is man's relationship with the supernatural, which is to say that religion is a link between man and God. Religion, therefore, is the totality of a man's relation with whatever he deemed as his God. From a social point of view, some people believe in a religion, which is a system of beliefs and practices that they use to try to figure out the purpose of life.⁴⁰³ In the same vein, Smart⁴⁰⁴ defines religion as a set of practices that are associated with tradition and express or evoke social sentiments that are directed towards a divine or trans-divine focus. These sentiments may be explained by mythology, or they may be based on doctrines that have been passed down through tradition.

However, in the context of this paper, the most acceptable definition is that religion represents actions in human society which direct the culture, and traditions of society in such areas as administration, education (formal and informal), legal standards and economic institutions. The above definition depicts that there is an interplay between religion and society that shapes and influences every aspect of social institutions. In this regard, religion is the heart of society. It is safe to say therefore, that there is no record of any modern human society that does not have religious influence in its administration in one way or another. In the case of Nigeria, Umeanolue⁴⁰⁵ asserted that religion continues to play a pivotal role in every facet of the society. Nigeria's economic, social, and political institutions are greatly influenced by religious salience vis-à-vis the nature and style of governance, which results in a languorous and sultry electoral process characterised by deep rooted malfeasance and blatant rigging.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and diverse religious state. There are a lot of different religious groups in Nigeria. Some people are Muslims, some are Christians, and some follow traditional religions. The largest religious groups in Nigeria are Muslims, Christians, and members of traditional religions. Thus, there exist three dominant religious beliefs and practices. All these religions have different ways of

⁴⁰² Ottuh, P. O., & Onimhawa, J. A. (2020). A Critical Assessment of the Role of Religion towards Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria. *Pinisi Discretion Review*, 4(1), 21-32.

⁴⁰³ Ekarika, J. P. (1984). A Christian apologetics/2 The recognizability and criteriology of natural & supernatural religion: an introduction to the sociology of religion. *A Christian apologetics*.

⁴⁰⁴ Smart, N. (1973). *Phenomenon of religion*. Springer.

⁴⁰⁵ Umeanolue, I. L. (2019). Religious influences on politics in Nigeria: Implications for national development. *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 15(1), 139-157. (2019:139)

worship but believe in one supernatural being. In this regard, Ottuh & Onimhawo⁴⁰⁶ averred that "religions differ from one another in principles and practice, all religions have one area of convergence, that is, the belief in the supernatural. The God of religion is the God that is conceived differently by different religions. The God of religion is the worshipped being, the cosmic power that is designated by different names in different religions, cultures, beliefs, and languages. The God of religion is conceived by various religions as an anthropomorphic deity - a deity that is conceived in the image and likeness of man, having all human attributes".⁴⁰⁷

Nigeria is the country with the largest population in Africa with over 182 million people as of 2015 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). Though, there is no exact ratio, the population of Nigeria is almost equally divided between Christians who are mostly located in the south, and Muslims who are mostly found in the north. Thus, Christianity and Islam are the two main religions in the country, but there are also a lot of people who do not have religious affiliations and about 5% of Nigerians are nonreligious.⁴⁰⁸

Irrespective of the three main religions, Islam and the Christian faithful constitute the highest population in Nigeria. There are no current demographic statistics for Muslims and Christians. However, different groups estimate the population of Nigeria to be around 50 percent Muslim, 40 percent Christian, and 10 percent traditional indigenous beliefs.⁴⁰⁹ Generally, it is assumed that there are a lot of Muslims and Christians who practice their religions alongside traditional indigenous beliefs.

Religion is often linked with Nigeria's large ethnic diversity. Christians are mainly found in the south, while Muslims are mainly found in the north. There are also small communities of other religious beliefs, including Hindus, Buddhists.⁴¹⁰ There is also a large population in Nigeria that identify as Jews.⁴¹¹ Indigenous and traditional religious beliefs and leaders are a very important part of Nigerian culture, and they often overlap with beliefs from other traditions.

⁴⁰⁶ Ottuh, P. O., & Onimhawo, J. A. (2020). A Critical Assessment of the Role of Religion towards Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria. *Pinisi Discretion Review*, 4(1), 21-32. (2020:23)

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid* (2020:23)

⁴⁰⁸ Sampson, I. T. (2014). Religion and the Nigerian State: Situating the de facto and de jure Frontiers of State–Religion Relations and its Implications for National Security. *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, 3(2), 311-339.

⁴⁰⁹ Hsu, B., Reynolds, A., Hackett, C., & Gibbon, J. (2008). Estimating the religious composition of all nations: an empirical assessment of the world Christian database. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 47(4), 678-693.

⁴¹⁰ Dike, V. E. (2005). Corruption in Nigeria: A new paradigm for effective control. *Africa economic analysis*, 24(08), 1-22.

⁴¹¹ Afsai, S. (2016). Nigeria's Igbo Jews: Jewish identity and practice in Abuja. *Anthropology Today*, 32(2), 14-17.

Thus, Nigeria is made up of many different ethnic groups, and each group has a different religion. The Hausa people in the north are mostly Muslim, the Yoruba people in the west are mostly Christian and the Igbos in the east and the Ijaw people in the south are mostly Christian, but there are a few Muslims in the North are predominantly Muslim, but there are also significant Christian communities there. Christians and Muslims live in equal numbers in the Middle Belt, which includes the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Christians are also prevalent in the southwest, where the Yoruba ethnic group predominates. In the east, where the Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Christians are the majority, and many Igbos also observe traditional rites and ceremonies in tandem with Christianity. Christianity first arrived in Nigeria through the western part of the country, and it was spread by European missionaries. Islam originated in the north of the country.

It should be noted that Christianity first reached Nigeria through the western zone, and it spread through European missionaries. Islam arrived in Nigeria through the north, and it has its roots in Arabia. The two main religions that are practiced in Nigeria were spread differently. Christianity was spread through preaching, convincing people, and getting them to believe in it. Islam was spread through Jihad, which means using force to spread the religion. Usman Dan Fodio conquered Gobir and made it a Muslim Sokoto Caliphate⁴¹² in 1804. By 1808, Islam had taken over many other towns and villages, including Kano, Kano, Nupe, and Ilorin.⁴¹³

3.0.3 RELIGIOUS SALIENCE IN NIGERIA'S CIVIL SERVICE

The constitution of Nigeria has indicated that Nigeria is a secular state since independence in 1960. The word 'secular' comes from the Latin word 'secularism', which means 'of or relating to worldly things'. It means that religion should have no part in government and civil laws should have nothing to do with religion. This is called a secular state Umeanolue.⁴¹⁴ This means that the government cannot decide which religion to follow and must not make religion a central part of its activities. This is stated in section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, "the government of the federation shall not adopt any religion as State Religion".

⁴¹² Okene, A. A., & Ahmad, S. B. (2011). Ibn Khaldun, Cyclical Theory and the Rise and Fall of Sokoto Caliphate, Nigeria West Africa. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(4).

⁴¹³ *ibid*

⁴¹⁴ Umeanolue, I. L. (2022). Religious differences and intermarriage in Ruth: lessons for Nigerian Christians. *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 14(1), 131-149. (2020:142)

On the other hand, Nigeria's constitution guarantees everyone the right to practice their religion freely. This was clearly stated in section 38 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as thus every citizen has a right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Again subsections 1 and 2 stipulated as follows:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This includes the right to change your religion or belief and to practice your religion or belief in public or in private.
2. No child attending school will have to attend religious instruction or participate in religious ceremonies or observances if the instruction, ceremony, or observance is about a different religion than their own or a religion not approved by their parents or guardian.,

The constitutional provisions as stated above have shown that religion is a private affair and every citizen has the right to choose, profess and practice any religion of choice. Contrary to practice, religion is a potent issue and has been politicized especially by political leaders to swell the interests of their religious faith. Currently, religious affiliation plays a critical role in shaping and sharing political power and power dynamics in Nigeria.⁴¹⁵ Consequently, belonging to a religious group affects how people in Nigeria feel about their power and how they interact with others. Some Christians and Muslims feel that they are being threatened by the growth of the other group, so they are often very protective of their own beliefs and interests.

Recently, Nigeria has become one of the most religious countries in the world. As the number of churches and mosques in the country continues to increase, and the population of worshipers doubles, so too does the number of Muslims and followers of Islam. Some people have argued that Nigeria has become the number one country in the world when it comes to the number of people who practice religion.⁴¹⁶ Religion is now a big part of Nigerian life, and it helps many people feel connected to their country. Since the country is now more open to different religious beliefs, different groups of people are coming here to practice their beliefs.

Some people believe that religion can help people feel connected and provide them with a sense of purpose. Others think that religions can help people get food and shelter if they need it. Religion is now regarded as a source of succour to the various

⁴¹⁵ *ibid*

⁴¹⁶ Falana, F. (2010). Religion and Political Reforms in Nigeria. *Being the text of the public lecture delivered at the 51st birthday anniversary of Rt. Rev Alfred Adewale Martins, Catholic Bishop of Abeokuta, Ogun State on Saturday June, 5, 2015.*

challenges confronting the citizens. However, at different times, political leaders used their religious beliefs to influence the government in a major way. For example, Sharia law was made the legal system and Nigeria joined the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) among other things.⁴¹⁷

Nigeria is a country made up of many different ethnic groups and religions. Even though the southern part of the country is mostly populated by people from the Christian Igbo/Yoruba ethnic group, the north is mostly populated by people from the Muslim Hausa/Fulani ethnic group. This religious diversity has led to a lot of tension and conflict throughout Nigeria's history.⁴¹⁸ The decision of politicians to use religious differences to gain power is happening more and more in the fourth republic and this is causing a lot of religious turmoil. To avoid this problem, it is becoming clearer and clearer how religion and politics should be separated.⁴¹⁹

Since President Buhari assumed office in 2015, there has been a big divide between Christians and Muslims in the country. This is because the Fulani herders, who are Muslims, have been causing a lot of trouble and killing people with impunity throughout the country. This has given religious leaders a chance to use politics to influence each other, and religion is becoming more important in shaping the power struggle in the country. There is a lot of concern right now about the killings by Fulani herdsmen all over the country. The government is trying to solve the problem by setting up cattle colonies, but some religious leaders don't like it because they think it's a way to make Islam more dominant in the country. This shows just how complicated and sensitive issues like religion can be when politicians try to use them for their gain.⁴²⁰

The rising killing spree of Fulani herdsmen has brought the issue of religion into the spotlight again. Some people think the federal government is trying to make Islam the official religion of the country by setting up cattle colonies. But many Christian leaders oppose this idea and see it as a way to push their religion on everyone. This

⁴¹⁷ Akah, J. N. (2018). Religion and Ethnicity: The need for national integration in Nigeria. *African Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(1), 12-23.

⁴¹⁹ *ibid*

⁴²⁰ Jelil, A., Sunday, O., & Rufus, A. (2018). Corporate board ethno-religious diversity and performance of quoted manufacturing companies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Accounting & Finance*, 7(2), 56-72.

shows how religion can get politicized in our country.⁴²¹ Islam is a religion that believes in one God. Muslims believe that Islam is the only true way to worship God, and they oppose secularity, which is a principle allowed in many countries with a variety of religious beliefs.

Ayantayo⁴²² pointed out that Islam's opposition to secularity has threatened the stability and development of Nigeria. For example, some decisions like the elevation of Sharia law to the Nigerian legal and political system and the issue of Nigeria joining the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) have angered religious people in Nigeria, especially Christians.⁴²³ Boko Haram insurgents have resorted to violence to achieve their goals on a wider scale, including with Muslims and Nigerian populations as a whole.

The current socio-economic situation in Nigeria is a sign of the many different religious beliefs present in the country. Nigeria is a big country with a lot of different people. Some of them are feeling a lot of anxiety because of all the problems they're facing. This anxiety is driving people to look for religious help. Religious groups are a big part of Nigerian society, and they play a big role in people's lives.⁴²⁴ Nigeria is a country with many different ethnic groups, cultures, and religions. There are three main religious groups in Nigeria - Christians, Muslims, and traditional religions.⁴²⁵ Traditional religions are the least politically active of the three groups. There are hundreds of different ethnic groups and sub-groups, villages, clans, and kin groups, and each religion involves the worship of different gods and goddesses.⁴²⁶ Religion has often helped to build nations, but its positive impact on Nigerian democracy has been relatively small. Some religious leaders have used their positions to benefit themselves, and greed has taken hold in some religious circles. This has led to problems where some religious leaders support corrupt rulers to get rich.⁴²⁷

⁴²¹ Jelil, A., Sunday, O., & Rufus, A. (2018). Corporate board ethno-religious diversity and performance of quoted manufacturing companies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Accounting & Finance*, 7(2), 56-72.

⁴²² Ayantayo, J. K. (2018). *Rescuing god from his abductors*. Ibadan University Press.

⁴²³ Rufus, A. Politicization of Religion in Nigeria: the Ills of the Politics of god Seekers.

⁴²⁴ Omilusi, M. (2018). PROBING THE DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPY IN NIGERIA: RELIGION AS A REFUGE?. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Africanos*, 3(5).

⁴²⁵ ibid

⁴²⁶ Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A history of identities, violence and stability in Nigeria* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford.

⁴²⁷ Falana, F. (2010). Religion and Political Reforms in Nigeria. *Being the text of the public lecture delivered at the 51st birthday anniversary of Rt. Rev Alfred Adewale Martins, Catholic Bishop of Abeokuta, Ogun State on Saturday June, 5, 2015.*

The core principles that many religions are based on include the truth, doing what is right, and caring for others. Thus, religion is based on principles like truth, morality, and love, and on the idea that we all need to work together.⁴²⁸ Religion can play a helpful role in promoting sustainable development because it helps people to find meaning in their lives and to connect with the larger universe. In other words, religion can play a role in helping to promote sustainable development because it is focused on the things that are important to people on a deep level, such as their social, cultural, and personal lives. In doing so, it can provide a sense of purpose and meaning to people's lives. Despite the claims made by many religious leaders and believers, the practice of religion in Nigeria does not always reflect the values and beliefs associated with it. This is an interesting topic for political scientists who study the way different political systems and cultures interact with each other.⁴²⁹

Religion plays significant roles in many dimensions of the nation where individuals with the same belief system have the likely ability to favour themselves as a way of promoting love and enhancing brotherhood.⁴³⁰ This is also obtainable in the recruitment process into various agencies, ministries, and parastatals of government. Recruitment was done by the Nigerian immigration service in 2011 under the administration of Mrs Rose Chinyere Uzoma as the Controller General of the service then. The recruitment was bedevilled by a lot of issues, recruitment procedures were not adequately observed. Some of the issues witnessed were the recruitment of more persons from the eastern part of Nigeria, a high level of interference by the elites in Nigeria, financial inducement for applicants' names to be enlisted, more Christian applicants being shortlisted and undue exploitation of the applicants.

Ezenna⁴³¹ averred that the reason for these issues can be traced to the fact that the controller general was an indigene of Abia state which is a state in the Eastern part of Nigeria where more easterners were recruited than those from other geo-political zones in the contrary, undue considerations were also given to elites from the Eastern part of Nigeria. Some of these elites were political heavyweights, business Moguls and other respected aristocrats from the Eastern region that had so much influence in the region. Part of the issues that mired the recruitment process was the exploitation of applicants where they were to pay a specific amount for those that

⁴²⁸ ibid

⁴²⁹ Ijabla, R. (2015). The Destructive Effects Of Religion On The Nigerian Society. *Sahara Reporters*.

⁴³⁰ Utsua, T. P., Habila, A., & Babale, Y. K. (2023). Ethical Evaluation of Impact of Insecurity on Nigeria Immigration Services and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 10(1), 315-327.

⁴³¹ Ezenna, B. (2012). Civil Service recruitment in Nigeria: Nigerian Immigration Service in Perspective. *Journal of Politics*, 2(3), 68 – 88.

have been recruited into the service. This recruitment process was also one-sided in that more quota was given to those of the Christian faith than those of the Moslem thereby resulting in an out-cry by those of the Moslem faith due to the imbalance in the recruitment process.

Similarly, Ugochukwu⁴³² argues that the reason for the recruitment of more easterners into the service could be traced to the fact that the then Controller General was an easterner. The inclusion of individuals from the Christian faith could also be linked to the fact that the Controller General was a Christian thus, the recruitment process was seen as an avenue to help the individuals that shared the same belief system with her thereby negating the federal character principle and not complying to the due processes expected of an effective recruitment process.

However, the recruitment was nullified by the federal government through its Ministry of Interior head by its Minister, Mr Abba Moro thereby resulting in the immediate sack of the controller-general whom she was asked to resign from her office due to gross abuse of the office and negating the federal character principles that guides the recruitment process into the civil service in Nigeria.

The religious background of the controller-general greatly influenced the recruitment of individuals into the service where more candidates from a particular religion were recruited. Religion, therefore, created a huge gap in the recruitment process, political affiliation also played a significant role in the recruitment process where individuals that are loyal to a particular politician or political heavyweight were compensated by recruiting them into the service due to the influence of their political “Godfathers” and mentors.

In another recruited conducted by the Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS) now known as Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) in 2017 under the administration of Ja’faru Ahmed the then Controller-General of the Nigerian Prisons Service. It was reported that the recruitment was not properly done, and a lot of irregularities were observed during the recruitment exercise.

Abdullahi⁴³³ showed the irregularities that marred this recruitment exercise were; the recruitment of more northerners especially those from Kebbi State which is the Controller-General’s State of origin as a way of gaining relevance, honour,

⁴³² Ugochukwu, S. A. (2012). Issues of recruitment in Nigerian civil service. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*, 4(6), 50-61.

⁴³³ Abdullahi, K. (2019). Recruitment dimensions into the Federal Civil Service in Nigeria: Issues and dimensions. *African Journal of Arts and Culture*, 2(3), 61-64.

recognition and respect before the elites and traditional rulers in the state, recruitment of party loyalists and party loyalist through different politician (Ministers, local government chairmen, senators, governors, past and present president, former ministers, local government chairmen, senators, members of House of Representative, Governors, and Councillors), the emergence of various lists with the names of preferred candidates written in it and the non-adherence to federal character principle in the recruitment process.

It was observed that most individuals that were recruited in the service during the recruitment exercise were either “party boys, girls, women or men” who have significantly contributed to the growth of their party or were recruited as a mark of reward by their political parties for being active members of the party for a couple of years while some were recruited based on their religious background and as a reward of their faithfulness and commitment to a particular religion as a mark of honour and appreciation. Some persons were also denied recruitment into the service because of their party affiliation where they are not members of the political party in power that appointed the controller-general of the service.⁴³⁴

The recruitment exercise also witnesses a lot of lopsided activities that were repugnant to the due process modalities expected of a proper recruitment process in any Federal government parastatal, ministry, or Agency. A situation where 50 percent of those recruited were from a particular geo-political zone while 50 percent was from other geopolitical zones thereby leading to an imbalance in the recruitment process because a particular geo-political zone was more favoured above the other geo-political zones.

This in turn makes the other geo-political zones feel cheated, marginalized and secluded in a recruitment exercise that was supposed to be evenly shared/distributed amongst all geo-political zones to promote unity, a high level of inclusiveness and unity amongst the zones.⁴³⁵ The Non-observance of the federal character principle, due to the biases in terms of religious sentiment and political affiliation made a lot of persons lose confidence in the recruitment processes into the service because the 2017 recruitment was used to favour individuals that have alignment with a particular against those who are not in alignment with such religious belief which ought not to be so. it was also used to favour or compensate individuals that shared

⁴³⁴ Azura, O. (2020). Political issues and religious issue on recruitment exercises. *Nigerian Journal of Economics and reading*, 4(5), 71-74.

⁴³⁵ Aisha, B. N. (2019). The federal character proceedings in recruitment activities I n Nigeria. *Journal of communication*, 3(5), 51-55

the same political ideology and are affiliated with a particular political party as against those who do not have any affiliation with such a political party.⁴³⁶

Another recruitment exercise conducted by Nigerian Prisons Service now Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) in 2015 which was regarded as Nigerian Prisons Service recruitment 2015/2016 under the administration of its Controller-General Peter Ezenwa Ekpendu,⁴³⁷ was done with the intention of engaging more individuals into the service to replace those that have retired and those that are dead and also engage more individuals so as to increase the workforce in the service but the recruitment process was faced with a lot of malpractices which should not be a part of the recruitment process.

Ugwu⁴³⁸ opined that the recruitment exercise conducted by the service in 2016 faced a lot of religious and political interference. These were obvious in situations where more Easterners were recruited into the service, more individuals from a particular religion were recruited, the merit level was very low (Below 10 percent), and individuals that has a close link with a particular political party either directly or indirectly were recruited into the service at the detriment of those that had no link either directly or indirectly with the political party in power that has the capacity to reward its party faithful. It was also very obvious to the applicants and the general public at large that individuals that have close links or connections to a particular religion were recruited against those that do not share the same belief (religiously with the others who were considered on this ground (religious ground)). This was probably done as a reward, compensation, or favour for having a particular religious belief or sharing a particular political concept, or belief ideology with those at the helm of affairs.

It was also observed that a lot of Easterners were considered in the recruitment process due to the closeness or relationship with the person at the helm of the affair in the service (Nigerian Prisons Service) who happens to be an Easterner.⁴³⁹ This singular act was done as a way of favouring applicants from the Eastern region due to the presence of their brother at the top of the service. This resulted in disaffection amongst the applicants that met all the requirements needed for them to be recruited

⁴³⁶ Aminah, N. (2018). Party System and recruitment exercises in Nigeria. *Journal reading and ethics*, 4(6), 61-66

⁴³⁷ Ugwu, W. S. (2018). Political and religious issues in recruitment: The Nigerian Perspective. *Journal of Religious Studies*, 2(3), 40-46.

⁴³⁸ ibid

⁴³⁹ Salisu, A. M. (2018). Party affiliation and individual recruitment into Nigerian civil service. *Journal of Practical Studies*, 4(5), 71-74.

into the service during the recruitment exercise but were denied the opportunity and privilege of being recruited into the service due to their individual states of origin and geo-political zone.⁴⁴⁰

It was also observed that more individuals from a religious group were recruited at the detriment of other applicants that are duly qualified for specific positions in the service but belong to another religious group whose belief is not in tandem with the beliefs of the members of the religious group in power thereby keeping them at a disadvantaged position (that shouldn't be) hence resulting to their non-inclusion in the recruitment process.⁴⁴¹ The non-inclusion of these individuals due to religious belief and affiliation breeds anger, disaffection, and hatred in them due to the unjust removal from the recruitment process, hence resulting in hatred for those that don't share the same religious belief with them then resulting to disunity on religious ground.⁴⁴²

In a recruitment exercise conducted by the Nigerian customs service (NCS) in 2016 under the administration of Jacob Gyang Buba as the controller general of the service then. In the view of Chukwuma,⁴⁴³ the recruitment exercise was intended to bring in more persons with experiences in their professions so as grow the various departments in the service for maximum service delivery and quality, but the recruitment process was hijacked by political juggernauts, sacred cows, money bags and religious heads. This was evident in the way individuals/applicants were recruited. A situation where slots were given to various politicians such as Governors, Ministers, Special Advisors, Senior Special Advisers, Personal Assistants, Local Government Chairmen, councillors, Senators, members of the House of Representatives, members of State houses of assembly, the presidency religious leaders, and traditional leaders.⁴⁴⁴

Various lists were compiled ranging from presidential lists which had the preferred candidates from the presidency, senators, members of the house representatives, special advisers, special assistants, governors, and other top government functionaries (both past and present). It is worthy of note that some traditional rulers

⁴⁴⁰ ibid

⁴⁴¹ Ego, M. P. (2019). Irregularities in recruitments processes: As perceived by Nigerians. *Nigerian Journal of Politics and Economics*, 3(5), 62-68.

⁴⁴² Akwa, O. (2019). Religious dimensions to recruitment in Nigeria. *Journal of Arts*, 2(3), 62 – 70.

⁴⁴³ Chukwuma, T. (2008). Conceptual issues in recruitment exercises in Nigeria. *Journal of politics and culture*, 4(6), 52-55.

⁴⁴⁴ Teni, C. (2007). Issues with recruitment into Nigerian Civil Service: Political and religious issues. *Journal of readings*, 3(4), 41-50.

and religious leaders were also given consideration in the compilation of these lists. Individuals whose names are captured in these lists are either related to these top government functionaries or are members of their political party at various levels and capacities.

These lists were not prepared on the ground of merit but on the platform of political affiliation and membership in the religious association. Those who are politically affiliated with political gladiators at various levels of politics either at the local, state, or federal levels didn't have the opportunity of being shortlisted during the recruitment process into the service and those who didn't share the same religious ideology were not given the privilege of being shortlisted.⁴⁴⁵ In this recruitment process, merit and qualification were trashed in the waste bin while party membership, political affiliation and religious belief and sentiment were promoted over merit thus side-lining integrity and promoting mediocrity over integrity because most of the individuals shortlisted may not be very efficient and effective as those who were not shortlisted due to non-affiliation to politics or party system and certain religious belief system⁴⁴⁶

The religious sentiment was also displayed in this recruitment process. According to Ogo,⁴⁴⁷ it was observed that so many applicants that share the same religious belief as the controller-general were recruited into the service. There is a possibility that this was done as a way of showing respect to the religious leaders whose lists were forwarded and their preferred candidates were shortlisted and recruited and individuals from the region where the controller-general hails from outnumbered the number of individuals that were recruited.

The reason for this is not far-fetched because every individual would want to favour the people from his/her region as a way of winning their heart and drawing their attention to himself/herself. This opposes the principle of federal character in any recruitment exercise into the federal civil service because it does not promote the due process format and the engagement of individuals from various states of the federation so as to promote equity and fairness in the recruitment process.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ Rukayat, B. (2009). Perceived influence of politics on recruitment exercises in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Affairs*, 3(6), 77-80.

⁴⁴⁶ Kafaya, O. N. (2010). Political sentiments and recruitment exercises in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Practice*, 4(6), 64-69.

⁴⁴⁷ Ogo, N. M. (2010). Influence of religious belief system on recruitment activities in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Science*, 4(8), 62-66.

⁴⁴⁸ Egwu, T. (2009). The role of Federal Character Principle in promoting equity and fairness in recruitment exercises. *Journal of Economics and statistics*, 6(8), 64-66.

In a 2002 recruitment exercise into the Nigerian Customs Service, Ugonna⁴⁴⁹ observed that the recruitment process was highly compromised, a situation where the position advertised has been given out as slots to various politicians (presidency, National Assembly members etc), and members of a particular religion. It was also observed that most of the applicants recruited were from the northern part of the country. a situation where 60% of the recruits are from the north while the eastern, western, and southern parts of Nigeria had the 40% of the individuals recruited.

This could be traced to the fact that the controller-general of the service is from the north hence special considerations were given to the northern part of the country. It was also observed that religious sentiment also played out in the recruitment process where more Muslims were recruited into the Nigerian customs service than their Christian counterparts in the country.

The names shortlisted for training where more Moslem names were shortlisted, and a few Christian names were on the list that was published. This is a clear indication that religious affiliation and religious sentiment played a major role in the recruitment process.⁴⁵⁰ During this recruitment exercise, individuals in the helms of affairs that have strongholds and influence in their political parties were given opportunities to send the names of their candidates and their preferred positions for their candidates in the service. Some of these individuals are the financiers of their political parties while some hold special positions in their political parties as a way of showing appreciation or a high level of gratitude to them, they were asked to compile a list of their party loyalists that are not employed in any ministry, agency, department and parastatal of government as a way of rewarding them for being loyal, committed and faithful to the party for a period of time and encouraging them to do more for the party.⁴⁵¹

It has also been observed that the head of the service (controller-general) is given specific instructions on what to do in the recruitment process in terms of the number of applicants to employ from a particular geographical zone and the number to give to some individuals who are often referred to as “political sacred cows” whose slots cannot be touched or tampered with in the recruitment process.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Ugonna, O. (2022). Issues of Civil Service recruitment in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Arts*, 6(7), 66-69

⁴⁵⁰ Adebajo, P. (2022). Nigerian Civil Service recruitment issues and challenges. *Journal of Economics and Statistics*, 15(17), 69-75.

⁴⁵¹ ibid

⁴⁵² Adetunji, B. (2022). Influence of Politics on recruitment exercises in Nigerian states. *Journal of Economics*, 3(6), 64-69.

The head of the service did not determine the number of applicants to be given a slot to these individuals hence they were at liberty to choose the number of individuals to be employed in the service even beyond the slots assigned to them thereby affecting the number of persons that were supposed to be recruited meritoriously into the service.

It was also observed that some individuals who were either friend to those in power or close to the corridors were also given the opportunity to bring in some names for employment thereby making a mockery of the entire process because most persons were not employed or came into the service from the “Back door” then following the rightful recruitment process that creates a level playing ground for everyone to showcase the stuff that he/she is made as a test and qualification for the position or job placement sought in the service.⁴⁵³ A recruitment exercise was conducted by Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 2021 under the administration of its group management director Mele Kyari. It was observed that the recruitment process was marred by a lot of issues which qualified the recruitment process as an unfair process.⁴⁵⁴

Furthermore, Adeniyi⁴⁵⁵ the recruitment conducted by Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in 2021 was bedevilled by a lot of recruitment malpractices which are not supposed to be found in a mature, ideal, and proper recruitment process. These malpractices and wrong practices range from the shortlisting of candidates for a particular job placement based on the recommendation of certain individuals that are often referred to as the powers that be or the kingmakers in society.

These individuals are usually consulted when recruitment or job placement exercises are conducted without which the recruitment process cannot commence. It was observed that 65% of the applicants recruited into the corporation were from the northern part of Nigeria this is traceable to the fact that the group managing director of the corporation Mr Mele Kiyari is from the northern part of the country, Maiduguri, this resulted in the inclusion and shortlisting of more northerners into the

⁴⁵³ Oge, S. N. (2021). The role of merit on effective and efficient recruitment exercise into public service. *Journal personality studies and influence*, 3(6), 69 – 71.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵⁵ Adeniyi, O. O. (2021). Issues of recruitment into Nigerian Civil service: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in Perspective. *Journal of Public issues and affairs*, 2(3), 71-74.

corporation against that of other applicants that applied for the same job from other zones.⁴⁵⁶

This, in turn, made the recruitment process to be highly lopsided and not fit to be called a proper recruitment process because the due process in terms of fair and equal treatment of applicants from the Western, Eastern and Southern parts of the country was not treated equally in that only 35%⁴⁵⁷ of those that applied were taken from the southern, Eastern and Western part of the country as a whole. On the other hand, it was also observed that most of the persons recruited into the corporation were more Muslims than those of Christian backgrounds.

This could be linked or traced to the fact the group managing director of the corporation Mr. Mele Kyari is a Muslim hence, the need to include more individuals from the Islamic religions comes to light and is at the front burner as well. This imbalance can cause disunity amongst the various zones with the least number of applicants shortlisted for the job and create a sense of segregation, maltreatment, intimidation, disaffection, and marginalization in their minds thereby igniting a strong hatred for the other party that was unduly favoured in the recruitment process.⁴⁵⁸

Kafayat⁴⁵⁹ insists that a major issue that played out during the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation recruitment was the sharing format amongst the elites in the society where some group of persons were assigned a particular number of persons to bring for employment into the corporation this was a way of saying “thank you” for the things that these persons did in the past towards the promotion of certain activities in the government of the day (i.e the government in power) or as a way of rewarding them for their roles in ensuring that those at helms assume that position by providing everything needed for them to get to where they are today. Some of these individuals provided their personal money to fund their campaign processes and other requirements of the electioneering process.⁴⁶⁰

Similarly, the Nigerian Security and Civil defence corps (NSCDC) conducted a recruitment exercise in 2021 (NSCDC 2020/2021 recruitment) under the administration of its commandant – General known as corps commandant Abdullahi

⁴⁵⁶ Adeniyi, O. O. (2021). Issues of recruitment into Nigerian Civil service: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in Perspective. *Journal of Public issues and affairs*, 2(3), 71-74.

⁴⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁵⁸ Adebajo, P. (2022). Nigerian Civil Service recruitment issues and challenges. *Journal of Economics and Statistics*, 15(17), 69-75.

⁴⁵⁹ Kafaya, O. N. (2010). Political sentiments and recruitment exercises in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Practice*, 4(6), 64-69.

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid*

Gana studies show that this recruitment exercise also has its flaws and various forms of deficiencies that made the process unbearable and unfriendly to most of the individuals (applicants) involved in the process either directly or indirectly.

To Okonkwo,⁴⁶¹ so many of the individuals recruited in the process are from Niger State. That is 50% of the recruits were from Nigeria State, 30% from other northern states and 20% from the southern, eastern, and western states combined.⁴⁶² There was an imbalance in the recruitment process due to the percentage of persons recruited from the various states in the federation. It was quite clear that the reason for the high number of candidates recruited from Niger State has a close connection or link to the fact that the commandant – General of the command is an indigene of Niger State, which could be the reason for the high of individuals recruited from his home state.

This singular act can be regarded as a mark of honour, respect, and friendliness to the indigenes of his home state which opposes the due process principle in an ideal recruitment process and also opposes and negates the federal characters principle that guides and regulates recruitment processes in every government agency, organization, or establishment (civil service).⁴⁶³

According to Okonkwo,⁴⁶⁴ most of the applicants who applied during this recruitment process were not considered for employment in the command due to their individual party affiliation and religion. This was crystal clear when applicants that had close ties or close relationships with highly placed personalities in the society and the nation at large were privileged to be shortlisted into the service because they were allies to these personalities or were recruited as a payback mechanism for being loyal to them over the years or as a way of saying ‘thank you’ for the jobs done over the years as a committed loyalist.⁴⁶⁵

Another issue that shows that the recruitment process was lopsided was that more Muslims were recruited than members of other religious groups. That is, the number of Muslims recruited into the command outnumbered the number of persons employed during the recruitment process which indicated that the recruitment

⁴⁶¹ Okonkwo, T. A. (2021). The influence of ethicism on recruitment activities in Nigeria. *Journal of African issues*, 2(4), 6-10.

⁴⁶² *ibid*

⁴⁶³ Igwe, O. (2021). The crisis of Federal character principle in Nigerian space. *Journal of behavioural arts*, 4(6), 7-9.

⁴⁶⁴ Okonkwo, T. A. (2021). The influence of ethicism on recruitment activities in Nigeria. *Journal of African issues*, 2(4), 6-10.

⁴⁶⁵ Igwe, O. (2021). The crisis of Federal character principle in Nigerian space. *Journal of behavioural arts*, 4(6), 7-9.

process was highly lopsided and highly below the standard and expectation of a proper recruitment process.

In another recruitment exercise conducted by the Nigerian Security and civil defence corps (NSCDC) in 2022 (2021/2022) recruitment under the administration of its commandant-general known as Corps Commandant Ahmed Abubakar Audu. The recruitment process was quite smooth and a bit commendable but had some form of malpractice that made it to be biased.

Funke⁴⁶⁶ argued that the recruited individual into the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps in 2022 witnessed a lot of unnecessary interferences where the management of the corps was not given total or complete free hands to coordinate the recruitment exercise in the way and manner expected of the command by the applicants and the public. Some of the issues of concern that flawed the process were poor advertisement of the recruitment process, omission of the names of some applicants from a particular geo-political zone, and the recruitment of more individuals from a particular religious background in the command.

It was observed that the recruitment process was not properly advertised thereby making, so many persons not to be aware that the corps is recruiting individuals to fill up vacancies and positions that were created due to the retirement of some individuals in the Corp and the death of some persons in the Corp so as to create an environment for the various Units and departments in the Corp to function effectively without any form of hitches, huddles and infringements.

The case was completely different because a lot of individuals were not privy to the recruitment thereby giving the elites to take undue advantage of it to put in their brothers, sisters, nephews, cousins, friends, and other persons that are very close to them.⁴⁶⁷ It was also noticed that a lot of names were omitted during the shortlisting process. A situation the names of specific individuals from a particular part of the country (Northern) as a sign of favour or recognition because the man at the helms of affairs in the command is a Northerner therefore, the need for special preference to the northerners comes to light in the command and it was observed that these individuals recruited shared same religious belief with the man at the helm of affair in the command.

⁴⁶⁶ Funke, A. (2022). Religious and Political biases in Civil service recruitment in Nigeria. *Journal of arts and culture*, 3(6), 60-64.

⁴⁶⁷ Funke, A. (2022). Religious and Political biases in Civil service recruitment in Nigeria. *Journal of arts and culture*, 3(6), 60-64.

This can be linked to religious loyalty, religious inclination, affiliation, and sentiment. Sometimes this is done to gain recognition amongst the religious leaders as one that upholds the tenets of the religion, cares for the members of the same religion and extends the spirit of brotherhood amongst the members of the religion by providing empowerment to them through the recruitment process in the command. Most times it is done to gain a higher position amongst the religious faithful.⁴⁶⁸

Also evident in this recruitment process was the employment of more applicants from the northern extraction. This was very glaring to everyone based on the names listed on the command's list of individuals that have been employed into the command as more names from the Islamic religion were published while a few names from other religions were published. This is a clear indication that the recruitment process was highly influenced by external bodies who are not part of the command. It is also important to mention that this brought about a lot of complaints amongst the individuals that applied for the recruitment because their expectations were dashed as a result of these activities that marred the recruitment process which ordinarily should not be like that.

A recruitment exercise was done in the federal service in 2020 during the administration of its controller general named Jaji Olola Abdulganiyu. It was noticed that there were a lot of irregularities that hampered the effective and efficient organization of the recruitment process.

To Onah⁴⁶⁹ the recruitment process into the Federal Fire Service was encumbered with a lot of irregularities that altered the smooth coordination of the recruitment process into the service observation shows that more persons were recruited from Kwara State, Nigeria which is the commandant-general's state of origin. This was possible because the man at the head of the service (controller-general) would want a lot of persons from his state to work in the service and the best time to bring them in is through the recruitment process conducted under his regime since the opportunity may not come up again when he leaves office and as well gain relevance and popularity in the state as a former controller-general of federal fire service that played a significant role in employing his people (Kwara State indigenes) in the

⁴⁶⁸ ibid

⁴⁶⁹ Onah, B. C. (2021). Recruitment issues in Nigeria. Nigeria fire service in perspective. *Journal of behavioural studies*, 3(4), 5-8.

service which might not completely possible to have that number of persons from Kwara State recruited into the service he leaves office.⁴⁷⁰

In another recruitment exercise conducted by the federal fire service in 2022 during the administration of Ibrahim Liman as the controller-general of the service. The 2021/2022 Federal Fire Service recruitment was intended to fill up the various vacancies in the service to further the objectives of the service at various and within the various arms of the service where there is a high need for manpower supply.

Furthermore, Onah⁴⁷¹ also posited that the recruitment into the federal civil service was intended to engage professionals with different levels of expertise in their fields and chosen careers in the various departments that are found in the service. Irrespective of how this recruitment process was planned by the top management of the service both at federal and state levels. It was well planned and properly arranged with the intention of putting square pegs into square holes and round pegs into round holes in the service so as to enhance maximum performance and maximum attainment of the visions, goals, and objectives of the service. The recruitment process was bedevilled with a lot of challenges ranging from an imbalance in the quota system, religious bias, hijack of the process by politicians and other corrupt practices.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the recruitment process to the Nigerian civil service. It is the crux of the personnel administration issue. It is useful to observe that the civil service places a strong focus on consistency, standardization, and openness in the hiring and selection procedures. Despite the aforementioned, it has emerged as a practical reality that the recruitment process for the Nigerian civil service has been politicized and affected by religious affiliation, with negative consequences for the institution and its employees.⁴⁷²

For any organization to maximise its performance potential, it must strive to become more effective and efficient; this can only be achieved if the right employees are recruited. It takes a successful recruitment process to create the pool of qualified and competent employees; it does not just happen. The goal of recruitment is to fill open positions in the organizational structure and keep them filled.⁴⁷³ Every organization, whether public or private, relies on the efficient use of its resources to accomplish

⁴⁷⁰ ibid

⁴⁷¹ ibid

⁴⁷² Ejumodu, K. B. (2011). *Constraints in the staff recruitment and Selection System of Delta State Civil Service*. Department of Political Science, Delta University, Abraka Nigeria.

⁴⁷³ Koontz, H. & Wehrich, H. (2005). *Management: A global perspective*. New Jersey: McGraw Hall.

its goals. If these resources (human and material) are to be used effectively, they must be in the proper number, quality, and timing.

The human resource, on the other hand, is one of the organization's resources that is regarded as the most important, most valuable, most intricate, and least predictable. This is due to the fact that human resources are what the organization uses to process its other resources in order to accomplish its goals and objectives. Every country's development is greatly influenced by the hiring of civil officials. The nation's resources come from the people who work in these governmental organizations in administrative and clerical roles. Therefore, it's important to make sure the correct people are hired. According to Cloete,⁴⁷⁴ the recruitment process must be carried out with the goal of securing the services of qualified individuals. Similarly, Barber⁴⁷⁵ also identified two key stages in the hiring process that are crucial to successful hiring. The ability of the human resource departments to choose the top candidates from the pool of applications comes in at number one and number two. If a sufficient number of applicants apply, and the selection process is managed easily, the recruitment process is effective. Whatever occurs throughout the recruitment process has a direct impact on the efficacy of the selection process. Many management academics have defined the idea of recruitment.

In light of this definition, recruitment includes both the processes of luring qualified candidates to submit job applications and selecting the top prospects for employment to the organization. Others see recruiting as the process of evaluating a position, advertising the opening, and motivating candidates to apply.⁴⁷⁶ The main goal of recruitment is to entice enough qualified candidates to fill open positions inside the firm.⁴⁷⁷ Recruiting is a crucial aspect of human resources and entails the process of locating and encouraging candidates who have the necessary abilities to fill open jobs in a business.⁴⁷⁸

Recruitment is also the method that occurs when an organization creates a pool of qualified, skilled, and knowledgeable people who then apply to work there. Given the foregoing, the organization's goal is to identify qualified individuals who meet the standards for employment. Armstrong⁴⁷⁹ sees recruitment is to find the correct

⁴⁷⁴ Cloete, J.J.N. (1993). Introduction to public administration. Pretoria: JL van Schaik Publishers.

⁴⁷⁵ Barber, A. E. (1998). Recruiting employees: Individual and organisational perspectives. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications, Inc.

⁴⁷⁶ Fatiregun, E. O. (1992). Recruitment, selection and placement processes in A. D. Yahaya and Akinyele. C. I. (ed.). New trends in personnel management: A Book of Reading. Lagos: Administrative Staff College of Nigeria.

⁴⁷⁷ Cole, G. A. (2002). Personnel and Human Resources Management 5 th Edition. London: Continuum.

⁴⁷⁸ Peretomode V. F. & Peretomode O. (2001). Human resources management: Principles, policies and practice. Lagos: Onosomegbowho Ogbinaka Publishers.

⁴⁷⁹ Armstrong, M. (2006). Strategic HRM: The key to improved business performance. London: Kogan Page Limited

kind and quantity of qualified individuals to fill open positions in an organization. Recruiting is also the process where management uses strategies and procedures to legally find qualified individuals to fill open jobs.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, Dessler⁴⁸¹ notes that the process of recruiting candidates for a vacant position is known as selection and recruitment. For recruitment and selection to be effective at any level, the following stages or processes should be followed⁴⁸²

Manpower Assessment The personnel strategy, which identifies organizational areas likely to have a skills gap and the number of candidates to be hired to fill those positions, serves as the starting point for the recruitment and selection processes.

Job Analysis: This entails looking at the tasks that each prospective employee would have in a given position. Job descriptions and personnel specifications are the results of the analysis of jobs.

Job Description: explains the duties, responsibilities, and activities that go along with a job in broad words. As a result, it is a written description of the task.

Man Specification: This is a list of the minimal human attributes that are required to do a job well. It identifies the traits needed for performance that is considered acceptable and serves as a standard for personnel.

Attracting Candidates for a Post(s): Both internal and external sources, including job postings, the press, public or private employment agencies, educational institutions, etc., can be used to accomplish this.⁴⁸³

3.0.4 PROPER METHODS AND SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

There are essentially two sources of hiring that are available to any firm. There are two categories for these sources: internal and external. The organization's unique environment and operating philosophy have a major impact on how widely any of the sources of recruitment will be used. But at this point, it's important to elaborate on the two key recruitment sources.

Internal Source: This source enables an organization to fill open positions with individuals or staff who are currently working for the company. In order to fill more senior job opportunities, the firm looks internally for suitable employees who have the necessary qualifications, skills, and competencies. Usually, personnels hired internally are either looking for promotions or lateral movements, or job changes

⁴⁸⁰ Castello, D. (2006). Leveraging the employee life cycle. CRM Magazine, 10(12), 48-58. Retrieved from: Academic Search Premier Database.

⁴⁸¹ Dessler, G. (2002). Human resource management, (8th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

⁴⁸² Ezeani, E.O. (2005) Fundamentals of public administration. Enugu: Zik-Chuks Publishers.

⁴⁸³ ibid

that don't significantly alter their degree of responsibility or power.⁴⁸⁴ Internal sources of recruiting include a number of advantages, including cost savings, reduced time commitment, employees' familiarity with the system, and knowledge of candidates' real performance on the job. In order for employees to function effectively and efficiently, it serves as a source of morale-boosting.⁴⁸⁵

External Source: This entails hiring potential employees from outside the company to fill open positions in the company. The company searches outside for potential applicants in this source. This method of hiring is typically used to fill entry-level roles, particularly during periods of expansion, and for positions whose unique criteria cannot be sufficiently met by personnel already working for the firm. It should be noted that organizational policy typically affects the method chosen to find applicants. While some organizational policies encourage the filling of key positions from outside the organization, others adopt an open-door policy where both employees from within the organization and others from outside the organization are given a level playing field to compete for available job openings. In the meanwhile, potential personnel are located externally using the following strategies:

i. **Advertisement:** This method offers a pool of potential employees with the necessary credentials, skills, and motivation to look for work possibilities in a business at a lower cost. This method stands out since it draws in a wide pool of applicants while also eliminating a significant section of the population through self-selection.⁴⁸⁶ Advertisements need to transmit the right candidates if they are to achieve their goals, thus it is important to choose your words and media carefully. An effective job advertisement should give a clear explanation of the position, the real nature of the company, the necessary qualifications, and the compensation package. It can be done via print or electronic (internet) media.

ii. **Employment agencies:** These are organizations whose main duty is to help find qualified managerial candidates to fill senior positions in an organization. Such jobs could be important ones within the firm, such chief executive officers. The agency receives the job descriptions and prerequisites for open positions, which it then uses to match those criteria with those who are already on its registry. These organizations

⁴⁸⁴ Jones G. R., George J. M., and Hill C. W. L. (2000). *Contemporary Management*, 2nd Edition. Irwin: McGrawHill.

⁴⁸⁵ Biobele, R. B. (2007). Problems of Recruitment in Civil Service: Case of the Nigerian Civil Service. *African Journal of Business Management* 1(6). 142-153.

⁴⁸⁶ Perkins, L. A., Thomas, K. M., & Taylor, G. A. (2000). Advertising and recruitment: Marketing to minorities. *Psychology & Marketing*, 17(3), 235-255.

have considerably helped numerous firms find and attract skilled and qualified managers to fill key managerial roles.⁴⁸⁷

iii. Employment Consultants: A consultant for employment helps a company create its personnel specification. He goes one step further and double-checks his records to see if he can get in touch with job candidates that have the required credentials, aptitudes, skills, and experience. When the consultant's files do not immediately contain suitable applicants, he can advertise, screen, and compile a list of candidates from whom the company can make its final decision.

iv. Executive Search Consultants: A particular search is conducted by this type of consultant to find qualified applicants for critical open jobs in an organization. They keep personal connections with potential talented employees, just like employment counsellors do. This agency's services are provided at a hefty cost, that much is certain. This may not be unrelated to the fact that it works hard to recruit the best minds from among its clients' competitors.

Other means of external recruitment include informal network, jobseekers' work-ins, professional unions, recommendations etcetera. The advantages of using an external source of recruitment include access to a potentially large applicant pool, the ability to draw candidates who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the organization to achieve its goals, and a channel for bringing in new talent who might have up-to-date concepts or expertise on the newest technology. The drawbacks include costly training and recruitment costs, inadequate understanding of the organization's internal operations, and uncertainty regarding the performance of prospective personnel.⁴⁸⁸

Some Nigerian social scientists like Osakwe,⁴⁸⁹ see recruitment politics as hiring practices that are influenced by political patronage or the ruling class. The politicization of recruitment is the unusual practice of using political interest by people in public offices to fill open positions in the public service, both those that exist and those that do not, without following the proper procedures.⁴⁹⁰ Therefore, this is the recruitment procedure that is based on less important, unimportant aspects besides merit and competence requirements.

Concerned members of the public have expressed their utter displeasure over the development and have blamed it on elements like inadequate and invalid standards

⁴⁸⁷ Irejeh, E., Nwafili, K., & Edih, D. (2023). Effect of private employment agencies recruitment strategy on organizational effectiveness in the hospitality industry: perspectives of selected hotels in Nigeria. *Polytechnica*, 7(1), 28-36.

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁸⁹ Osakwe, A. A. (2007). Application of Elite Theory to Corruption in Nigeria Society. In Ugwu, C. O. T. (ed) *Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives*. Nsukka: CEP.

⁴⁹⁰ Omeje, N. P. & Ndukwe, C. (2009). Politicization of Personnel Management and Nigeria Public Service Efficiency An Overview. *A Journal of the Nigeria Public Administration Review*, 1(2).

for evaluating job candidates, sources of luring prospective applicants, transparency, and the authority's independence in the hiring process. Other reasons include the demands of society, politics, technology, and the economy.⁴⁹¹

The recruitment and selection procedures for the civil service have been infiltrated by politics. The political heavy hitters frequently take advantage of their privileged positions to install their political thugs into the state civil service as a way of rewarding them for their tireless efforts that helped them win the voting system. Similar to this, there are cases where hiring into the public service is based on the idea of godfatherism, which ignores merit-based standards.

Another tendency in political interference in hiring procedures is the desire to reward party members. In this case, the party's chief executives are typically given the chance to suggest a certain number of people for promotion to the post. It is also permitted for members of the house of assembly, commissioners, ministers, and special advisors to recommend individuals for the same position.⁴⁹² Politics are usually a factor in this kind of appointment. Unfortunately, the recruitment process has been severely undermined by politics and religious sentiment, limiting its effectiveness, utility, and efficiency in the delivery of public services, despite constitutional provisions to prevent fraud and other related vices in the conduct of the exercise and the strategic position of the civil service as a dominant instrument to drive socioeconomic and political development of the country in general.⁴⁹³

As a result, despite employment embargoes, the federal public service's employee size has increased dramatically, particularly that of the Nigerian Customs Service. Since the Nigerian Customs Service's most recent recruiting drive in 2021, a number of appointments have been made using the godfatherism principle.⁴⁹⁴ The departmental/unit leaders must overcome several obstacles since they will be unable to implement the service's established norms and regulations and ensure optimal organizational productivity without infringing on the rights of their godfathers. The urge to reward party supporters is another trend in political intervention in hiring procedures. Politics are usually a factor in this kind of appointment.

The appointment of the chairman and other commissioners to the state civil service commission is a noteworthy instance of how politics show up in the recruitment process. Although the governor or president, depending on the situation, is given the authority to carry out this duty under the constitution, they typically pick the primary

⁴⁹¹Biobebe, R. B. (2007). Problems of Recruitment in Civil Service: Case of the Nigerian Civil Service. *African Journal of Business Management* 1(6). 142-153.

⁴⁹² *ibid*

⁴⁹³ Osakwe, A. A. (2007). Application of Elite Theory to Corruption in Nigeria Society. In Ugwu, C. O. T. (ed) *Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives*. Nsukka: CEP.

⁴⁹⁴ Osakwe, A. A. (2007). Application of Elite Theory to Corruption in Nigeria Society. In Ugwu, C. O. T. (ed) *Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives*. Nsukka: CEP.

officers of the commission based on political considerations. Some of the new hires are lacking in initiative, creativity, skills, techniques, knowledge, and credentials in human resource management. They purposefully aid and abate the intrusion of politics into the civil service recruitment processes in an effort to maintain their job as well as obtain improper favor from the president and members of his cabinet. Because of this, the panel is believed to have been compromised in ensuring a fair, unbiased, and merit-based hiring process.⁴⁹⁵

In addition to the aforementioned, prospective employees who are looking for jobs in the state civil service and the Nigerian customs service frequently give duplicate copies of their credentials to influential political figures in the hopes that they will be given positions in the state civil service. It is interesting to observe that, in some instances, such as the recruitment exercise in 2021, strict adherence to the formal recruitment and selection procedures does not always indicate who will succeed. Throughout the process, the political power players' lists consistently lag behind. More so, it is no longer news that the appointment of individuals from the same community, relatives, friends, and colleagues of the governor to the public service always announces the transition to a new government. That explains why the state government building adopts the dialect of the new governor whenever there is a change in government. This demonstrates that even when there is a clear hiring embargo, those from the same locality as the top citizen are likely to receive preferential treatment for appointments.

3.0.5 CHALLENGES OF RECRUITMENT INTO THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

The inconsistencies in the Nigerian Public Service's recruiting process and the Nigerian Customs Service's role as a government instrument for expanding the labour force and replacing open posts left by departing employees. So far, this study has established that prejudice and other fundamental issues like nepotism, and favouritism were given more weight in hiring decisions than merit. This negatively affected the labour market and raised government expenses.

The main issues are highlighted as frequent involvement brought on by politicians' attempts to enlist relatives in the military, recruiting that is only based on talents rather than character, and the federal character concept that made the problem much worse by requiring ethnic balancing. The Nigerian public service should emphasize meritocracy, regardless of an applicant's background or connection, and that the problem of political obstruction should be resolved in order to restore sanity to the process. In addition to having a strong moral attitude, applicants for recruitment

⁴⁹⁵ Osakwe, A. A. (2007). Application of Elite Theory to Corruption in Nigeria Society. In Ugwu, C. O. T. (ed) Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives. Nsukka: CEP.

should be given the needed independence and freedom since doing so will encourage recruiters to do the exercise correctly by using the right ways.

Nigeria's national progress has been hampered by corruption, insecurity, education, and ethnicity, among other factors. These barriers have created significant developmental issues that are obvious in the management system's dysfunctions, which not only result in the inadequate and inefficient provision of public services but also in the volatility of the nation's socioeconomic and political wellbeing.⁴⁹⁶

In order to ascertain the degree to which job descriptions and job specifications are used in the hiring process, Briggs⁴⁹⁷ investigated the issues with recruitment in the Nigerian federal government's civil services and the Nigerian custom service. The survey identified factors like rising employment pressures, the use of unofficial sources for recruitment, the federal character principle, the service commission's lack of independence, and delegation of recruitment functions as the most common issues affecting recruitment in Nigeria's federal civil service and customs service. Due to these issues, the recruitment process did not effectively use job descriptions and normal personnel standards, particularly at the lowest group of grade levels.

The effects of politicizing recruitment into the civil service, particularly the Nigerian Customs Service, include the following. Corruption, to put it simply, is one of the main effects of recruitment politics. When there is a departure from the norm of behaviour, corruption occurs. Merit and other scientific standards are thrown away in favour of political and other unethical motives once recruiting and selection are politicized. The end outcome is the appointment of dishonest officers who then enable and mitigate systemic corruption. The end outcome of the recruitment process does not necessarily involve corruption, it should be mentioned. According to certain researchers, there are particular situations where merit must be carefully followed, and this leads to the desired and anticipated outcomes. When a company is unable to provide the intended results within the allotted time, low productivity sets in. However, the likelihood is that productivity will always be at its lowest ebb when unqualified workers are assigned to key positions in the organisation.

This condition also leads to inefficiency, which is defined as a lack of competence, the capacity to perform tasks competently or to produce desired results without wasting time or resources.⁴⁹⁸ The primary cause of inefficiency in the public service

⁴⁹⁶ Gbereubie, D. E. (2011). An Appraisal of Staff Recruitment and Retention Policies of Delta State Civil Service in Nigeria. *Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti Bulletin*, 63 (1)

⁴⁹⁷ Briggs, B. R. (2007). Problems of Recruitment in Civil Service: Case of the Nigerian Civil Service. *African Journal of Business Management* Vol. 1(6). Available online <http://www.academicjournals.org/ajbm> ISSN 1993-8233 copyright 2007 Academic Journals.

⁴⁹⁸ Omeje, N. P. & Ndukwe, C. (2009). Politicization of Personnel Management and Nigeria Public Service Efficiency An Overview. *A Journal of the Nigeria Public Administration Review*, 1(2).

is the political considerations-based selection of unqualified and inappropriate personnel to certain positions. They are merely puppets and stooges who are always willing to accept improper instructions from their political godfathers, which invariably results in service inefficiency. The majority of managing directors and heads of government establishments appointed on political grounds lack the necessary experience, skills, abilities, and qualification.⁴⁹⁹ Additionally, when there is no way to address strategic manpower planning and the requirement for staffing inside the service, overstaffing is inevitable. Politicians suddenly deciding to impose a certain number of employees on the service does not bode well for the service's staffing levels. A scenario where six or seven cops are tied to a table and two seats is the typical outcome, which is too bloated service. When a line manager (head of department) has no say in hiring workers, the manager shouldn't anticipate complete adherence to established regulations from the workforce. This is because politically favoured employees who are appointed will openly demonstrate their unwavering commitment to their political heavyweights while also flagrantly violating established civil service standards without repercussions.⁵⁰⁰

The over politicization of hiring and placement results in the appointment and placement of substandard candidates at the expense of the best candidates. When this occurs, the civil service is compromised by a group of ineffective employees who lack the resources to turn the organization around for greater public service delivery. Low staff morale, division, and bad leadership are some further effects of recruitment and selection politics. In every area of the public sector in Nigeria, the head of a board or commission or the commissioner of a ministry creates a list of the names of his friends, family, and political acquaintances.⁵⁰¹

Due to its strategic role in the performance, growth, and stability of organizations, the subject of religious impact and affiliation on recruiting has drawn a lot of attention from public and corporate officials as well as academics. The performance of both private and public organizations is often significantly impacted by recruitment, this is because the primary goal of recruitment is to create a collection of talented candidates to enhance the ability of selecting the best candidates for the organization.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ Omeje, N. P. & Ndukwe, C. (2009). Politicization of Personnel Management and Nigeria Public Service Efficiency An Overview. A Journal of the Nigeria Public Administration Review, 1(2).

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid*

⁵⁰¹ *ibid*

⁵⁰² Argue, M. (2015). *The importance of the strategic recruitment and selection process on meeting an organisations objective* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin Business School).

In order for an organization (like the public sector) to function effectively, recruitment procedures are used to acquire the right number of appropriate talents at the right time from the right places.

3.0.6 HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

The federal civil service comprises the entire staff used by the federal government to transform policy objectives and electoral promises into objective results that would benefit the citizenry.⁵⁰³ Therefore, the right calibre of personnel must be in place to perform this varied function. The Nigerian federal civil service emphasizes uniformity, standardization, and transparency in recruiting competent applicants.

The Nigerian Federal Civil Service is an institution established for the implementation of policies of the Federal Government in its quest to enhance the living standard of Nigerians in terms of quality social service delivery and infrastructural development. What this means is that the poor performance of the Nigerian Federal Civil Service does negatively affect the realization of the goals of the government. The enhanced performance of the civil servants on the other hand affects positively the goals of the government.⁵⁰⁴

The history of the Nigerian Civil Service as seen from existing literature hold two major positions; firstly, the argument which held the position that the origin of the Nigerian Civil Service is traceable to 1900 when the colonial masters established an institution to be tasked with overseeing the administration of the then southern and northern protectorates of Nigeria.⁵⁰⁵ The second argument was one that traces the origin of civil service to the annexation of Lagos by the colonial masters in 1861.⁵⁰⁶ In any case, it is documented that the establishment of the civil service during the

⁵⁰³ Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American journal of social and management sciences*, 3(1), 17-29.

⁵⁰⁴ Gberegbe, D. E. (2010). Strategies for employee recruitment, retention and performance: Dimension of the Federal civil service of Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(8), 1447-1456.

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁰⁶ Gberegbe, D. E. (2010). Nigerian federal civil service: Employee recruitment, retention and performance. *Journal of Science and Sustainable Development*, 3(1).

colonial era was a brainchild of the British Government for the maintenance of law and order in Nigeria.⁵⁰⁷

In the same vein, some scholars trace the stages in the evolution of federal character to the days of colonialism.⁵⁰⁸ The stages include the period of the informal federation 1900-1946; The period of the formal federation, the first phase, 1946-1966, and the period of the formal federation second phase: 1967- present. Afigbo further noted that the principle arose out of a compromise among the protagonists of the 1976 Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC).⁵⁰⁹ The colonial administration served the interest of the British as the structure and composition of the civil service were British. Initially, there was the exclusion of Africans during the formative years of the colonial civil service, but Nigeria's climatic environment was a constraint to the health of British officials. Thus, ecological problems encountered by the British officials and pressure arising from political development and nationalism accelerated the policy of gradual withdrawal and acceptance of the various levels of the Nigerian civil service.⁵¹⁰

In the year 1914, the Southern and Northern Protectorates were amalgamated, and this engenders a burgeoning public sector (and private sector) career. The public services were then set up both in the North and South headed by Lieutenant Governors. All the original officers of the two public services were expatriate managers.⁵¹¹ At this time, the indigenous people of Nigeria occupied low-rank positions. Less than a decade after the introduction of this system of administration, educated Nigerians, led by Herbert Macaulay (the Father of Nigerian nationalism), started challenging the status quo. As a group, they agitated greater political and administrative participation in the nation's affairs. The outcome of this was the birth of the first constitution ever recorded in the history of the country, The Clifford Constitution of 1922.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁰⁸ Inyang, B. (2007). Managing workforce diversity and inclusiveness in the public service: going beyond the Nigeria Federal Character Principles (FCP): forum section. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 31(2), 85-101.

⁵⁰⁹ *ibid*

⁵¹⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹¹ Adamolekun, L., & Ayo, S. B. (1989). The evolution of the Nigerian federal administration system. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 19(1), 157-176.

⁵¹² Oboh, G. E. (2017). Influence of ethnicity and religion in Nigerian elections and the imperative of media intervention. *Sociology International Journal*, 1(3), 79-84.

The structure of the Nigerian Civil Service was created by Sir Hugh Clifford who succeeded Lord Lugard as Governor General of Nigeria. In 1921 he established a Central Secretariat in Lagos and by 1939, provinces administered from Enugu, Ibadan, and Kaduna had their secretariats. The period 1940 – 1950 marked the emergence of the Nationalist Nigerian Administration and this represented the proper commencement of the Nigerian Civil Service.⁵¹³

The 1958–1959 Solaru Parliamentary Committee on Nigerianization⁵¹⁴ of the civil service suggested among others, the training of Nigerians to administer the civil service. In the discharge of its duties, the committee was of the view that independence would require total control of the federal civil service by Nigerians in order to achieve the task of unity, loyalty, commitment, and dedication by officers that would be charged with policy implementation. Thus, by 1st October 1960, the Federal Civil Service of Nigeria was established. During this period, some Nigerians held prominent positions but fundamental problems such as lack of initiative, lack of expertise, nepotism and inexperience served as impediments to the successful implementation of the Nigerianization policy. However, this transitive stage created opportunities for qualified Nigerians to be recruited and impact the indigenous culture on a hitherto foreign and British culture-dominated and oriented civil service.⁵¹⁵

The subsequent constitutions increased Nigerian participation in government as a whole. In the wake of federalism in the year 1954, Nigeria took on a federal structure having three regions and public services were established at the centre of each region.⁵¹⁶ During this period, both the Federal and Regional levels of government encouraged and urged her citizenry to seek careers in public service. However, the role of the Nigerian Civil Service has metamorphosed since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 to that of social and economic management, including the establishment of public institutions for the provision of social services.

⁵¹³ Oronsaye, S. O. (2009). Restructuring of the office of the civil service of the federation. In *Workshop on annual performance and evaluation report. Nigeria*.

⁵¹⁴ *ibid*

⁵¹⁵ Olusanya, G. O. (1975). *The Evolution of the Nigerian Civil Service, 1861-1960: The Problems of Nigerianization* (Vol. 2). University of Lagos.

⁵¹⁶ Nkwede, J. O. (2013). Public sector restructuring and governance in Nigeria: Perspectives, processes and challenges. *Journal of Business and Management*, 2(3), 32-44.

During this period, public services were established at the Federal and regional (which include Northern, Eastern, Western and Mid-Western) levels. At this time, Nigerians began to be more visible occupying the front seat in public service and, concurrently, started looking down on agriculture.⁵¹⁷ It is important to note that up till the end of the first republic in 1966, Nigerian public services were a direct resemblance of that of the British administrative structure in terms of operations, rewards, training and development, ethics and *esprit de corps*.⁵¹⁸

Ajibade & Ibietan⁵¹⁹ averred that in 1960, the Nigerian civil service had undergone a role shift from the imperialist interest of maintenance of law and order to facilitating the actualization and realization of the developmental aspirations of the country. They also maintained that the Nigerian public sector functioned better during the time of colonial administration, as the religious difference or ethnicity hardly affected recruitment into the service.⁵²⁰ Similarly, the condition of Nigerian bureaucracy and subsequent policy and political actions to reposition it for effective and efficient service delivery have resulted in complications in the civil service.⁵²¹ This eventually led to the Murtala government constituting a Public Service Review Commission known as the Udoji Commission to look into the problems that bedevilled the institution and recommend measures to address them. But the commission's recommendations faced outright rejection by the bureaucrats.⁵²²

In an attempt to further develop the public service system in Nigeria, the civil service had over time been subjected to varying sets of and several reforms. These said reforms were undertaken with the objective of solidifying and strengthening the administrative system while engendering the development of society through the effective and efficient provision of service delivery.⁵²³ The reforms were criticized as not having effectively reformed the service delivery of the public administrative system. These reforms were as such characterized as weak and ineffective due to and as a result of the politicizing of the public service, absence of neutrality of the

⁵¹⁷ *ibid*

⁵¹⁸ *ibid*

⁵¹⁹ Ajibade, O., & Ibietan, O. (2016). Public bureaucracy and service delivery in Nigeria: The neo-Weberian explanation. *The Public Administration and Social Policies Review*, 2(17), 5-18.

⁵²⁰ *ibid*

⁵²¹ *ibid*

⁵²² Omitola, B. O. (2012). Nigerian Public Service Reforms and the Fourth Republic Experience: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 5(1).

⁵²³ *ibid*

service, weak human resources policies and management, and poor recruitment process. The public service as such became filled with individuals who lacked merit, professionalism, and administrative skills as well as knowledge to handle public service functions.⁵²⁴

The discovery of crude oil and the resultant oil boom and abundant wealth in the 1970s, more commitment towards the provision of social services and public infrastructure in addition to the advancement of the Nigerian economy. This resulted in the creation of states in replacement of regions. Since then, both the federal and state public services have witnessed unprecedented growth and, in the process, have undergone a series of reforms, to be able to meet their increasing responsibilities.⁵²⁵

Today, Nigeria is a country with a very large public service, having thirty-six states along with a federal capital territory. Apart from the federal civil service, each state government operates its own civil service. There are also many parastatals (utilities), ministries, commissions and agencies established by the federal and state governments. There are also many local governments (known as the third tier of government) in all the states with their own structures extending through all the nooks and crannies of the country.⁵²⁶ The Nigeria federal civil service comprises the staff used administratively by the central government. The government, whether at the federal, state, or local government level is the highest employer of labour. The government uses the civil service to transform its policy objectives and electoral promises into objective results that would benefit the citizenry. Therefore, the right calibre of personnel must be placed to perform these varied functions.⁵²⁷

Similarly, the personnel employed in an organization serve as the hub around which other resources revolve. This allows the entire wheel of the organization to turn smoothly in order to perform more effectively, efficiently, and economically. This is the reason why the personnel employed in any organization that eventually

⁵²⁴ Inyang, B. J., & Akaegbu, J. B. (2014). Redefining the role of the human resource professional (HRP) in the Nigerian public service for enhanced performance. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 5(1), 90-98.

⁵²⁵ Ijewereme, O. B. (2018). Civil service reforms and governance challenges in Nigeria. *Global encyclopedia of public administration, public policy, and governance*, 1-10.

⁵²⁶ *ibid*

⁵²⁷ Igbokwe-Ibeto, C. J. (2015). Re-inventing Nigeria's Public Sector: A Review of National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). *Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review*, 3(2), 183-211.

become the breadwinners of their family and an instrument of progress for the society, have to be well structured.⁵²⁸

The emergent all-powerful “bureaucrat professionals” resulted from the governance incompetence and administrative ignorance of military administrators. This was particularly observable in the Gowon administration more than in any other regime. The extent of excessive involvement of the highest echelon of the civil service such as permanent secretaries in the governance and day-to-day running of Gowon’s government resulted in bureaucratic corruption, nepotism, and favouritism with the concomitant negation of effectiveness and efficiency, Weber’s ideals of anonymity, neutrality, and impersonality.⁵²⁹

Progressively, in the second republic, changes were introduced into the public service. Furthermore, the Udoji Review Commission’s recommendation on the Code of Ethics⁵³⁰ was adopted as a government Code of Conduct with which a person must comply. The Code of Conduct was meant to operate alongside the tribunal established to regulate the behaviour of civil servants and forestall abuse of power in the exercise of state authority on the part of civil servants.⁵³¹

Eventually, the collapse of the second republic usually would mean a reversal of the military norm of obsessive and undue interference in civil service. With the introduction of the American Presidential system of government at the federal, state, and local government levels, one would expect the civil service to be anchored on and run on the principles of presidentialism. Operationally, it conformed to the British parliamentary system, instead, where the permanent secretaries have constitutionally ascribed the status of chief executives of ministries and departments.

3.0.7 ETHNORELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN NIGERIA'S CIVIL SERVICE

The Latin word "religio" is the root of the word "religion", this means the thing that binds people together and their gods.⁵³² Religion has been defined by a lot of academics from different points of view. Taves stated that religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is things that are outlawed beliefs and practices that unite a single moral community known as a

⁵²⁸ ibid

⁵²⁹ Oyekola, I. A., Ajani, O. A., Asamu, F. F., & Olajire, O. O. (2022). Public service in Nigeria: Perception of young and middle-aged adults. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 22(4), e2663.

⁵³⁰ UMARU, U. D. (2016). Assessment of the Implementation of 1972 Udoji and 2003 Obasanjo Public Service Reforms in Nigeria: A Neo-Public Management Paradigm. *Assessment*, 7(10).

⁵³¹ ibid

⁵³² Ramsey E. & Ledbetter S. (2001). Studying religion: Issues in definition and method. *Encountering religion*, 1-20.

church and all of its members.⁵³³ Raines citing Karl Marx sees religion as the sign of the oppressed, the soul of conditions without souls and a heartless world.⁵³⁴ It is also known as society's opium.⁵³⁵ According to Karl Marx's definition, religion makes people dogmatic. To put it another way, people's perceptions of the social issues in their immediate environment are distorted when they are influenced by religion. To Anderson,⁵³⁶ religion is the embodiment of one's beliefs, practices, and attachment to something one considers to be valuable in one's life. Making libations, praying, burning incense, and bowing are all examples of such beliefs and practices. Other examples include the belief in supernatural forces.⁵³⁷ The issue of adhering to ethical principles or values as a result of one's religion is accurately captured in Anderson's definition of religion. According to this definition, religious activities and practices tend to support and encourage ethical behaviour.

In spite of the fact that religion is present in a variety of facets of Nigerian life, it is interesting to note that caution has always been applied to avoid religious conflict. This is done by making sure that no religion is overly preferred or neglected. For instance, at public gatherings like political rallies and national gatherings, prayers are either not offered at all or are offered by recognized religious leaders or officials. In this case, if the opening prayer was said by a Muslim, a Christian will say the closing prayer, and vice versa. This is a way of preventing conflict, which may snowball into violence. With respect to that public holidays, Christianity and Islam are adequately catered for with provisions made to accommodate both religions as work-free days are observed during respective festive periods. Whereas, in the history of the Nigerian federation, no public holiday has been declared for traditional festivals by the Federal Government and this can be attributed to the fact that the only two acceptable religions are Christianity and Islam.

In the aspect of recruitment in Nigeria, religion is one of the factors in recruitment in Nigeria's civil service. Due to its strategic position in the performance, growth, and stability of organizations, recruitment has received a lot of attention from public and business administrators as well as academics. Any state religion is forbidden by the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution, as amended in 2011.⁵³⁸ According to Section 10 of the CFRN from 2011, no religion may serve as the

⁵³³ Taves, A. (2009). Religious experience reconsidered. In *Religious Experience Reconsidered*. Princeton University Press.

⁵³⁴ Raines, J. (2011). *Marx on religion*. Temple University Press.

⁵³⁵ *ibid*

⁵³⁶ Anderson, J. (2013). Cathedrals of the surf zone: Regulating access to a space of spirituality. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(8), 954-972.

⁵³⁷ *ibid*

⁵³⁸ Vaughan, O. (2018). Sharia Politics, the 1999 Constitution, and the Rise of the Fourth Republic. *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics*, 239.

official religion of any state or Federation.⁵³⁹ In Nigeria, unfortunately, constitutional provisions are not always followed. Overtly and covertly, numerous politicians, members of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, and other holders of political office have utilized religion as a means of political ascendancy and power retention. Outside of Nigeria, objective observers are beginning to wonder where religion is currently leading the Nigerian, especially in the civil service. The situation has reached a point where the country's political, social, and economic stability, as well as democratic consolidation and effective leadership, are now severely impacted by religion and its divisive role.

The tragic situation is that many of Nigeria's highest-ranking civil servants, from administrative officers to permanent secretaries and director generals are deeply religious stakeholders and followers. Therefore, the question arises as to why the Nigerian Civil Service is plagued by persistent corruption and embezzlement of public funds; a lack of progressivism and opposition to changes; excessively large to the point where it allows for placement of political touts. Excessive political intrusion and a lack of accountability among civil servants have prevented the implementation of substantial budgetary allocations in Nigeria.⁵⁴⁰

The failure of the most important and significant component of providing public services—the Nigerian Civil Service—exemplifies the claim that Nigerians are religious and godless. Some of the factors that contribute to the civil servants' negative attitude when carrying out their duties: Ethnic violence, conflict of interest, educational issues, and the disclosure of official secrets are all examples of unethical behaviour at work.⁵⁴¹

However, empirical research has not identified how religion has influenced the Nigerian civil service in any major way; rather the Nigerian public service is influenced by meritocracy, godfatherism, indigenization, ethics, and accountability. However, meritocracy and religion are regarded as the least influential of these factors. The civil service in Nigeria, the hub through which the government implements its policies and programs, is plagued by ethical and accountability issues

⁵³⁹ Ibid

CFRN stands for Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria

⁵⁴⁰ Paul, S. O., Usman, T. O., & Ali, M. A. (2013). Labour unions and the transformation of the Nigerian civil service: a discourse. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 2(1), 12-25.

⁵⁴¹ Adejimi, A. A., Fawole, O. I., Sekoni, O. O., & Kyriacou, D. N. (2014). Prevalence and correlates of intimate partner violence among male civil servants in Ibadan, Nigeria. *African journal of medicine and medical sciences*, 43(Suppl 1), 51.

that have hampered the Nigerian state's overall growth and development over the years.

The Nigerian Civil Service continues to face significant difficulties related to ethics and accountability. The civil and public service no longer adheres to rules and regulations. This could be because of the people hired into the civil and public service and the personalities they brought with them. The Nigerian civil and public service has lost both its reputation and its productivity as a result of employees who work late and leave early, regardless of whether the government loses money or not, in order to maximize their pay checks.

Boss⁵⁴² defined the term "ethics" as "a set of standards of right and wrong established by a particular group and imposed on members of that group as a means of regulating and setting limits on their behaviour".⁵⁴³ This definition was used to describe the concept of ethics. The values that govern human behaviour in terms of the rightness and wrongness of such actions' motives and ends are also known as ethics. Ethics can be defined as the values and norms that are attached to what appears to be wrong or what appears to be right, inappropriate or appropriate in the conduct within an identifiable group.⁵⁴⁴ As a result, when we talk about ethical issues in the civil service, we are essentially referring to instances in which civil servants use their positions or appear to use them in a manner that is contrary to public confidence and trust. This unethical behaviour typically or occasionally arises from a desire for personal gain at the expense of the public good.

We mentioned earlier that ethics are typically a matter of evaluating occupational or professional moral values. Professional ethics are primarily concerned with the normative values that support loyalty, courtesy and respect, integrity, confidentiality, neutrality, discipline, and accountability in public administration, particularly in the civil service. In the civil service, these are the moral standards for management and administration that uphold the principles of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency. Even outside of the civil service, the steadfastness of civil servants is an essential ethical principle. The term "loyalty" refers to an employee's unwavering support of a high-ranking individual or organization. It simply indicates that a manager or official adheres to his instructions and responsibilities. In the case of the civil service, the executive branch of the government is expected to implement the political leadership's established policies.

⁵⁴² Boss, J. A. (1998). *Ethics for life: An interdisciplinary and multicultural introduction*. Mayfield Publishing Company.

⁵⁴³ Ibid (1998:5)

⁵⁴⁴ Sorkaa, A. P. (2003). *Development as Ethics and Accountability in Governance: The way forward for Nigeria* (No. 1). Benue State University. (2003:8)

People's perceptions of the current government are generally influenced by the civil service's performance in that regard. This explains why the civil service and the government need to have a special relationship of loyalty.

Respect and courtesy are other important ethical values because civil servants must always act courteously when interacting with staff and the public. Fairness, objectivity, and justice are always required of public servants. They are to avoid using abusive language, arrogance, deliberate hostility, roughness, and apathy toward the people. As a crucial ethical principle, courtesy and respect also entail creating a friendly and respectful environment for everyday people in society and being prepared to serve them promptly. Additionally, civil servants are expected to be prudent, patient, respectful of human dignity, and generally considerate of the public they serve. They should not try to take advantage of special privileges just because they are in a public service position. In addition, their way of life needs to reflect the prevalent viewpoints regarding virtue, manners, morals, dignity, and integrity. They are expected to act as examples of people who will not tolerate unethical behaviour.

In addition, public property must be treated with responsibility, and official materials and property should not be used for personal gain. They must be diplomatic in their interactions with the people. A strong sense of integrity is also a necessary ethical value for the civil service. As a result, civil servants must uphold high ethical standards by being truthful, trustworthy, open, steadfast, and morally sound. To avoid bringing the civil service into disrepute, it is necessary to uphold all of these aspects of integrity. Public administration is also impacted by the ethical value of confidentiality, which refers to the non-disclosure of government data. If they are locked, some government documents may compromise the integrity and security of the government.

Additionally, it is expected of civil servants to maintain political neutrality in regard to partisan politics. Simply put, this indicates that public servants should not assume the role of politicians by making their opinions known to the public. Administrators must be impartial in all official dealings, regardless of personal, ethnic, religious, or racial considerations, but they are expected to serve as advisers to the political leadership.

Sorkaa⁵⁴⁵ claims that the obligation of a subordinate to answer to the superior in the performance of assigned tasks and the exercise of discretionary powers is the primary focus of the concept of accountability. It is intended to hold public servants or other public officials accountable for their actions and inactions by illustrating hierarchical chains of accountability. It is intended to simplify government, increase responsiveness and legitimacy, and enhance policy implementation all at the same time.

In fact, the general apprehension that government employees might use the system for their own gain is the motivation behind accountability. This is because civil servants typically hold a lot of authority, knowledge, information, and resources that could be misused. In addition, because the civil service is in charge of a sizeable portion of a state's resources (including those of Nigeria), it has the power to form or fail governments and sometimes even usurp governmental authority. Given the preceding, it is, therefore, necessary to have control mechanisms for civil servants in order to reduce individual misbehaviour, group promotion, and excessive power use.

As can be seen from the preceding, professional ethics serve as the foundation for accountability, which in turn complements ethics. The norms and values of the society serve as the foundation upon which accountability is built. Clearly, ethics and accountability are the foundation for productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency in any organization—not just the civil service—and in society as a whole. However, the civil service in Nigeria has exhibited unethical behaviour and a widespread lack of accountability.

A situation in which civil servants, either individually or collectively, use or appear to use their positions in a manner that is contrary to public confidence and trust is referred to as a problem of ethics in the public bureaucracy. This unethical behaviour stems from a conflict of interest, loyalty, or values; It could also be because people are trying to get something for themselves at the expense of the rest of the population. Loyalty, courtesy, respect, integrity, and neutrality are frequently violated by civil servants in the course of policy implementation.⁵⁴⁶

An employee's unfaithfulness or failure to support an institution, organization, or superior is referred to as a disloyalty problem. The issue of disloyalty is also

⁵⁴⁵ Sorkaa, A. P. (2003). *Development as Ethics and Accountability in Governance: The way forward for Nigeria* (No. 1). Benue State University.

⁵⁴⁶ Beetseh, K., & Kohol, B. (2013). Challenges of ethics and accountability in Nigeria civil service: Implication for counseling. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 9(2), 18-23.

responsible for the unhealthy relationships that exist between civil servants. Additionally, this has a significant impact on the achievement of the service's intended goals and objectives. Disloyalty can be shown at work through insubordination and a friendly attitude.

Second, there is the issue of a lack of courtesy and respect. When dealing with people, all civil servants are expected to show courtesy and respect. However, it is disheartening to learn that civil servants in Nigeria show disrespect, uncounted behaviour, hostile, and unaccommodating tendencies, as demonstrated by the police. The state scholarship board, cabinet office (state secretariat), civil service commission, and local government service commission, to name a few, also exhibit this unethical behaviour, as did the author.

The low level of integrity among civil servants is another ethical issue. As a result of this lack of integrity, resources can be stolen and diverted for personal gain, contracts can be forged, and official records and classified information can be leaked. This is frequently attributed to the service's poor pay package.

Political neutrality issues are just as significant as the service's ethical issues. The term "political neutrality" simply refers to the instances in which public servants engage in partisan politics. This has frequently affected how well civil servants do their jobs. Again, this author had practically witnessed the situation during the 2007 general elections, when civil servants in Benue state publicly supported the PDP, the ruling party. In fact, the government of the time forced civil servants to "deliver" their constituencies to the ruling PDP or lose their salaries for the April elections.

In the Nigerian civil service, the issue of accountability has become a recurring phenomenon. It is now part of the service's culture! Corruption, red tape, and waste of human and material resources are manifestations of accountability issues. However, corruption is the most pronounced of these manifestations. Mismanagement, neglect of a recognized duty, or the unjustified exercise of power with the intention of gaining some advantages that are more or less directly personal are all examples of corruption. "Corruption is behaviour that deviates from the forward duties of a public role because of private regarding pecuniary or status gain,"⁵⁴⁷ corruption occurs when an individual illegally or illicitly places personal interest above the interests of others and the ideals she or he is pledged to serve. The nature and character of the Nigerian state, which is marked by widespread poverty,

⁵⁴⁷ Nye, J. S. (1967). Corruption and political development: A cost-benefit analysis. *American political science review*, 61(2), 417-427. (1967:427)

deprivation, exclusion, and a low level of development of the productive forces and social relations of production, are linked to the causes of corruption in the Nigerian civil service.

Red-tapism (strict adherence to bureaucratic procedures), or in this case, the strict adherence to civil service procedures, rules, and regulations. Despite the fact that regulations themselves are beneficial. This rigid adherence to them and inflexibility appears to be problematic. The strict adherence to policies and procedures of an organization may occasionally result in the goals of the organization being displaced. Indeed, red tape is restrictive, dysfunctional, and a hindrance to growth.

It is impossible to overstate the difficulties caused by resource wasting. The enormous waste of both human and material resources can be attributed to the ministers and departments of the government being duplicated in an unnecessary way. For instance, from 1999 to 2007, Benue State had a ministry of agriculture and another for animals and forestry, which is absurd and completely unnecessary. Due to the unproductive nature of the Nigerian economy, a high value is placed on the public bureaucracy to the point where such establishments and ministries are primarily created to reward political opponents and cronies at the polls. In the Nigerian civil service, these issues have continued to have a significant impact on productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency. As a result, the centre must properly undergo a surgical procedure rather than the usual palliative measures.

One of Nigeria's most perilous catastrophes is corruption. In all honesty, majority of the people in Nigeria, especially in Nigeria civil service, are not liberated from corruption. In the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government, journalism, politics, academia, security agencies, and even religious institutions and scholarship, corrupt practices have been established and adopted. The majority of Nigerians have recently expressed concern regarding the degree of corruption and sluggishness in the Nigerian civil service. The service's rules have been flouted, and the service has been dubbed several unpleasant names. The psychological factors and the sociological causes are the two causes of this attitude.

Psychological factors include, among others, an individual's insatiable appetite and desire for more, fear of the unknown, and greed. The service no longer upholds its ethical behaviour and accountability culture.⁵⁴⁸ Lack of institutional structure, cumbersome administrative procedures, negative attitudes among civil servants, non-disclosure of information unless the person pays for it, the civil service's rule of

⁵⁴⁸ Akindele, S. T. (2005). Critical Analysis of Corruption and its Problems¹ in Nigeria. *the Anthropologist*, 7(1), 7-18.

impartiality, political neutrality, and other factors contribute to corruption in the service which are found in the majority of government facilities. All of these made it easier to ignore the procedure.

Corruption is the foundation of the civil service's inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This was one of the reasons why the civil service had undergone several reforms in the past. For instance, upon Chief Olusegun Obasanjo taking over office in 1999, he announced on August 15, 2001, that he would submit a bill to the National Assembly to implement additional changes to the structure of the nation's civil service. The executive believed that the civil service could only be made more efficient and effective if the president could fire any civil servant, whenever he deem it appropriate, which is why the bill was passed. Due to the extent to which corruption had progressed to the point where it could no longer be concealed and was readily apparent to all, people were clamouring for reform at this point. The 1999 constitution's provision that allowed the president to hire and fire high-ranking federal civil service officers like the Secretary to the Federal Government, Ambassadors, Permanent Secretaries, and Head of the Civil Service of the Federation served as the basis for the demand and agitation. Nigerians have the propensity to become serious and stand up to their jobs only when they observe some drastic measures being taken, such as when a high-ranking civil servant or influential individual is retrenched.

It was noted that the civil service played a significant role in Gowon's economic policy. The civil service was responsible for developing the Second National Development Plan, with significant assistance from academics. Ademolekun⁵⁴⁹ asserted that the highest-ranking civil servants deserved full credit for the quality of the plans from 1970 to 1974. They should also be held accountable for contributing to the documented evidence of mismanagement and corruption against them, particularly for their cooperation with military officers to ignore the priorities outlined in the Second National Development Plan and for alienating the business elite, with whom the civil servants ought to have collaborated in the undertaking of national development. The Plan also stated that the civil service, which is part of the executive branch of the government, is essential regardless of shortcomings—which, of course, may reflect society—and that reforms may eventually be required.

Countries all over the world are working hard to improve the civil service's efficiency and effectiveness by changing its standards. However, the civil service

⁵⁴⁹ Ademolekun, L. (1993). *Politics and administration in Nigeria*. Spectrum Books.

that the colonial masters left Nigeria was foreign, narrow, and not focused on development. When the country gained independence in 1960, a large number of unqualified individuals joined the civil service, which led to corruption and an overworked workforce. It is believed that the corruption that currently exists in Nigeria's civil service is a legacy of what the colonial masters left her at independence. It was designed in a way that made it possible for colonial masters to successfully extract the material and financial resources that their controlling colonial powers needed. When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, our leaders took over the civil service, but they didn't try to reorganize it to meet our own developmental needs; consequently, despite the numerous reforms implemented by Nigeria's various regimes, the system's inherent corruption has continued to this day.

The colonial mindset of acquiring wealth for self-promotion and superiority permeated the civil service. "Black man's skin" made Nigerian leaders colonial masters, the spirit that says, "This work is not my father's work" and "The cap is not to be put on top of the head but by the shoulder" was aggravated by this. As a result, corruption and underdevelopment developed.

The Adebo Commission of 1971⁵⁵⁰, the Udoji Public Service Review Commission of 1974, the Dotun Philip Civil Service Reform of 1988, the Allison Ayida Committee on Civil Service of 1995, and other reforms were implemented after independence. The same spirit of colonialism and corruption persisted despite all of these reforms. Colonialism was characterized by a lack of accountability and transparency,⁵⁵¹ the colonial judicial system did not exist to carry out justice but rather to support the foreign government and its laws.⁵⁵²

Everyone believed that corruption would end once the Military Government took office. However, the situation was the opposite. The military elevated former politicians, academics, and high-ranking civil servants to ministerial positions giving them enormous authority to initiate and implement economic, social, and political policies. As a result, public spending accountability collapsed, and the service lacked transparency.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Cohen, R. (1971). Nigeria's Central Trade Union Organisation: a study guide. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9(3), 456-458.

⁵⁵¹ Fagbadebo, O. (2019). Corruption and the challenge of accountability in the post-colonial African states: A discourse. *Journal of African Union Studies*.

⁵⁵² Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American journal of social and management sciences*, 3(1), 17-29.

⁵⁵³ *ibid*

In March 2004, one of these attempts to reform the civil service was made in response to evidence of corruption and inefficiency in the service. In his speech at the service compact retreat in 2004, former president Obasanjo said, "Regrettably, Nigerians have been short-changed for too long by the quality of civil service/public service delivery," which means that decisions are not made without undue influence and files do not move without being pushed with inducements. Too often, our public offices have been shown to be obstacles to the effective implementation of government policies and to be examples of both inefficiency and corruption.⁵⁵⁴

To put it mildly, the president's speech or address is about how the civil service is being abused. Because the institutions and commissions established to curb crime and abuse of office are weak, it is difficult to hold public officers and other privileged Nigerians to any maximum level of conduct, which makes it difficult to hold them to any maximum level of conduct. Corruption in the civil service in Nigeria is ripe and attractive because the possibility of being caught or punished is remote because there is no risk of a deterrent.⁵⁵⁵ This corruption destroys the nation's socio-economic life, makes economic planning difficult, if not impossible, and prevents infrastructure projects from being implemented. While it concentrates wealth in the hands of a small number of people, it also encourages widespread poverty, high unemployment, inflation, and the destruction of ethical, moral, religious, and domestic values, creating an unfair and inequitable environment.

Corruption is a societal structural flaw that can be fixed mechanically.⁵⁵⁶ This lends credence to the viewpoint of functionalists, who maintain that every society functions like a machine and that any breakdown or malfunction of one component has a negative impact on the operation of other components. He goes on to say that because capitalism is based on exploitation and selfishness, any society with capitalism could be corrupt.

The widespread corruption committed by individuals, groups, ministries, parastatals, and agencies in Nigeria has a domino effect on a dysfunctional nation, hindering economic growth and development. Therefore, the high rate of corrupt practices in Nigeria has continuously permeated and invaded the nation in extremely complex

⁵⁵⁴ Ogunrin, F. O., & Erhijakpor, A. E. O. (2009). Servicom policy intervention: Improving service quality in Nigerian public sector. *Global journal of social sciences*, 8(1), 51-60.

⁵⁵⁵ Smith, D. J. (2018). Progress and Setbacks in Nigeria's Anticorruption Efforts. *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics*, 288.

⁵⁵⁶ Ogbonna, B. M., & Uma, K. E. The Dialectics of Corruption, Governance and Sustainable Economic Development: The Case of Nigeria.

ways, rendering the efforts of the government implausible and the level of corruption intolerable.⁵⁵⁷

A lot of these corrupt practices are carried out by administrators in conjunction with civil and public servants.⁵⁵⁸ In the 2007 Nigerian corruption index, the majority of corrupt institutions are public sector driven,⁵⁵⁹ notably, the Nigerian Police, Nigeria Customs Service, Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), and the Ministry of Education.⁵⁶⁰ However, another scholar argues that a typical civil servant has recently been subjected to a number of pressures to follow the part of corruption for the advancements of their career a socio-economic gains, the resultant effect is that widespread corruption is now a major obstacle to service delivery.⁵⁶¹

These corruptions also extend to recruitment in civil service which has been marred with politics. The Nigerian civil service's importance to recruitment and selection cannot be overstated. The personnel department and the line managers share responsibility for recruitment and selection in public organizations.⁵⁶² The fact that the civil service places an emphasis on uniformity, standardization, and transparency in the recruitment and selection procedures is instructive. Despite the foregoing, it is now clear in practice that the recruitment and selection process for the Nigerian civil service has been politicized, resulting in dysfunctional effects on institutional and employee productivity, quality decisions, program implementation, and quality public service delivery.⁵⁶³ The politics of recruitment as recruitment is the selection of candidates for recruitment based on political patronage or the political class.⁵⁶⁴ In the recruitment and selection process, it is the use of other criteria than merit, qualification, and technical expertise.

⁵⁵⁷ Aloko, S. M., & Abdullahi, U. (2018). Corruption and underdevelopment in Nigeria: Challenges and solutions. *Scientific Research Journal*, 6(7), 1-10.

⁵⁵⁸ Rotimi, E. M., Obasaju, B. O., Lawal, A., & Iseolorunkanmi, J. (2013). Analysis of corruption and economic growth in Nigeria. *Analysis of corruption and economic growth in Nigeria*, 4(4.2), 1-19.

⁵⁵⁹ Elijah, A. (2007). Effects of corruption and economic reforms on economic growth and development: lessons from Nigeria. In *African economic conference*.

⁵⁶⁰ Kayode, A., Adagba, S. O., & Anyio, S. F. (2013). Corruption and service delivery: the case of Nigerian public service. *Wudpecker Journal of Public Administration*, 1(1), 001-006.

⁵⁶¹ Bankole, I. O., & Olaniyi, D. E. (2014). Leadership crisis and corruption in Nigerian public sector: Implications for socio-economic development of Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 2(3), 24-38.

⁵⁶² ibid

⁵⁶³ ibi

⁵⁶⁴ Ikechukwu, N. P., Achori, T. D., Gogo, P. B., & Nchey-Achukwu, M. B. E. (2019). The Interference of Politicians in the Recruitment and Selection of Academic Staff in Tertiary Institutions: A Case Study of Polytechnics in Niger Delta. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, 9(3), 147-152.

Omeje and Ndukwe,⁵⁶⁵ contend that politicization of recruitment is the unconventional practice of employing political interest by those in public offices to fill vacancies in the public service, both existing and pending, without following proper procedures. As a result, this is the recruitment and selection procedure that is based on less important factors than merit and competence. In the meantime, concerned members of the public have voiced their total displeasure with the development and attributed it to factors such as the recruiting authority's transparency and independence, sources of attracting potential applicants, and inadequate and invalid standards for evaluating job candidates.⁵⁶⁶

State civil service's recruitment and selection procedures have been influenced by politics.⁵⁶⁷ Most of the time, political heavyweights take advantage of their privileged positions to give appointments to the state civil service to their political thugs who worked hard to make them winners in the election. In a similar vein, there are instances in which the concept of "godfatherism"⁵⁶⁸ is used to recruit and select individuals for the state civil service, overturning merit-based criteria.

Additionally, the need to compensate party loyalists is another trend of meddling in politics in recruitment and selection processes. Principal Officers of the party typically have the opportunity to nominate a specified number of individuals for appointment to the service in this scenario.⁵⁶⁹ Commissioners, special advisers to the governor, and members of the state house of assembly all have the privilege of making nominations for the same reason. Political affiliation often serves as the basis for this kind of appointment.

In addition, it is no longer news that the governor's relatives, friends, concubines, and associates⁵⁷⁰ are frequently appointed to public service when a new government takes office. That explains why whenever a new government takes office, in the state government house, the new governor's dialect serves as the lingua franca. This demonstrates that even when there is a clear employment embargo, people from the same neighbourhood as the top citizen are more likely to be appointed.

⁵⁶⁵ Omeje, N. P., & Ndukwe, C. (2009). Politicization of Personnel Management and Nigeria Public Service Efficiency An Overview. *A Journal of the Nigeria Public Administration Review*, 1(2), 35-46.

⁵⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁶⁷ Adeyemo, D. O., & Osunyanmi, P. O. (2009). Political influence on bureaucratic growth and social responsiveness: A case of Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of public administration and policy research*, 1(6), 117.

⁵⁶⁸ Ekundayo, W. J. (2017). Political elite theory and political elite recruitment in Nigeria. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 7(5), 1-8.

⁵⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁷⁰ Omitola, B. O. (2012). Nigerian Public Service Reforms and the Fourth Republic Experience: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 5(1).

Between 1999 and 2003, political officeholders in Ondo State manipulated recruitment into the public service in a critical manner.⁵⁷¹ It asserts that political exertion was largely responsible for the phenomenal expansion of the Ondo state public service during this period. Although these public servants only make up 1% of the population, 65.3⁵⁷² percent of the state's revenue is used for their salaries, making this increase's financial impact unsettling. In light of the pub service's abandonment of the merit system during this period, the paper observes complacency among the highest ranks. It concludes that the public service and society as a whole will be greatly affected by this extraordinary expansion of its size and methods of operation.

The Nigerian Public Service's irregular recruitment and selection procedures⁵⁷³ were the government's way of increasing the workforce and filling in for those who left the service. He also pointed out that sentiment and other fundamental issues like ethnicity, favouritism, and nepotism are given more weight in employment decisions than merit. The result was labour migration and an increase in governance costs. Constant interference, brought about by politicians' desire to enlist their constituents, is one of the main obstacles identified. Ethnic balancing was added to the problem by recruiting solely on skills rather than good character and the federal character principle.

Bernard and Okofu⁵⁷⁴ say that in any public or private organization, staff selection and recruitment are critical to the success of the business. This is because staff members are the ones who make the organization's vision and mission a reality. As a result, the successful coordination of an organization's human resources (staff) is necessary for achieving its goals. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the Nigerian public sector's recruitment and selection procedures. According to the findings, merit is frequently sacrificed for ethnicity and religion in Nigerian public service recruitment.⁵⁷⁵ The Nigerian Federal Character Principle was largely adhered to because the public service is directly controlled and regulated by the government. The study also reveals that, despite having established deadlines for recruitment and selection into the public sector, these are frequently ignored. The paper concludes

⁵⁷¹ David, A. O., & Pius, O. O. (2009). Political Influence on Bureaucratic Growth and Social Responsiveness: A Case of Ondo State, Nigeria. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 6(2).

⁵⁷² Ibid

⁵⁷³ Adamolekun, L., Erero, J., & Oshionebo, B. (1991). "Federal Character" and Management of the Federal Civil Service and the Military. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(4), 75-88.

⁵⁷⁴ Omisore, B. O., & Okofu, B. I. (2014). Staff recruitment and selection process in the Nigerian public service: what is to be done. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 280-293.

⁵⁷⁵ Ocheni, S., Atakpa, M., & Nwankwo, B. C. (2013). Improving staff utilization and productivity in the Nigerian public service through training. *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 2(1), 75-78.

by recommending that the Nigerian government's recruitment and selection policies should be unrestricted in order to operate the most effective administrative service for the benefit of all. It ought to be able to take on the most qualified, technically proficient, disciplined, and dedicated workforce, which would in turn assist the government in achieving its governance goals.

Since 1979, the federal character principle, also known as the quota system, has been a part of Nigeria's Constitution.⁵⁷⁶ Its goal is to make sure that public service organizations recruit and hire people from a variety of linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic backgrounds. The federal character and quota system have made it difficult to strike a balance between merit and quota when recruiting civil servants, military, and paramilitary personnel. In terms of discipline, morale, overall efficiency, productivity, and service delivery, this has had negative effects on both institutions.

The principal fundamental goal is equal representation of all states, ethnic groups, and other sectional groups in the federal workforce. The federal character principle has a lot of political support, especially from those who live in disadvantaged areas, primarily the northern states of Nigeria.⁵⁷⁷ In 1995, a commission known as the Federal Character Commission was established in order to effectively put this idea into action. The mission of the commission, which works in conjunction with the Federal Civil Service Commission and Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MDAs),⁵⁷⁸ is to guarantee that applicants for the federal civil service are recruited in accordance with the federal character principle.

Briggs⁵⁷⁹ investigated the recruitment issues in Nigeria's federal civil service and the extent to which job descriptions and job specifications are utilized in the hiring process. The survey found things like the use of informal sources of recruitment and rising employment pressures. The long military era, the federal character principle, the service commission's lack of independence, and the delegation of recruitment functions are the most common issues that affect recruitment in the Nigerian federal civil service.

⁵⁷⁶ Adamolekun, L., Erero, J., & Oshionebo, B. (1991). "Federal Character" and Management of the Federal Civil Service and the Military. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(4), 75-88.

⁵⁷⁷ Olowu, D., Otobo, E., & Okotoni, M. (1997, April). The role of the civil service in enhancing development and democracy: an evaluation of the Nigerian experience. In *conference on Civil Service Systems in Comparative Perspective*, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (pp. 5-8).

⁵⁷⁸ Manning, N., & Parison, N. (2001). Modernization of the federal civil service: methodology for functional reviews. *Paper produced for the Russian Federation Government*, The World Bank, Washington, DC, 28.

⁵⁷⁹ Briggs, B. R. (2007). Problems of recruitment in civil service: Case of the Nigerian civil service. *African journal of business management*, 1(6).

The recruitment process did not make adequate use of the job description and standard personnel requirements as a result of these issues, particularly at the lowest grade levels. In light of the findings, it was suggested that the federal government should pass laws protecting private-sector workers to lessen persistent competition for public-sector employment. It should be encouraged to recruit from educational institutions and professional organizations rather than from subjective and informal sources. The establishment of zonal and state offices should result in an increase in the number of federal civil service commissioners. Additionally, it was suggested that the salaries of federal employees be raised. When conducting actual recruitment, the federal civil service should use job descriptions and personnel requirements should be developed to match the classification of positions in the service.

Subsequently, Gberevbie⁵⁸⁰ asserts that institutions are established with specific objectives in mind. Human resources are seen as one of the most important factors in achieving these objectives; without them, the objectives are meaningless. The study empirically examined recruitment, retention, and performance strategies for Nigeria's Federal Civil Service (FCS) employees. The findings demonstrated that the Federal character principle (equal representation of people from different parts of the country), merit, political consideration, and the discretion of the government are primarily the foundations of the strategies for employee recruitment into the civil service. The study found that, in comparison to what is available in the private sector, the service lacked adequate incentives to retain its workforce for performance in terms of strategies for employee retention. Because of Nigeria's multicultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, the Federal Character Principle may be required as a strategy for employee recruitment into the FCS. However, its application should reflect merit within the principle. In addition, effective incentives ought to be offered in order to keep competent, productive employees.

The study's findings revealed specific organizational recruitment practices. It also revealed that the organization's recruitment procedures have a significant impact on employee behaviour and performance. It also laid out the obstacles to recruitment processes in organizations and their effects on employee retention and organizational growth. The following recommendations were made based on the findings: all applicants must go through recruitment processes and procedures; all applicants should be treated equally, and qualifications and merit should be clearly defined to include an applicant's ability to "deliver," rather than just "paper" qualifications.

⁵⁸⁰ Gberevbie, D. E. (2010). Strategies for employee recruitment, retention and performance: Dimension of the Federal civil service of Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(8), 1447-1456.

Recruitment and selection procedures have long been regarded as the most crucial aspects of human resource management.⁵⁸¹ These procedures aim to attract and then select the most qualified candidates for an organization's open positions. It is becoming increasingly clear that the recruitment and selection process can have a significant impact on an organization's success. It was discovered that politics are frequently a part of the recruitment process for the Nigerian civil service. Corruption, inefficiency, low productivity, indiscipline, and other negative effects of the exercise have been identified as the bane of the Nigerian civil service.⁵⁸² The study suggested, based on the preceding, that experts should handle recruitment and selection, and that the civil service commission should be made up of experts in human resource management. Additionally, the civil service commission ought to have autonomy not only in principle but also in practice. As a result of the preceding, the commission will be able to carry out its duties objectively and effectively without fear or favour, resulting in effective public service delivery.

Due to its age, laziness, and lack of enthusiasm for carrying out government policies, the civil service has been unable to provide effective service to the public. The majority of reforms were unsuccessful as a result of the non-political will to implement the reforms on behalf of political office holders, sentiments and mediocrity undermined the recommendations of several committees, the government's attempt to reform the civil service without departing from the status quo and deliberately disregarding democratic practice in managing the civil service. The current civil service reform will not result in the desired outcome unless the issue of a lack of democratic practice in the administration of the civil service is addressed. This will reduce the waste, corruption, poor productivity, redundancy, and weak governance structure that characterize civil service affairs.

While personal relationships, one's physical appearance, and one's attitude are also factors that influence the Nigerian civil service, religious factor is still considered a factor in the Nigerian public service though the influence is minimal compared to corruption and politics. The introduction of the Federal Character Principle is the primary factor that promotes this sentiment. In addition to religion, indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity, and bribery have an impact on Nigerian public service; however, meritocracy is regarded as the least important of them all. In addition, Godfatherism is prioritized over meritocracy during the Nigerian public servant

⁵⁸¹ Ahmad, S., & Schroeder, R. G. (2002). The importance of recruitment and selection process for sustainability of total quality management. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 19(5), 540-550.

⁵⁸² Anazodo, R. O., Okoye, J. C., & Chukwuemeka, E. E. (2012). Civil service reforms in Nigeria: The journey so far in service delivery. *American journal of social and management sciences*, 3(1), 17-29.

recruitment process. However, poor job knowledge, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, and poor performance and productivity in Nigeria's public service are all negatively impacted by politics and corruption sentiment in the recruitment process.

In the Nigerian civil service, recruitment and selection should be based on performance, merit, and action with the potential to produce and maintain the necessary skilled, knowledgeable, and developed human resources that are properly grounded in civil service norms and standards. The civil service commission ought to have autonomy not only in theory but also in practice. The constitutionally mandated duties of the commission ought to be discharged without restrictions.

This chapter clearly shows that religion plays some significant roles in the Nigerian political space, it also shows that ethnicity also plays a significant in the economy as well. In the next chapter, attempt would be made to examine a few state institutions to see how religion and ethnicity affects some specific institution.

4.0 Chapter Four

4.0.1 NIGERIA FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

Introduction

The best way to ascertain the impact of religious salience in the Nigerian polity, is to attempt to decipher how it impacts state institutions particularly in the areas of recruitment, training, and promotion. Efforts would also be made to identify lapses occasioned by ethnic bias and political affiliation. The recruitment and selection of employees in any organization be it in the public or private sector is of immense importance to the organization. This is a result of the fact that it is the staff that turns the mission and ultimately the vision of the organization into reality. Thus, the objectives and goals of any organization can only be realized through the effective coordination of the human capital of the organization.⁵⁸³ In other words, every organization is established with a predetermined goal or objective that it wants to achieve. The accomplishment of such goals, objectives, and vision lies in the hands of the organization's workforce. They must, therefore, be suited to meet the requirements of the organization.

The capacity of a nation's development rests on the capacity of its public service. Across the globe, most public services that are rendered or provided by the government are often carried out through civil servants.⁵⁸⁴ Civil servants are those that work in the public organization of any state or government. In Nigeria, civil servants are made up mainly of senior and junior staff, as well as executive, technical and administrative cadres who are largely distinguished based on their educational qualification, training, skill, and the duties they discharge.⁵⁸⁵

The role of public service towards the attainment of national development cannot be underrated in a dynamic and rapidly changing Nigerian society., this is because national development encompasses more than just the provision of physical infrastructure, it must be man-oriented.⁵⁸⁶ In developing countries, and particularly in Nigeria, public service is the most significant catalyst of national development and remains a preferred choice of career for many young and middle-aged adults.⁵⁸⁷ National development must be conceived in the context of a particular social system,

⁵⁸³ Omisore, B. O., & Okofu, B. I. (2014). Staff recruitment and selection process in the Nigerian public service: what is to be done. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 280-293.

⁵⁸⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁸⁵ Yaro, I. (2014). Recruitment and selection in the Nigerian public service: Nature, challenges and way forward. *British Journal of Economics, Management and Trade*, 4(7), 1005-1017.

⁵⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁸⁷ Eneanya, A. N. (2018). Performance management system and public service delivery in Nigeria: Impacts, problems, challenges and prospects. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 6(1), 1-9.

in other words, it is wrong and indeed injurious to conceive of national development in terms of system or systems adopted for a different cultural segment.

National development is a gradual manifestation of positive changes in the economic, industrial, political, social, cultural, and administrative life of a country.⁵⁸⁸ It has been argued that for an organization to achieve a certain degree of success in service delivery, the quality of human resources needs not be compromised. Because they are needed to coordinate and activate the other resources, human resources are the main instrument for the attainment of organizational objectives.⁵⁸⁹ As an intricate activity, service delivery entails meeting not only expressed needs but also anticipating the unexpressed needs of the customer, prioritizing that customer, allocating resources to satisfy the needs of that customer, and being able to account for what has been done. The contractual relationship obliges the government agency to render satisfactory service to citizens.⁵⁹⁰ The relationship also mandates the government as its core responsibility to provide services of public interest such as security, education, energy, water, healthcare, and other physical infrastructures or at least provide social services to their citizenry.

Empirically, service provision and delivery between the government and the people evoke a sense of contractual relationships between policymakers, service providers, and the populace. In order to achieve an efficient and effective public service, personal interests should never override the impetus for a strong institution. This in fact is the reason why public service delivery in Nigeria has witnessed declining performance levels since the colonial administrative period, personal interest has over the years, dwarfed the interest of the state. In some instances, the interest of the state has been jettisoned for political, tribal, and religious affiliations. As a result of this, the Nigerian public sector has undergone several reforms to reposition the country's bureaucracy for improved service delivery for the citizenry. None of the policy reforms has been able to change the narrative. Reforms that have spanned over 60 years with both the military and civilian administration proffering varying solutions through constitutional provisions and amendments to improve the performance of the civil service and deepen national integration, yet the country continues to grow apart with the public service, and the bureaucratic processes

⁵⁸⁸ Miller, P., & Rose, N. (1990). Governing economic life. *Economy and society*, 19(1), 1-31.

⁵⁸⁹ Okoye, P. V. C., & Ezejiofor, R. A. (2013). The effect of human resources development on organizational productivity. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(10), 250.

⁵⁹⁰ *ibid*

continue to out the national government institutions and parastatals in the hands of those who should not be there in the first place.

The reality of Nigerian bureaucracy is dominant politicizing, endemic and institutionalized corruption. While there are extant rules and established bureaucratic procedures, they simply exist in theory and on a nominal plane, as they can easily be breached with impunity by both politicians and top bureaucrats. The inefficiency and ineffectiveness of public service constitute a major setback for any country.⁵⁹¹ Generally, any service provided or supported by the government, or its agencies is considered public service. If public service encompasses all services that are rendered or funded by the government or its representatives and/or agencies, and if the government remains the final hope for the majority timid and vulnerable Nigerian population, then its assessment is crucial in determining its performance and contribution to national development.⁵⁹²

In the same vein, having the wrong personnel in an organization would jeopardize both individual and organizational development. However, having the right personnel would enhance the development of the individual as well as the organization, and until the management stops hiring bad habits, individuals and organizational development would become more and more frustrating.⁵⁹³

To maximize the potential of any organization, there must be mechanisms in place to harness the most qualified personnel so as to achieve the organisational goals.⁵⁹⁴ But, in most developing countries particularly Nigeria, nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, corruption, godfatherism and religious salience have destroyed the process of recruitment, training and promotion into the public service. These negative vices bring about incompetent personnel and demoralise the workforce with resultant effects on productivity. The desire of any rational management is geared towards ensuring that the qualified candidate gets the job but recently, management has been faced with problems of nepotism, tribalism, individualism, and management unpredictability in place of sincere recruitment and selection exercise.

To put the qualified candidate in the job, a strong recruitment and selection strategy is needed to maximise organisational goals. Gberevbie⁵⁹⁵ sees strategy as a means

⁵⁹¹ Tom, E. J., & Attai, A. J. (2014). The legislature and national development: The Nigerian experience. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(9), 63-78.

⁵⁹² *ibid*

⁵⁹³ Obisi, C. (1996). Personnel management. *Jackbod Enterprises. Ojokondo Layout Agbowo, Ibadan.*

⁵⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁹⁵ Gberevbie, D. E. (2010). Strategies for employee recruitment, retention and performance: Dimension of the Federal civil service of Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(8), 1447-1456.

by which a particular goal of an organization is attained. And that for any organization to achieve its goals there is the need to devise certain strategies including the one involving employee recruitment of a competent workforce and their retention for organizational performance.

Furthermore, the ethical behaviour of civil servants worldwide is proxied on certain codes such as discipline, loyalty, honesty, courage, cooperation, tact or skilfulness, and empathy, among others. These are behavioural codes any religion should ensure.⁵⁹⁶ Civil servants tend to in some cases, associate their work ethic observance with their religious teachings and doctrines thereby establishing a relationship between their faith and work. such as family, politics, and gender roles.⁵⁹⁷ Nigeria is also a diverse country in terms of religion. Christianity and Islam are each practiced by at least half of the population. While notably, Islam is widely practiced in the North, a considerable number of Christians are also domiciled there as well, in particular in the North Central region. Similarly, Christianity is prevalent in the South, there is also a considerable number of Muslims in the South, in particular in the Southwest.⁵⁹⁸

This is pertinent to make mention, that religion and religious institutions play a significant role in society, the workplace inclusive. It is also pertinent to note that civil servants do not leave their religion at home when they are off to work, it is an important part of their lives. The role of Religion in a workplace environment, in this case, the civil service, therefore, has become a major concern to scholars of corporate governance.

4.0.2 RELIGIOUS SALIENCE IN NIGERIA'S PUBLIC SECTOR

Nigeria is a religiously pluralistic country. Aside from the three major religions of Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion (ATR),⁵⁹⁹ there are several others competing for recognition and relevance. In spite of this reality, in theory,

⁵⁹⁶ Asifat, O. D., & Adisa, A. L. (2020). Influence of Religious Affiliation on the Observance of Civil Service Work Ethics in Osun State. *Ife Social Sciences Review*, 28(1), 1-15.

⁵⁹⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁹⁸ Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): a critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315-328.

⁵⁹⁹ Kitause, R. H., & Achunike, H. C. (2013). Religion in Nigeria from 1900-2013. *Religion*, 3(18), 45-57.

Nigeria is a secular state.⁶⁰⁰ This has been inculcated into the constitution since the country gained its independence.⁶⁰¹ It is taken to mean ‘of or relating to something worldly, as opposed to sacred things or having no particular religious affinities. Secularism, as a type of doctrine, rejects religion. It maintains that there should be no room for religious influence in civil affairs and civil rules should have no interest in religion. Thus, a secular state is a state where religious communities have no identifiable role in politics and no formal relation and connections to the state.⁶⁰² This is different from the theocratic or religious state where religion determines and influences what happens in the state.

Also, the Holy Qur’an admonished that the choice of religious worship should be the prerogative of the individual because the right part is often distinguishable from the wrong part, stating that:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in 'Taghut' [false leaders and false deities] and believes in Allah, then, he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. Allah is the 'Wali' [Protector or Guardian] of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light. But as for those who disbelieve, their "Auliya" [supporters and helpers] are 'Taghut' [false deities and false leaders], they bring them out from light into darkness. Those are the dwellers of Fire, and they will abide therein forever.”⁶⁰³

Similarly, the Holy Bible also advocates for religious freedom among believers. Stating that:

“You, my brothers, and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.”⁶⁰⁴

The provision of the constitution as stated in section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, “the government of the federation shall not adopt any religion as State Religion”.⁶⁰⁵ Therefore, in policy formulation, governance, and other governmental activities, religion should not be an issue. By implication, every

⁶⁰⁰ Kenny, J. (1996). Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a secular state. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26(4), 338-364.

⁶⁰¹ *ibid*

⁶⁰² *ibid*

⁶⁰³ The Noble Qur'an. English translation of the meanings and commentary. Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex. (Qur'an, Surah 2, 256-257)

⁶⁰⁴ The Holy Bible New International Version (NIV Galatians 5:13)

⁶⁰⁵ Yesufu, M. L. (2016). The impact of religion on a secular state: the Nigerian experience. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 42(1), 1-11. (2016:8)

citizen has a right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Section 38 is categorical, that:

1. Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom (either alone or in community with others and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance.

2. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony, or observance relates to religion, other than his own or a religion not approved by his parents or guardian, and

3. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.

The constitution further emphasizes that national integration will be emphatically encouraged. Accordingly, discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic, or linguistic ties and or association shall be prohibited, while national ethics shall be Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, selflessness, Self-reliance, and Patriotism.

From the foregoing, the legal provisions are made in order to ensure that citizens enjoy the freedom of religion and that the state and or government does not identify and affiliate itself or show a preference for one religion. The popular principle 'live and let live' is held and the impact and contribution that religion can have on the life of citizens are recognized, hence the promotion of religious tolerance.

Religion manifests in various aspects of life in Nigeria, however, what is interesting is that caution has always been taken not to use religion to cause problems. This is done by making sure that no religion is overly preferred or neglected. For example, at public gatherings such as political rallies and national gatherings, it is either prayer

is not offered at all, or they are offered by leaders or functionaries of the recognized religious. In this case, if the opening prayer was said by a Muslim, a Christian will say the closing prayer, and vice versa. This is a way of preventing conflict, which may snowball into violence. With respect to that public holidays, Christianity and Islam are adequately catered for with provisions made to accommodate both religions as work-free days are observed during their festivals. Whereas, in the history of the Nigerian federation, no public holiday has been declared for traditional festivals by the Federal Government.

From the foregoing, the provisions of the constitution apply to the administration of the Nigerian Federal Civil Service.

4.0. 3 RECRUITMENT INTO THE NIGERIAN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

At independence, Nigeria became a federal state with three autonomous regions: the North, South-East, and South-West. The federal government was dominated by the Northern region, which was by far the largest one.⁶⁰⁶ This structure of ‘unequal federation’⁶⁰⁷ pitted the regions and dominant ethnic groups in each region against one another. Arguably, the most important cleavage exists between the North and the South of the country and is rooted in these regions’ different ethnic, religious, political, and economic make-up. While the South feared the North’s demographic majority, the North worried about losing out to the relatively higher-educated Southern elites, particularly in public service.⁶⁰⁸

The intensification of these concerns and fear of domination of some ethnic groups/tribes over others culminated into the Nigerian Civil War Between 1967-1970. The post-civil war era witnessed several efforts by the military regimes to address the sensitive issues of political inequality and ethnic domination that had contributed to the collapse of the First Republic and the onset of the civil war. A range of constitutional changes was introduced in the years following the civil war with the specific aim to promote ‘national unity’ and political stability.⁶⁰⁹ Chief among the changes introduced were the requirement that political parties had national character, and the introduction of the ‘Federal Character Principle’,

⁶⁰⁶ Diamond, L. (1983). Class, ethnicity, and the democratic state: Nigeria, 1950–1966. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 25(3), 457-489.

⁶⁰⁷ Ukiwo, U. (2005). The study of ethnicity in Nigeria. *Oxford Development Studies*, 33(1), 7-23.

⁶⁰⁸ Langer, A., Mustapha, A. R., & Stewart, F. (2009). Diversity and discord: Ethnicity, horizontal inequalities and conflict in Ghana and Nigeria. *Journal of International Development*, 21(4), 477-482.

⁶⁰⁹ Ukiwo, U. (2005). The study of ethnicity in Nigeria. *Oxford Development Studies*, 33(1), 7-23.

requiring the fair and equitable representation of different ethnic and regional groups in the composition of all tiers of government.

The federal character principle can be regarded as a direct approach to redress horizontal inequalities between different groups in society.⁶¹⁰ Such an approach targets specific groups directly and associates a person's group identity with a certain benefit. Ijewereme⁶¹¹ identified the correlation between corruption and societal pressure, greed, and nepotism, and failed and incapacitated Nigerian public service as well as impeded individual worker performance and organizational development. A public service reform emanating from such pressure is the federal character principle (FCP).

The federal character principle was first included in the Second Republic constitution but is now enshrined in provisions 14.3 and 14.4 of the 1999 Constitution. It requires that there is 'no predominance of persons from a few states or a few ethnic or other sectional groups' in the federal government and its agencies. The Federal Character Commission (FCC) was created to carry out this mandate. The Federal Character Commission was created by decree in 1996 by the military regime of Sani Abacha but the 1999 constitution has included the Federal Character Commission as one of the 14 independent federal executive bodies. Omisore & Okofu⁶¹² stated that in the Nigerian public service, a distinction has been traded and sacrificed for sentiments, tribalism, nepotism, ethnicity, and undue favouritism. Gberevbie⁶¹³ also recognized that predicting employee recruitment on federal character does not mean that such an employee cannot contribute meaningfully towards the enhancement of the goals of the organization.

The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognized the imperative of federal character to Nigeria's administrative system, hence section 14 (3) states that: 'The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of

⁶¹⁰ Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): a critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315-328.

⁶¹¹ Ijewereme, O. B. (2015). Anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian public sector: Theoretical perspectives and some empirical explanations. *Sage Open*, 5(2), 2158244015581188.

⁶¹² Omisore, B. O., & Okofu, B. I. (2014). Staff recruitment and selection process in the Nigerian public service: what is to be done. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 280-293.

⁶¹³ Gberevbie, D. E. (2014). Democracy, democratic institutions and good governance in Nigeria. *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, 30(1), 133-152.

persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies’.

Its first mandate is to work out an equitable formula, subject to the approval of the president, for the distribution of posts in public service as well as political appointments. The commission is composed of a chairman, 37 commissioners representing the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and the Secretary of the Commission (FCC, 2016).⁶¹⁴ The Chairman, commissioners and secretary are appointed by the President upon nomination by the state government and confirmation by the National Assembly. The Federal Character Commission is supported by civil servant staff responsible for data gathering and monitoring, administration. The FCC has established 24 committees to monitor recruitment into about 600 ministries, departments, and agencies (MDA) of the Federal Government⁶¹⁵. The state branches of the Federal Character Commission monitor the states and Local Government Areas (LGA). The distribution formula developed by the FCC is strictly based on geographical areas including geopolitical zones, states, local government councils and electoral wards, rather than ethnicity, religion, and demography.

Geopolitical zones are not formally recognised as administrative units in the constitution, but they are well known and used, including by the Federal Character Commission. Nigeria counts six geopolitical zones: North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South, and South-West. The zonal level is used when the number of employees in an institution is small.

In this case, each zone should count for between 15 and 18% of the employees. However, no state should dominate in a zone. The approved formula for equitable distribution across states is that each state should produce 2.75% of the total workforce, with an acceptable range of 2.5% to 3%. The Federal Capital Territory should take up 1%. At the state level, the ranges are dependent on the number of Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state. At the LGA level, the ranges are dependent on the number of

⁶¹⁴ Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): a critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315-328.

⁶¹⁵ *ibid*

wards. At all geographical levels, exceptions exist for junior staff, which may take up 75% of a specific ‘catchment area’ or the locality where the institution is based.⁶¹⁶

The Federal Character Commission collects data on Ministries Departments and Agency (MDAs) nominal rolls by year and produces an annual report for the President. It also monitors recruitment exercises, pointing out to the Ministry Departments and Agencies which states should receive preference in hiring based on the analysis of the nominal roll. Candidates should firstly meet the criteria set out in the vacancy, and then fulfil federal character criteria. This implies that candidates with a lower score than others, but from underrepresented states, should receive preference, as long as the minimum criteria are respected.

Vacancies for positions in the federal civil service are to be advertised in one Northern and one Southern newspaper for a period of six weeks, but increasingly also on the web. FCC commissioners monitor the recruitment process to ensure the implementation of federal character. The Ministries Departments and Agencies are required to present the names and states of origin of successful candidates recruited. While MDAs who meet the requirements are awarded a certificate of compliance after the recruitment exercise, Chief executive officers of MDAs who do not comply may be prosecuted for criminal offences. Penalties include fines of 50,000 Naira or more, and 6 months or 2 years of imprisonment.⁶¹⁷

The inclusion of federal character into the 1979 and 1999 constitutions is a display of heinous attitude by the elite.⁶¹⁸ Since its inclusion, Nigeria has known no peace. That Nigeria is still united is not unconnected to the greed of the elites that sacrifice popular agitation for personal gains. The rising security challenges orchestrated by militia groups are indications of disillusionment among different ethnic groups and sub-nationalities. Aside from being an administrative mechanism, the federal character principle in Nigeria has come to represent a political necessity to further integrate the diverse elements of over 250 ethnic groups that comprise the nation.

Given the “multi-ethnic,” religious and cultural diversity of the country, it is clear that merit as an exclusive principle for recruitment will negate the desire for equal representation of all sections of the country in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service (NFCS). Consequently, the place of federal character in the country’s geo-

⁶¹⁶ Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): a critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315-328. (2020:317)

⁶¹⁷ *ibid*

⁶¹⁸ Okolo, P. O. (2014). Influence of the Federal Character Principle on national integration in Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(6), 121-138.

administrative and political equation cannot be over-emphasized. It was in a bid to resolve the dilemma of the problem of northern political domination and southern-dominated bureaucracy in the country that led to the introduction of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria.⁶¹⁹

The term “bureaucracy” can be traced to and is derived from the word “bureau” and “Kratos.” While “bureau” denotes the office,” Kratos” refers to power or rule.⁶²⁰ Since that connection has been established, bureaucracy etymologically would translate to the rule of the office. Succinctly put, bureaucracy refers to rules operated from a table or an office, which is characterized and associated with written documents,⁶²¹ this concept was first developed by French economist Vincent de Gourney (1712–1759).⁶²²

The term representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is not exclusively related to Nigeria's administrative system; it has gained popularity and become acceptable public policy in many heterogeneous societies⁶²³ in the world both the developed and the developing, especially in the area of recruitment as well as promotion in public institutions. For instance, in Canada the representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is referred to as employment equity,⁶²⁴ in India and Nepal it is reservation while it is known as positive discrimination in the United Kingdom. In the United States of America, the introduction and adoption of the principle of representation in public institutions is habitually discussed under the umbrella of the term affirmative action.⁶²⁵

There are many other countries that practice representative bureaucracy but still can boast of viable public institutions and sustainable national development, and why Nigeria's brand has been counterproductive, is that representative bureaucracy was not introduced in Nigeria to achieve sustainable development or national integration. Also, such an objective was never part of the agenda of the political class, rather it was introduced by the dominant political elites to ensure a wider and stronger hold on the state power.⁶²⁶ He further maintained that the political elites and senior bureaucrats in Nigeria's public service perceive the ethnic balancing arrangement as

⁶¹⁹ *ibid*

⁶²⁰ Ukeje, I. O., Ogbulu, U., Onyema, U. E., Obi, V., & Obasi, V. U. (2019). Bureaucratization and service delivery in Nigeria. *Global encyclopedia of public administration, public policy, and governance*. Springer, Cham.

⁶²¹ Potter, R. A. (2019). *Bending the rules: Procedural politicking in the bureaucracy*. University of Chicago Press.

⁶²² Ives, R. J. (2003). Political publicity and political economy in eighteenth-century France. *French History*, 17(1), 1-18.

⁶²³ Riccucci, N. M., & Saidel, J. R. (1997). The representativeness of state-level bureaucratic leaders: A missing piece of the representative bureaucracy puzzle. *Public Administration Review*, 423-430.

⁶²⁴ Onyishi, A. E. (2018). Representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service and the problem of sustainable national development: Issues and policy recommendations. *Journal of security studies and global politics*, 3(2), 157-166.

⁶²⁵ *ibid*

⁶²⁶ *ibid*

a method of extending their power and political tentacles in the country rather than a basis for the recruitment of competent hands into the public service to ensure sustainable national development in the country.

Representative bureaucracy as a doctrine of the 1979 constitution sought to give a semblance of order to the modes of this distribution by preventing any ethnic group from having dominance and exclusive access to these opportunities and benefits inherent in the exercise of state powers and consequently ensuring that every state or region has equal access to the benefits of the state.⁶²⁷

The theory of representative bureaucracy recommended that a demographically diverse public sector workforce will lead to a policy outcome that reflects the interest of all groups represented, including historically disadvantaged communities. The representative bureaucracy involves a deliberate plan to construct means of ensuring the proper distribution of amenities and government projects in the whole country.

The principle of Representative bureaucracy recommends that the social composition of the public organization is crucial to its performance and acceptability in the sight of the general public. It must be as a result of the above postulation that some scholars wonder whether any bureaucracy can ever secure legitimacy if it is unable to represent all sectors of the society to which they are serving⁶²⁸ because a bureaucracy must as a matter of necessity consist of a rational cross-section of the body politic in terms of occupation, class, geography, and all so it must be in general tune with the ethos and attitudes of the society of which it is part.⁶²⁹

A number of scholars on representative governance have identified some advantages of representative bureaucracy as a result of its ability to provide some kind of support for government policies, as well as include people who are local and indigenous to the environment to be actively involved or partake in the implementation of government policies and programmes in that particular area including its ability to serve as the mechanism for the government to distribute patronage to its supporters.⁶³⁰

Representative bureaucracy has helped in consolidating national stability⁶³¹ by reducing ethnic competition for political position and ethnic politics and makes it

⁶²⁷ *ibid*

⁶²⁸ Krislov, S. (2012). *Representative bureaucracy*. Quid Pro Books.

⁶²⁹ *ibid*

⁶³⁰ Tiemo, J. A., & Arubayi, D. O. (2012). Recruitment practices in Nigeria: Issues of equality and diversity. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 3(3), 210-213.

⁶³¹ Idike, A., Ukeje, I. O., Iwuala, H. O., Onele, J. C., Ekwunife, R. A., Nwachukwu, K., & Udu, O. (2019). The practice of inclusive representation in Nigeria bureaucracy: The federal character principle experience. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1601545.

difficult for an ethnic bigot to take over political power and suppress other ethnic groups and the principle is not only desirable but also inevitable in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria.⁶³² However, there are contradictions in the application of the federal character principle in the civil service particularly in the area of employee recruitment and promotion. Subjecting recruitment or promotion to federal character discriminates against merit and is therefore unfair to certain sections of the country to the advantage of others. The resultant outcome will be that of acquisition and employment of incompetent workforce into the public service and the inevitable result is that of poor performance.

The practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's context is a strategic plan of the dominant political elites to position their loyal agents in public offices who will act as political representatives against the set-out goals of the establishment where they work. Furthermore, the practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria instead of restructuring the negative effects of ethnocentrism to positive outcome, tend to aggravate ethno-regional division in the country,⁶³³ its practice in Nigeria lacks the fundamental stimulus required as a state policy for ensuring sustainable national development, nation building or national integration.⁶³⁴

The federal character principle is simply an elite strategy which cannot enhance sustainable development or national integration in Nigeria because it is not designed for such responsibility but for the selfish elite's political reasons. In the same vein, other scholars observed that the application of Representative Bureaucracy to public services is a radical attempt and damaging to national development.⁶³⁵ He also asserted that the application of the principle had invaded the integrity and standards of public bureaucracy and other governmental bodies that normally should be shielded from the influence of politics.

The application of the Federal Character principle in public service did not only lead to poor appointments but also promoted mediocrity rather than merit.⁶³⁶ Although the principle has been one of the effective nation-building strategies invented for managing the combustive diversity in Nigeria, it had badly eroded the professional

⁶³² *ibid*

⁶³³ Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A history of identities, violence, and stability in Nigeria* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford.

⁶³⁴ *ibid*

⁶³⁵ Ughulu, E. S., & Amaka, O. P. (2020). Representative bureaucracy and the challenges of diversity management in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration*, 2(2), 15-22.

⁶³⁶ Okolo, P. O. (2014). Influence of the Federal Character Principle on national integration in Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(6), 121-138.

and competency capacity of the public service.⁶³⁷ To ensure equality for the unequal in the federal government institutions, the federal character principle has become discriminatory. However, the interpretation of the federal character on the basis of state and ethnicity is regarded by some as inadequate as other social divisions in Nigeria including class, religion, and ideological divisions.⁶³⁸

Similarly, the operations of federal character tend to give more power to the politically dominant groups, creating wider power disparity between the stronger and weaker groups.⁶³⁹ The representative bureaucracy, quota system or federal character principle is just one of the numerous methods that are employed by the dominant political elite in the country to maintain their hold on the tentacles of state power and to maintain their continued exploitation of better-qualified citizens of the country from the other class or region.⁶⁴⁰ The representative bureaucracy is purely a doctrine of class domination.

Scholarly research and investigations by government regulatory agencies in Nigeria's public administration have shown that the federal character principle has not achieved equitable sharing and distribution of employment opportunities in government public bureaucracies but has exacerbated ethnic rivalry, cronyism, corruption, and system dysfunction in the recruitment process.⁶⁴¹ Over the years, the Nigerian public service had gone through various reforms to develop its service delivery. These reforms have been said to be more structural, paying little or no attention to human recruitment processes. Human resources managers/professionals were not engaged to hire personnel strategically which in turn does not translate to strategic recruitment of personnel into the service.⁶⁴²

Civil service is the backbone of the government.⁶⁴³ It formulates and implements core national policies and should be modernized to cope with modern-day challenges and meritocratic recruitment can be one way of promoting the effectiveness of the service.⁶⁴⁴ Thus, public service recruitment (PSR) practices remain an indispensable tool for the attainment of the goals and objectives of government in a sustainable

⁶³⁷ Kayode, A. (2015). Federalism and Federal Character Principle in Nigeria: A Dilution. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 3(7), 32-44.

⁶³⁸ Idike, A., Ukeje, I. O., Iwuala, H. O., Onele, J. C., Ekwunife, R. A., Nwachukwu, K., & Udu, O. (2019). The practice of inclusive representation in Nigeria bureaucracy: The federal character principle experience. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1601545.

⁶³⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁶⁴¹ *ibid*

⁶⁴² Lasisi, O. I., & ASA, K. J. (2020). Recruitment process: a catalyst for employees' performance in the Nigerian public service. an empirical evidence from the Lagos state internal revenue service.

⁶⁴³ Zainab, B., Bhatti, M. A., Pangil, F. B., & Battour, M. M. (2015). E-training adoption in the Nigerian civil service. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 39(6), 538-564.

⁶⁴⁴ *ibid*

manner. However, there are prerequisites for achieving the sustainable development goals in public administration. Literature in this area has highlighted the importance of strategic recruitment practices by human resource practitioners in sustaining global best practices and citizen-centred service delivery.⁶⁴⁵

Employees' performance in public service can be linked directly or indirectly to recruitment procedures and practices.⁶⁴⁶ The Nigerian public service is riddled with poor recruitment policies and practices which inadvertently had negative implications on its service delivery.⁶⁴⁷ Furthermore, the recruitment process should not be randomized, and provisions should be made for candidates with excellence and outstanding performances. In line with the strategic goals of the organization.⁶⁴⁸ Recruitment exercise in the public service has led to sacrificing merit on the altar of nepotism and tribalism by political officeholders and top bureaucrats.⁶⁴⁹

In the same vein, public service recruitment practices refer to the trends peculiar to a bureaucracy's workforce engagement processes. In the case of Nigeria, recruitment revolves around divisive issues like religion, ethnicity, political affiliations, networking, and secret auctioning to the highest bidders as parameters for filling vacancies in the public service.⁶⁵⁰

The availability of a competent and effective workforce does not just happen by chance but through an articulated recruitment policy. It should be noted that one of the greatest challenges of Nigerian bureaucracy is the non-performance of the civil service.⁶⁵¹ It is, therefore, imperative to further interrogate this catalogue of challenges by investigating the federal character principle as regards recruitment in the federal civil service and its implications on workers' service delivery.

As Onyishi⁶⁵² observes, those who got employed in federal institutions through representative bureaucracy or federal character principle tend to be more loyal to the region or state to which they represent, since they lack the requisite competence for

⁶⁴⁵ Kamugisha, F. (2018). Effect human resources capacity building of on service delivery in local government in Rwanda (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rwanda).

⁶⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁴⁷ Adewusi, O. A., Ogunyemi, S. Y., & Aluko, Y. A. (2017). Motivation and ethics: critical factors for sustainable public service delivery in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities, Social Science and Creative Arts*, 12(1), 38-60.

⁶⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁴⁹ Lasisi, O. I., & ASA, K. J. (2020). Recruitment process: a catalyst for employees' performance in the Nigerian public service. An empirical evidence from the Lagos state internal revenue service.

⁶⁵⁰ Ndukwe, C., Idike, A. N., Ukeje, I. O., Onele, J. P., Clementina, K., Obasi, V. U., ... & Anigbata, O. D. (2020). Recruitment practices and sustainable development. *Global encyclopedia of public administration, public policy, and governance*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_4034-1.

⁶⁵¹ Eme, O. I., & Andrew, V. O. (2013). Civil service and cost of governance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Accounting Research*, 1(2), 27-48.

⁶⁵² Onyishi, A. E. (2018). Representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service and the problem of sustainable national development: Issues and policy recommendations. *Journal of security studies and global politics*, 3(2), 157-166.

the position they occupied. They often have the proclivity to frustrate organizational objectives without being appropriately sanctioned as a result of the region or unit they represent in that particular public organization. The employees who are recruited into a public organization and the civil service, through the principles of representative bureaucracy may inadvertently begin to operate like political representatives without paying due attention to their job descriptions.⁶⁵³

From the foregoing, it is clear that when meritocracy, objectivity, excellence, and competence are jettisoned in the recruitment process of a country's civil service, it will likely hinder the national development of the country. This anomaly often has a ripple effect. If the goal of the government is to promote and improve social infrastructure in the country, to achieve this goal, it has to call on its employees (civil servants) to help implement governments policies and programmes. Any chink in the armour often results in disastrous consequences usually felt in the living standard of the citizens.

This in turn results in the failure of the government as a whole. This inadvertently implies that for a government that intends to keep its mandate to its people. The first thing is to ensure that those under its employ that would assist carry out its objectives must be skilled enough to handle the demands of the civil service. The recruitment and selection process into the civil service is bedevilled by factors that are hindering the climate of meritocracy which is critical to actualizing the goals of the service.⁶⁵⁴

From the results of an empirical study in 2015⁶⁵⁵ on the selection of ministries, parastatals, and agencies in Nigeria, it was observed that there is little to no adherence to the federal character principle in the recruitment of civil servants. It was further observed that the federal character principle has a negative effect on employees' service delivery in the nation's federal civil service, while also inhibiting workers' productivity and reducing workers' morale as a result of the recruitment of incompetent and inefficient workers into the civil service.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵³ Utume, D. A., & Ugandan, I. A. (2018). Ethnic Diatribes as National Dialogue: Metamorphosis of Political Expression in Nigeria. *FUDMA JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*, 1(1), 136-150.

⁶⁵⁴ Adenugba, A. A., Fadoju, O., & Akhuetie, R. E. (2017). Non-meritocratic factors and the recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service, Nigeria. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 21(2), 115-133.

⁶⁵⁵ Igbokwe-Ibeto, C. J., Osadeke, K. O., & Anazodo, R. O. (2015). The effect of manpower planning and development in Lagos state (Nigeria) civil service performance. *Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review*, 3(4), 76-116.

⁶⁵⁶ Idike, A., Ukeje, I. O., Iwuala, H. O., Onele, J. C., Ekwunife, R. A., Nwachukwu, K., & Udu, O. (2019). The practice of inclusive representation in Nigeria bureaucracy: The federal character principle experience. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1601545.

In addition, their findings also concluded that the application of the federal character principle has a negative effect on employees' attitude to work in the Nigerian federal civil service,⁶⁵⁷ which was not far-fetched from the results of their interviews with selected civil servants where some workers complained indignantly on how some workers are unfairly promoted, meaning that workers with less experience often become the bosses of those that joined the service before them. As a result, the federal character principle becomes a demotivating and demoralising factor in the morale of the workers which significantly impacts their service delivery in the service, and even worse, some may deliberately attempt to sabotage the system just to prove a point. This phenomenon is often blamed on religion or ethnicity which further fan the embers division in the country.⁶⁵⁸

They recommended that the civil service recruitment be modified to ensure it is capable of absorbing the best qualified, technically competent, disciplined and committed personnel that would in turn help the government to achieve the goals of governance and administration. Also, the Nigerian civil service should imbibe the precepts of Marx Weber's bureaucratic theory as regards recruitment and global best practices that place preference on recruitment based on merit, technical competency, and qualification.⁶⁵⁹ It was discovered in their study that the reason why the principle is considered more important than meritocracy in the recruitment of federal civil servants is that those in disadvantaged areas are guaranteed adequate representation.⁶⁶⁰ This study shows that religion does not play any significant role and is not a major determinant in recruitment into the Nigerian federal civil service. However, ethnic affiliation and corruption play significant roles in the weakness of state institutions in Nigeria.

This is in addition to indigenization and statism in the federating states, where it was observed that candidates who are not indigenes of Oyo state, for instance, are not recruited into the state civil service even when they are more qualified.⁶⁶¹ Furthermore, adopting the principle of meritocracy in recruitment ensures that candidates are selected based on their ability, competence, and skills. When sentiments influence the recruitment process, it could have a negative impact on the

⁶⁵⁷ Justine, I. I. C., Chinelo, A. F., & Ogomegbulam, A. R. (2015). The application of federal character principle and its implication on service delivery in Nigerian federal civil service. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 5(3), 1-22.

⁶⁵⁸ Nwogwugwu, N., & Sosanya, O. A. (2015). Effect of federal character on appointment into the civil service system: A study of federal ministry of education. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 3, 1-12.

⁶⁵⁹ Justine, I. I. C., Chinelo, A. F., & Ogomegbulam, A. R. (2015). The application of federal character principle and its implication on service delivery in Nigerian federal civil service. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 5(3), 1-22.

⁶⁶⁰ Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): a critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315-328.

⁶⁶¹ Adenugba, A. A., Fadoju, O., & Akhuetie, R. E. (2017). Non-meritocratic factors and the recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service, Nigeria. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 21(2), 115-133.

organization. Socio-cultural factors such as ethnicity, statism, nepotism, and religion are factors that arise out of sentiments and personal bias.⁶⁶² They represent non-meritocratic factors that serve as an impediment to the effective recruitment process. An instance is, the non-recruitment of non-indigenes, qualified for a job. The sentiments attached to recruitment of public office holders in Nigeria have contributed to the low performance of the civil service in the country.

It is safe to conclude that staff recruitment and selection in the Public Service in Nigeria are complementary and critical indispensable institutional activities that add significant value to Nigeria's civil service which is as a result of the fact that they provide the basis or bottom line for the paramount role of the civil service in supporting the policy formulation process and translating policies into action. After all, the most important task of the civil service is to operate the administrative machinery in accordance with the policy established by the political executive, and the work of government cannot be left undone.

*This explains why staff recruitment, selection systems, and practices must be allowed to take their full course or follow their entire cycle by adhering to the principles of systematic planning, clinical execution, objectivity, and merit, even where there is a need to satisfy such demands for ethnic balancing or Federal Character Principle. In the Public Service of Nigeria, staff recruitment and selection system and practice are beset with sub-optimal institutional and organizational factors that alter the demands for meritocracy and constitute a great threat to the effectiveness of the Public Service as an instrument and machinery of development in the country.*⁶⁶³

Similarly, the recruitment processes for public service can encourage sustainable development across different areas by implementing a merit-based system of personnel administration that eliminates any violations of process and procedure. This system should also prioritize diversity while selecting the best human resource capital available within a group, rather than recruiting unskilled individuals who lack the necessary qualifications, training, and skills for optimal performance in public organizations. It is essential to avoid appointing individuals who are only endorsed

⁶⁶² *ibid*

⁶⁶³ Omisore, B. O., & Okofu, B. I. (2014). Staff recruitment and selection process in the Nigerian public service: what is to be done. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 280-293. (2014:290)

by highly placed politicians and bureaucrats, as this does not contribute to sustainable development.

The excessive involvement of politicians, top-level officials, bureaucrats, and other individuals in the hiring process, by exploiting factors such as ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, institutional politics, state politics, governmental connections, and corruption, is not only unproductive but also detrimental to the competence, ability, quality decision-making, and service delivery.

The impact of altering the recruitment and selection procedures of staff within Nigerian public institutions results in an ineffective and debilitated civil service, which is unable or restricted from establishing the necessary and unavoidable connection between the development and implementation of policies by means of a dedicated team of skilled, proficient, quality-oriented, and service-oriented personnel.

Though the staff recruitment and selection system in the Public Service of Nigeria is characterized by a number of irregularities, which are mostly sentimental, it is believed that a lot can be achieved if the recruiters maintain the status quo by making sure that merit is considered as number one priority followed by impartiality, fairness, and equality.

This is why Sanusi and Martadha⁶⁶⁴ argued that effective management of human and financial resources in a public organization is most likely to be achieved through the recruitment of qualified individuals to oversee administrative and managerial roles within the service. Also, Lasisi & Asa⁶⁶⁵ recommended that all competent candidates must be granted equitable and just treatment, while simultaneously eliminating any forms of godfatherism or corruption such as nepotism, ethnicity, favouritism, religious or gender discrimination, tribalism, and the like, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all qualified applicants.

Onyishi⁶⁶⁶ recommends that Greater emphasis should be placed on instilling high moral values in all employees of the Nigerian public service, irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliations, to promote unity and prevent divisive tendencies in the workplace. This would result in enhanced accountability and responsibility

⁶⁶⁴ Sanusi, A., & Martadha, A. M. (2011). Public sector reforms and E-recruitment in Nigeria: Will good governance count. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 26(4), 611-620.

⁶⁶⁵ Lasisi, O. I., & ASA, K. J. (2020). Recruitment Process: a Catalyst for Employees' Performance in the Nigerian public service. An Empirical evidence from the Lagos state internal revenue service. *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies (IJMSSPCS)*, Vol.3 No.4 D

⁶⁶⁶ Onyishi, A. E. (2018). Representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service and the problem of sustainable national development: Issues and policy recommendations. *Journal of security studies and global politics*, 3(2), 157-166.

among political office holders, corporate organizations, and career officials in their daily dealings.

In addition, Gberevbie⁶⁶⁷ posits that in order to retain competent civil service employees, proper incentives must be established, and excellent performance should be rewarded. These incentives may consist of timely and satisfactory salary payments, recognition awards for exceptional employees, scholarship opportunities for the children of employees, a positive work environment in conjunction with favourable working conditions, prompt gratuity and pension settlements for retired employees, provisions for housing and car loans, performance bonuses, and policies that prioritize job security.

The positions of these scholars are consistent with the findings of this study thus far that identified two overarching perspectives on professional ethics among civil servants in Nigeria based on their pre-entry motivations: prioritizing personal gain versus prioritizing the welfare of the general public. The allure of working in Nigeria's civil service lies in the prestige it carries, the stability of the career path, the chance to serve one's country, the abundance of job opportunities for those who are connected to corrupt politicians, and the access to educational prospects. This suggests that individuals may be driven to pursue such employment either by the intrinsic benefits it offers or by the appeal of its reputation.

⁶⁶⁷ Gberevbie, D. E. (2010). Nigerian federal civil service: Employee recruitment, retention and performance. *Journal of Science and Sustainable Development*, 3(1).

5.0 Chapter Five

5.0.1 CONCLUSION

5.0.2 A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS SALIENCE IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECTORS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is often referred to as the giant of Africa, mostly because of its size and the roles it plays in peace and stability on the continent, particularly in West Africa.⁶⁶⁸ The country is divided almost equally between the Christian majority south and the Muslim majority north.⁶⁶⁹ It must be noted however, that there are a high number of Muslims in the south and a large number of Christians in the south, this observation is important because it brings about some unique leadership challenges in the country. For instance, it is impossible to effectively implement Sharia law in the North even when the majority of the population is Muslim. By the same token, it is impossible to implement Christianity-based legal order in the South as this will infringe on the rights of the Muslims in the South.

Subsequently, drafting a working constitution for the whole country is a monumental challenge. At the end of the military dictatorship in the country in 1999, the military administrators managed to draft a constitution that was hurriedly put together to help the transition to democracy.⁶⁷⁰ Prior to 1999, the country had drifted along with very little constitutional element especially as it fluttered between various military dictatorships.⁶⁷¹ The 1999 constitution has been criticised by many analysts as the bane of the nation's development⁶⁷² as the citizens were not consulted in the course of drafting the constitution. However, the 1999 constitution seems like a blessing in disguise as all attempts to amend the constitution or come up with a new one have failed thus far. It goes without saying therefore that without the 1999 constitution, the country could have easily drifted towards anarchy or worse.

Furthermore, there have been attempts to organise a sovereign national conference⁶⁷³ to come up with a workable constitution for the country, but all of those conferences often end up in a deadlock. The problem is that Nigeria is so divided that it is

⁶⁶⁸ Sesay, M. A. (1995). Collective security or collective disaster? Regional peacekeeping in West Africa. *Security Dialogue*, 26(2), 205-222.

⁶⁶⁹ Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A history of identities, violence and stability in Nigeria* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford.

⁶⁷⁰ Ekeh, P. (2010, December). Military rule and damage to the spirit of the Nigerian Constitution. In *Lecture delivered at a forum organized by Lagos State, Nigeria, at Eko City Hall*.

⁶⁷¹ Ihonvbere, J. O. (2000). How to make an undemocratic constitution: the Nigerian example. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(2), 343-366.

⁶⁷² Wehner, J. (2002). Parliament and the power of the purse: the Nigerian constitution of 1999 in comparative perspective. *Journal of African Law*, 46(2), 216-231.

⁶⁷³ Ajayi, K. (2006). From the demand for sovereign national conference to national dialogue: the dilemma of the Nigerian State. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 4(2), 123-130.

impossible for the people to agree on a constitution to govern the country, the implication of this is that the country now operates democratic rule with a military constitution⁶⁷⁴ drafted by a select group of people handpicked by one man, who was at the time a military dictator. It should be noted also that there have been a few amendments to the constitution by the national assembly which is a form of bicameral legislature which further complicates the issue as bicameral legislatures often lead to difficulties in constitutional amendments.

The process of amending a single article in the Constitution can take so long that many see it as a waste of time. Secondly, any attempt to amend the constitution often leads to shouting and raucous legislative sessions, usually not between political parties but between Christians in the south and Muslims in the north,⁶⁷⁵ to this end, the legislator that talks about the constitutional review is often seen as an agent fighting to divide the country. The difficulty, although distressing, is somewhat understandable, because in many countries the constitution reflects the history, culture, and dominant religious philosophy of the people. But in Nigeria, much like many countries in Africa, homogeneity only exists in groups and tribes.

The 1884-1885 Berlin conference⁶⁷⁶ balkanised Africa among European colonial masters for the ease of domination, exploitation, and subjugation with very little regard for the future consequences. The resultant effect is that, though the conference managed to forestall wars among European colonialists over territories in Africa, it, however, set the continent up for difficult years ahead in terms of leadership because of the multicultural nature of these states.⁶⁷⁷ Nigeria represents a clear example of the leadership difficulties of multicultural societies especially when it involves religion and ethnicity. In Nigeria, the oxymoronic doctrine of unity in diversity⁶⁷⁸ comes first before national development or constitutional amendment.

This chapter seeks to understand how this constitutional quagmire has affected some major agencies and institutions in the country, in the quest for economic development and the fight against corruption. The truth is that Nigeria shares many deep divisions, which encourage people to question things violently and willingly

⁶⁷⁴ Ihonvbere, J. O. (2000). How to make an undemocratic constitution: the Nigerian example. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(2), 343-366.

⁶⁷⁵ Owutu, I. U. (2012). Politics, Governance and Security: Reflection on the Nigerian State. In *7th Annual Security Conference of Institute of Security: University of Lagos Auditorium, July* (pp. 16-17).

⁶⁷⁶ Idejiora-Kalu, N. (2019). Understanding the effects of the resolutions of the 1884–85 Berlin Conference to Africa's Development and Euro-Africa relations. *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, (2), 99-108.

⁶⁷⁷ Theresa, N. C., Christian, N. G., & Ononogbu, O. A. (2014). The national conference, ethno-religious pluralism and the challenge of national unity in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 44-58.

⁶⁷⁸ Adetoro, R., & Omiyefa, M. (2013). Unity In Diversity in Nigeria's Nationhood—Which Way Forward?. *Sociology*, 2(8).

along lines of ethnic or religious lines. Suffice it to say, religion has for decades become the primary means of social identification in Nigeria.

Similar to other countries within the continent of Africa, as identified earlier, Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diversified nations with a major religious divide.⁶⁷⁹ Unfortunately, to a very large extent, the divide and religious identities have continued to build conflicts, disparities, economic and social discrimination since the country's independence in 1960.⁶⁸⁰ Interestingly, the above explanation inspires divisions in the Nigerian state. However, there are numerous recognized groups and inter-group debates, even within the major Christian and Muslim groups, in Nigeria. These conflicts are fuelled by symbolic intimidation, relegation, control, and unfavourable stereotypes and they have a negative impact on employee relations and job performance.

Religious beliefs and individual orientations build some forms of stereotypes and biased practices in the workplace, which count against individuals within the minority religion/religions, and this may incite disputes⁶⁸¹ that disturb job performances at public organizations if not well handled. It is important to mention that some groups of staff in different organizations in Nigeria face some level of bias due to their religious beliefs. As such, most issues on employment are tied to the pacification of religious motives and instrumentalized religiosity leads to ethnocentric predispositions and individuality bias at the workplace which affects organizational goals. The consequence is that some staff or groups may be treated differently based on their religious beliefs, particularly in public organizations in Nigeria where there seems to be an aggressive contest among the two major religions – Christianity and Islam in the public service.⁶⁸²

This phenomenon leads to reported cases of inequity in the public service experienced during recruitment, and training of staff. Employee promotions, staff transfer, remuneration of employees, and compensation of workers due to their religious beliefs.⁶⁸³ Accordingly, when a staff is harassed or discriminated against due to his or her religious orientation, it may lead to little or no self-esteem, anger,

⁶⁷⁹ Dowd, R. A. (2016). Religious diversity and religious tolerance: lessons from Nigeria. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60(4), 617-644.

⁶⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁶⁸¹ Agbibo, D. E. (2013). Ethno-religious conflicts and the elusive quest for national identity in Nigeria. *Journal of Black Studies*, 44(1), 3-30.

⁶⁸² Carl, O., & Olokooba, S. M. (2014). Managing diversity in the workplace: Legal and theoretical perspectives in Nigeria. *Advances in Management*, 7(6), 1.

⁶⁸³ *ibid*

and frustration which are unfavourable to staff performance and organizational objectives.

5.0.3 THE NIGERIAN ARMY

The significance of competence in the development of the social, and psychological lives of personnel in the Nigerian Army⁶⁸⁴ cannot be overemphasized. Thus, it is generally believed that the military is not a profession for the lazy, this is because it needs practical commitment, persistence, and tolerance of an individual aspiring to become a military personnel.⁶⁸⁵ In this direction, it is key to state that every member of the Nigerian Army is expected to be physically, mentally, passionately, and spiritually fit to stand the rigidities of workouts carried out by the military during their training and also their operations on the battleground. Since the beginning of the church, the clerics have usually gone with armies to the battlefields, signifying the place of religion during wars or on the battlefield.⁶⁸⁶

The problem of corruption is widespread in Nigeria much like in the rest of Africa. Politicians and bureaucrats absolutely love it because it saves them from accountability and guarantees almost unlimited access to the resources of the state⁶⁸⁷ to the detriment of society in general. Ijewereme⁶⁸⁸ identified some of the forms of corruption in Nigeria including electoral corruption, budgeting corruption, procurement corruption or over-invoicing, ghost worker corruption, and nepotism. All these various forms of corruption rear up in one way or another in the Nigerian military, and some scholars have attributed the problem of Boko haram and kidnapping that is currently bedevilling the country as a result of corruption in the security agencies, particularly the military.

Nepotism, for instance, leads to situations where public officers use their vantage positions to favour, recruit and promote those that they consider allies such as relatives, people of the same ethnicity and people of the same religion. With this form of corruption, the head of the military can easily flood the service with people that look like him, speak like him or worship like him. Regrettably, all of these significantly weaken the military as a state institution that is aimed at protecting the

⁶⁸⁴ Oyelade, O. K., & Omobowale, A. O. (2022). The Structure of the Chaplaincy of the Nigerian Army. *Journal of Sociology and Christianity*, 12(2), 29-42.

⁶⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁸⁶ Palmer Jr, J. (2011). *The Influence of Religion on the Rules of Engagement*. George mason univ fairfax va institute for conflict analysis and resolution.

⁶⁸⁷ Arowolo, D. (2010). The state, bureaucracy and corruption in Nigeria. *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal*, 8(3), 52.

⁶⁸⁸ Ijewereme, O. B. (2015). Anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian public sector: Theoretical perspectives and some empirical explanations. *Sage Open*, 5(2), 2158244015581188.

territorial integrity of the state. For some time, the Nigerian military had ceded some territories⁶⁸⁹ of the country around Lake Chad which borders both the republics of Chad and Cameroon⁶⁹⁰ this failure gave Boko haram access to import and export goods and ammunition across the Sahel region like a sovereign state.

The Nigerian military sees itself in many cases as above the constitution⁶⁹¹ of the state so, the rules of the federal character principle often do not apply to the military, especially in terms of recruitment and promotion of officers and men.⁶⁹² For instance, the Nigerian military is notorious for its human rights abuses on the citizens with very little to no consequences. If the military can get away with such infringements on the fundamental human rights of the citizens, on the streets where everyone can see, and they go unpunished, it goes without saying that they can get away with almost anything as well behind closed doors.

5.0.4 THE NIGERIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

The customs service is very important for a country, it is often strategic for revenue generation, trade moderation and the freight that comes into or out of the country.⁶⁹³ Nigeria Customs Service is a major source of revenue for the government, through customs duties.⁶⁹⁴ There has been some push for the greater push for technological assistance for the service for better efficiency of the service at the port. Over the years, there has been a steady push to make the working conditions better for the officers and men of the Nigerian customs⁶⁹⁵ service by improving their wages and through continuous training, it is however contestable if the promotion and training at the service subscribes to equity and justice.⁶⁹⁶

Tribalism means being part of a group and putting that group first, even before other important things like friends or country.⁶⁹⁷ It can be based on things like language or shared culture such as religion. Being part of an ethnic group can give people a

⁶⁸⁹ Bappah, H. Y. (2016). Nigeria's military failure against the Boko Haram insurgency. *African Security Review*, 25(2), 146-158.

⁶⁹⁰ Oyewole, S. (2015). Boko Haram: Insurgency and the war against terrorism in the Lake Chad region. *Strategic Analysis*, 39(4), 428-432.

⁶⁹¹ Akanbi, M. M., & Shehu, A. T. (2012). Rule of law in Nigeria. *JL Pol'y & Globalization*, 3, 1.

⁶⁹² Ojo, J. S., Lamidi, K. O., Odewale, A. D., Shiyabade, B., & Ihemeje, G. (2020). Enemy within the state: the pathology of boko haram insurgency, military corruption, and fallacy of arms procurement in Nigeria. *International journal of public administration*, 43(12), 1068-1082.

⁶⁹³ Sule-Dan, I., & Ilesanmi, A. G. (2015). Discipline and organization effectiveness: A study of Nigeria customs service. *Review of public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 88-106.

⁶⁹⁴ ibid

⁶⁹⁵ Flynn, D. K. (1997). "We are the border": identity, exchange, and the state along the Bénin-Nigeria border. *American Ethnologist*, 24(2), 311-330.

⁶⁹⁶ ibid

⁶⁹⁷ Mafeje, A. (1971). The ideology of 'tribalism'. *The journal of modern African studies*, 9(2), 253-261.

sense of belonging and safety.⁶⁹⁸ A tribe is like a group of people with a shared identity. Tribalism means caring for one's tribe at the expense of other tribes, sometimes the conflicts can be so severe that it could even result in ethnic tensions such as tribal wars.⁶⁹⁹

Ethnicity is not radically different from tribe.⁷⁰⁰ The difference between the two is so nuanced that they are sometimes used interchangeably.⁷⁰¹ However, most anthropologists argue that a tribe is a collection of people that originate from different generations of families and clans that share the same linguistic identities, geography, culture, religion, and philosophical ideologies.⁷⁰² While an ethnic group can consist of numerous tribes scattered around different geographical locations.⁷⁰³ For the purpose of this study, tribalism is used to represent the negative tenets of both a tribe and an ethnic group.

The process of obtaining employment in either the private or public sector requires the recruitment and selection of capable individuals who work alongside other factors to achieve organizational goals.⁷⁰⁴ Recruitment and selection are two distinct activities that determine how a candidate becomes an employee. Recruitment involves attracting eligible applicants with the necessary skills and mindset for a job opening, while selection involves identifying the most suitable candidate for the job.⁷⁰⁵ Recruitment is a meticulous process that involves identifying candidates with appropriate qualifications and experience.⁷⁰⁶ Recruitment into the Nigerian customs service is often marred by accusations of nepotism and favouritism.⁷⁰⁷ Usually, the major factors that influence this process are predetermined by religious or ethnic identities, leading to high levels of unprofessionalism and lack of discipline in the service. The fundamental principles underlying the political conduct of Nigerian

⁶⁹⁸ ibid

⁶⁹⁹ Isabirye, S. B., & Mahmoudi, K. M. (2001). Rwanda, Burundi and their tribal wars. *Social Change*, 31(4), 46-69.

⁷⁰⁰ Eller, J. D. (1997). Ethnicity, Culture, and 'The Past'. *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 36(4).

⁷⁰¹ Levine, H. B. (1999). Reconstructing ethnicity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 165-180.

⁷⁰² Desmet, K., Ortuño-Ortín, I., & Wacziarg, R. (2017). Culture, ethnicity, and diversity. *American Economic Review*, 107(9), 2479-2513.

⁷⁰³ ibid

⁷⁰⁴ Riesen, T., Morgan, R. L., & Griffin, C. (2015). Customized employment: A review of the literature. *Journal of Vocational rehabilitation*, 43(3), 183-193.

⁷⁰⁵ Bland, P., Church, E., & Luo, M. (2016). Strategies for attracting and retaining teachers. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 4(1).

⁷⁰⁶ Umachandran, K. (2021). Application of artificial intelligence for recruitment in manufacturing industries. *Journal of Emerging Technologies*, 1(1), 11-18.

⁷⁰⁷ Brady, S. (2019). Nigeria: Black gold, suits and brown envelopes. In *Handbook of organised crime and politics* (pp. 335-347). Edward Elgar Publishing.

elites can be traced back to the colonial state's political culture, which was rooted in a tradition of absolute control.⁷⁰⁸

The high rate of corruption in the Nigerian customs service often leads scholars to draw a comparison between the Nigerian customs service and the Nigerian police force.⁷⁰⁹ The Nigerian police are famous for extortion of motorists along the highways across the country. Unsurprisingly, the Nigerian customs service also mounts round blocks on highways across the country to extort motorists as well. The corruption in the service is so obvious that officers of the service have very little inclination to hide the extortion of innocent motorists.⁷¹⁰ The citizens have grown numb to the continuous extortion that often just pays the customs officers whenever they are stopped on the highway.

This phenomenon is often referred to as ‘settling’.⁷¹¹ It should be noted that the major hues and cries of the people about corruption in the customs service come from the southern states where there are significantly more economic activities partly the Igbos in the southeast famous across the globe for the love of commerce and industry. After the Nigerian civil war ended in 1970, there seems to be a general fear among those that believe in the Nigerian project, not to allow the Igbos to hold sensitive positions in the country as they may use this power to initiate another push for succession. To this end, many scholars believe that “since the appointment of ministers, recruitment into the civil service and security agencies and admission into unity schools, federal higher institutions and revenue sharing are based on states and local governments; the Southeast (Igbo nation) has been overtly marginalised due to having the least number of states and local governments”.⁷¹²

As mentioned earlier, the federal character principle stipulates that all states and local government areas must be represented equally in all federal recruitments and appointments where possible, however in the course of all the military regimes that governed Nigeria before the 4th republic, virtually all but two were from the north, the military regimes had a field day balkanising the country into states and local

⁷⁰⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁰⁹ Sule-Dan, I., & Ilesanmi, A. G. (2015). Discipline and organization effectiveness: A study of Nigeria customs service. *Review of public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 88-106.

⁷¹⁰ Sule-Dan, I., & Ilesanmi, A. G. (2015). Discipline and organization effectiveness: A study of Nigeria customs service. *Review of public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 88-106.

⁷¹¹ Aluko, M. A. O. (2002). The institutionalization of corruption and its impact on political culture and behaviour in Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11(3), 10-10.

⁷¹² Obiorah, C. B., & Okoye, A. C. (2020). Regional Agitation and the Challenges of National Integration in Nigeria: Political Restructuring as a Panacea. *Studies in Politics and Society*, 9, 227-247. (2020: ccxxxiii)

governments as they deemed fit. With little to no accountability, the northern military administrators created more states and local governments in the north than in any other region of the country.⁷¹³ This means that the north who are mostly Muslims are often ‘overrepresented’⁷¹⁴ in most government parastatals and agencies and these agencies like the Nigerian customs service have most of their offices in the southwest, south-south, and southeast which are mostly Christians.⁷¹⁵

In the end, due to a lack of transparency in appointments, recruitment, and promotion, tension often rises from these interactions and generally leads to a lack of trust and antagonistic feelings.⁷¹⁶ To this end, the control of the Nigerian federal government is often a fierce battle between the majority Christian south and the majority Muslim north. It is often believed that whoever becomes the president will appoint members of his region and religion into the most sensitive position such as the customs service.⁷¹⁷ The Nigerian customs service is one of the main revenues generating agencies in the country as virtually all the consumables in the country are imported, due to lack of infrastructure and the death of industries.

For instance, the Yoruba Liberation Command (YOLICOM), George Akinola in an interview with media, speaks about the various agitations in the country and heavy lop-sidedness in President Muhammadu Buhari’s appointments that has fuelled the regional crisis across the country⁷¹⁸

This observation has led to many calling for reform of the federalism system in Nigeria to give more power to regional governments and less power to the central government, this agitation is often referred to as the agitation for ‘true federalism’,⁷¹⁹ again all the calls for reform of the faulty federal system of government have fallen on deaf ears.

This situation has heightened the political tension in the country with some analysts arguing that without a comprehensive federal reform, the country is inevitably

⁷¹³ Adamolekun, L. (2005). The Nigerian federation at the crossroads: The way forward. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 35(3), 383-405.

⁷¹⁴ Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2008). *Ethnicity, religion and the state in Ghana and Nigeria: perceptions from the street* (pp. 205-226). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

⁷¹⁵ Paden, J. N. (2015). *Religion and Conflict in Nigeria*.: US Institute of Peace.

⁷¹⁶ Omotoso, F. (2014). Public-service ethics and accountability for effective service delivery in Nigeria. *Africa Today*, 60(3), 119-139.

⁷¹⁷ *ibid*

⁷¹⁸ Obiorah, C. B., & Okoye, A. C. (2020). Regional Agitation and the Challenges of National Integration in Nigeria: Political Restructuring as a Panacea. *Studies in Politics and Society*, 9, 227-247. (2020: ccxxxi)

⁷¹⁹ Adedeji, A. O., & Ezeabasili, I. E. (2018). Restructuring and clamour for true federalism in Nigeria: A comparative analysis. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(2), 160-168.

headed for another bloody civil war⁷²⁰ as those that make peaceful change impossible, inadvertently make violent change inevitable. Sequel to this, there has been a continuous call to divide the country by separatist agitators across the country. Most of these irredentist agitations seem to be asking for the return of a pre-1914 Nigeria,⁷²¹ which is Nigeria before the amalgamation of the north and the south.

The distribution of revenue among constituent units in a federation is a contentious issue due to disagreements over the appropriate formula and basis for allocation. Some prominent scholars⁷²² have argued that constituent units often have disputes on issues such as the allocation of funds from the central government to the regional government,⁷²³ which affects their ability to fulfil their constitutional mandates. Revenue allocation refers to the distribution of collected revenue among various levels of government in a federation to reflect the adopted structure of fiscal federalism.⁷²⁴ Revenue allocation, therefore, involves sharing the government's revenue among different tiers of the government within a federation.

5.0.5 THE NIGERIAN IMMIGRATION SERVICE

Due to high levels of unemployment across the country, public sector jobs are highly sought after for employment by millions of unemployed Nigerian youths.⁷²⁵ So many of these youths are very well educated and some of them have certificates from some of the best universities across the globe. The scarcity mindset makes any calls for recruitment into the country's public sector a very difficult endeavour for the citizens. The immigration service is one of such public sector agencies that many unemployed graduates see as a great potential.⁷²⁶

The Nigerian immigration service plays a very important role in the control mechanism of the political elites, it has the power to issue passports for international travel, it has the power to withdraw passports, and it can also issue diplomatic passports.⁷²⁷ Other powers of this agency include admitting people into the country

⁷²⁰ Chuku, G. I., & Njoku, O. N. (2004). *Troubled journey: Nigeria since the civil war*. University press of America.

⁷²¹ Mbalisi, C. N., & Okeke, C. A. (2021). The 1914 Amalgamation: Pre-Cursor to Misconstrued Unity in Post-Colonial Nigeria. *Kenneth Dike Journal of African Studies*, 1(2).

⁷²² Ikeji, C. C. (2011). Politics of Revenue Allocation in Nigeria: a re-Visitation. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 299-299.

⁷²³ Akeem, U. (2011). Revenue allocation formula and its impact on economic growth process in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 2(3), 29-37.

⁷²⁴ Arowolo, D. (2011). Fiscal federalism in Nigeria: Theory and dimensions. *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2.2), 1-22.

⁷²⁵ Innocent, E. O. (2014). Unemployment rate in Nigeria: Agenda for government. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(4), 103.

⁷²⁶ Ajani, O. A., & Oyekola, I. A. (2019). Reasons for public sector jobs preference in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 13(1), 114-130.

⁷²⁷ Emeka, C. (2020) "The Right To Freedom Of Movement In Nigeria." *Auxano Law Journal* Vol. 1 ALJ (No. 5) 80 -108

and stamping people out. The border control powers of the Nigerian immigration service make it a huge target for politicians because, a prosecuted political adversary may want to flee the country, but with the control of the immigration service politicians, particularly the executive, can intervene and stop the individual from leaving the country. This scenario further strikes fear in the mind of the people thereby solidifying the powers of the ruling party.

In the same vein, the immigration department can also be used to apprehend political opponents who spoke truth to power outside the country, they can therefore be swiftly apprehended at the airport and taken into custody for daring to speak against the government's propaganda. The immigration service, therefore, plays a significant role in the promotion of corruption, weakening freedom of speech, prosecution of opposition politicians and the general abuse of the human rights of the people of Nigeria.⁷²⁸

The crucial role of the immigration service makes it an alluring target for politicians to tamper the recruitment and promotion⁷²⁹ into and within the service to guarantee expected results at all times. Unsurprisingly, this political intervention has significantly weakened the Nigerian immigration service to the point where some refer to it as a national disgrace.⁷³⁰

The cascading effects of corruption in the service show how ethno-religious political interference can directly weaken a state institution and how this weakness can have serious economic consequences.⁷³¹ The major factors that interfere with the recruitment process into the Nigerian immigration service are often traceable to ethnicity and religious salience.⁷³² This interference goes through a very complicated bureaucracy usually through the ministry of interior. Subsequently, after every recruitment exercise, there is often the accusation of marginalisation, Yoruba agenda, Igbo agenda and Hausa agenda depending on the religion or ethnicity of the head of the service at the time. To illustrate this fact, the current administration

⁷²⁸ Nzarga, F. D. (2014). An analysis of human rights violation by the Nigerian security services. *JL Pol'y & Globalization*, 30, 1.

⁷²⁹ Musalli, N. M., Harun, A., & Zainuddin, R. (2015). Performance of border management personnel and its security implications in northern Nigerian borders: A pilot study for reliability and validity of instruments. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 5(4), 7-11.

⁷³⁰ *ibid*

⁷³¹ Agbiboa, D. E. (2013). Ethno-religious conflicts and the elusive quest for national identity in Nigeria. *Journal of Black Studies*, 44(1), 3-30.

⁷³² Omisore, B. O., & Okofu, B. I. (2014). Staff recruitment and selection process in the Nigerian public service: what is to be done. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(3), 280-293.

headed by a northern Muslim president has often had to fight off the accusation of the northern agenda, the Hausa agenda, and the ‘Islamization’⁷³³ agenda.

5.0.6 THE NIGERIAN JUDICIARY

The judiciary is the moral compass that dictates the direction of any country,⁷³⁴ this is closely linked to the principle of separation of power equality before the law traceable to the days of magna carta.⁷³⁵ A broken judicial system, therefore, spells doom for society in general. This lacuna can easily result in the dictatorship of the ruling elites. It also undermines democracy. In other words, democracy cannot achieve its aims of freedom and justice in a country where the judicial system is compromised.

The judiciary is often the target of corrupt politicians in most developing countries, in that they have the final say in most disputes. Controlling the judiciary gives the political elites the effrontery to misbehave with the power they have even in a democratic system.⁷³⁶ The lack of focus on the judiciary leads to malfeasance by the corrupt elites to the detriment of the country and the impoverishment of the citizenry.

In Nigeria, it has been argued that the failure of successive civilian administrations in the past was a result of a lack of independence of the judiciary.⁷³⁷ For instance, the country has often struggled with the conduct of free and fair elections even in pre-colonial times. This means that politicians often get their legitimacy through the judicial process after an election.⁷³⁸ This arrangement makes the judiciary a huge target for political parties hoping to hold on to power as they can manipulate the election as they deem fit, and whoever complains would be asked to go to court.⁷³⁹ They often say this with the confidence that they have the judiciary under their arms.

The political chokehold of the executive arm over the judiciary in Nigeria has been highlighted by many scholars as one of the blights of the nation that hinders development.⁷⁴⁰ It is often argued that the lack of transparency and trust in the

⁷³³ Ajeli, F. C. (2021). The North and the Rest of us: A Historical Evaluation of the Paradox of one Nigeria, 2007-2020. *IGWEBUIKE: African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 7(4).

⁷³⁴ Adekoya, A. A. (2011). Corporate Governance Reforms in Nigeria. *Journal of Law and Governance*, 6(1), 39-52.

⁷³⁵ Cowdery, N. (2015). Magna Carta: 800 years young. *LSJ: Law Society Journal*, (12), 26-30.

⁷³⁶ Onapajo, H., & Uzodike, U. O. (2014). Rigging through the courts: The judiciary and electoral fraud in Nigeria. *Journal of African Elections*, 13(2), 137-168.

⁷³⁷ Akinyetun, T. S. (2021). The prevalence of electoral violence in the Nigerian fourth republic: An overview. *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*, 1(1), 73.

⁷³⁸ Onapajo, H., & Uzodike, U. O. (2014). Rigging through the courts: The judiciary and electoral fraud in Nigeria. *Journal of African Elections*, 13(2), 137-168.

⁷³⁹ Herskovits, J. (2007). Nigeria's rigged democracy. *Foreign Affairs*, 115-130.

⁷⁴⁰ Abdullahi, I. (2014). Independence of the Judiciary in Nigeria: A Myth or Reality?. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 2(3), 55-66.

judicial system means that the people cannot enjoy the benefits of democracy such as freedom of speech and freedom of expression.⁷⁴¹ This lack of freedom of speech means that the people cannot criticise the government without fear of prosecution.

It also leads to vote buying and election rigging such as ballot box stuffing, gerrymandering, voter intimidation, ballot box snatching and intimidation of voters by the security forces.⁷⁴² In the end, all those that participated in these unwholesome practices in helping the politicians win the election are often promoted, financially rewarded or given lucrative political, and ministerial appointments rather than prosecuted.⁷⁴³ In the rare occasions that they are brought before the courts, they are often guaranteed a favourable judgement by the courts because the judges are often loyal to the leaders of the executive arm of the government.⁷⁴⁴

One major reason why this happens is that the executive arm can appoint, dismiss, and discipline the judges as they wish.⁷⁴⁵ This clearly negates the principle of separation of power. Attempts to reform the judiciary is often seen as an attempt to weaken the executive arm of government, so in Nigeria, legislators that push for such reforms are often intimidated, with the anti-corruption agency like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)⁷⁴⁶ or they can be booted out of power with the help of the judiciary which they were trying to help.

Sometimes, some judges may uphold justice due to their moral stands, political affiliation for instance, when they are appointed by the previous administration, or due to their ethnicity or religious affiliation. A good example is the case of Justice Ayo Salami who as the president of the federal court of appeal, was famous for giving several unfavourable judgements against the government in power. He was subsequently suspended by the executive, raising concerns about the freedom of the judiciary in Nigeria.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴¹ Adenrele, A. R., & Olugbenga, O. M. (2014). Challenges of human rights abuses in Nigerian democratic governance—which way forward. *Journal of Social Economics Research*, 1(5), 87-96.

⁷⁴² Steve, A. A., Nwocha, M. E., & Igwe, I. O. (2019). An Appraisal of Electoral Malpractice and Violence as an Albatross in Nigerian's Democratic Consolidation. *Beijing L. Rev.*, 10, 77.

⁷⁴³ Albert, I. O. (2005). Explaining 'godfatherism' in Nigerian politics. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 9(2), 79-105.

⁷⁴⁴ Oko, O. (2005). Seeking justice in transitional societies: An analysis of the problems and failures of the judiciary in Nigeria. *Brook. J. Int'l L.*, 31, 9.

⁷⁴⁵ Okene, H. A., Bolanle, M. A. B., Aina-Pelemo, A. D., Mahmud, R. F., & Wuraola, O. T. Constitutional Perspectives of the Trial of Judges Within the Context of Judicial Independence in Nigeria.

⁷⁴⁶ Azaigba, K. T., & Ahom, H. T. (2021) Between Combating Corruption And Political Vendetta: An Appraisal Of The Economic And Financial Crimes Commission (Efcc) In Nigeria Since 2002. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development* Vol. 1, Issue 11

⁷⁴⁷ Shehu, A. T., & Tamim, M. K. (2002). Suspension of Justice Isa Ayo Salami: Implications for Rule of Law, Judicial Independence and Constitutionalism. *Education*, 2009.

Also, in the case of the chief justice of the federation Justice Walter Onnoghen whom many agreed was frustrated out of power by the executive⁷⁴⁸ just before a general election because the government feared unfavourable judgement in the supreme court after the election. Justice Onnoghen replaced Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad⁷⁴⁹ who was of the same ethnicity and religion as the chief executive. This was criticised by the media as rigging the judicial process before rigging the election.⁷⁵⁰ Nonetheless, in most non-political cases, the judiciary tends to do a better job in the delivery of justice.

5.0.7 SUMMARY

At independence in 1960, Nigeria was touted as one of Africa's greatest potentials, some even referred to it as the giant of Africa. This seemed justifiable at the time as the country is blessed with abundant human and natural resources.⁷⁵¹ It also has very fertile soil for agriculture and industrious citizens. The stage was all set for an African giant to emerge, but this was not to be as the country fell into numerous challenges upon independence.

One of the most notable challenges of Nigeria is the ethnic diversity and ethnic rivalry of the country,⁷⁵² this challenge is compounded by the fact that the northern part of the country had been part of the Arabian trade routes from the Sahel through the middle east and the northern parts of Africa, long before western colonialists arrived. The Arabs introduced Islam to what is now northern Nigeria and the leaders of the region who accepted Islam helped to push the religion more and more into the hinterland. One of such leaders was Usman dan Fodio of Sokoto who led so many Jihads⁷⁵³ to propagate Islam further in the country pushing more and more towards the south.

⁷⁴⁸ Mrabure, K. O., & Awhefeada, U. V. (2020). Onnoghen's cjn conundrum, exercise of the executive powers of the president and the practice of separation of powers in Nigeria. *Commonwealth Law Bulletin*, 46(3), 440-460.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibrahim, U. (2019). Controversies Surrounding the Jurisdiction of Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) and National Judicial Council (NJC) on Discipline of Judicial Officers.

⁷⁵⁰ Komolafe, A., Hitchen, J., & Kalu-Amah, O. (2019). the role of the media during Nigeria's 2019 elections.

⁷⁵¹ Yagboyaju, D. A. (2011). Political corruption, democratisation and the squandering of hope in Nigeria: democratisation in Nigeria. *Journal of African Elections*, 10(1), 171-186.

⁷⁵² Agbibo, D. E., & Okem, A. E. (2011). Unholy trinity: Assessing the impact of ethnicity and religion on national identity in Nigeria. *Peace Research*, 98-125.

⁷⁵³ Hill, M. (2009). The spread of Islam in West Africa: containment, mixing, and reform from the eighth to the twentieth century. *SPICE digest*.

Upon the arrival of British colonial rule, Christianity was introduced to the south,⁷⁵⁴ this newly arrived religion spread like wildfire across the country pushing back against Islam that had already been established across the country. This push for Christianity came with some things that were very important for employment in the colonial era which are the English language and Western education. In the end, this gave the Christians from the South a slight advantage in colonial civil service.

Coming from mostly homogenous nation-states like England, the colonialist had very little experience with how multicultural societies operate. Also, because of the heavy-handedness of the British colonial administrators, there was no freedom of speech or freedom of expression especially in criticising colonial policies. The British had murdered so many that dared to speak or protest, some of which led to some wars which were obviously one-sided. The British colonial masters used their vantage position of control over import and export and local manufacturing to starve the people of the technology to fight back.

The colonial masters were also very corrupt in their dealings with the citizens, they also chose favourable leaders such as warrant chiefs and deposed those leaders who were opposed to or critical of colonial policies. All of these toxic political cultures were passed down to the local political elites who took over at independence. The implication was a very difficult start to the country's drive to self-rule. The difficult start that the country had at independence was, therefore, hardly surprising, considering the events that led to it.

However, upon independence, the issues were exacerbated by first ethnic and later religious tensions. This political infighting among the elite has dominated the political discourse in the country coupled with some laid down toxic political conventions passed down from colonial rule such as weak adherence to the rule of law, abuse of human rights, favouritism and tampering with the leadership structure for the sake of loyalty.

The indirect rule may have led to a symbiotic relationship between the colonial administrators and the warrant chiefs, but for the citizens, it was nothing short of a disaster. This unfortunate reality was aggravated by the 1914 amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria by Lord Lugard. The amalgamation brought over 200 ethnic nationalities together to form a single country while at the

⁷⁵⁴ Vaughan, O. (2016). *Religion and the Making of Nigeria*. Duke University Press.

same time bringing two opposing religions and civilisation together, without any consultation with the people. Some have argued that this was the worst British colonial policy in the region that may forever curse the country with bad leadership until it is addressed.

This study sought to challenge this narrative and to uncover if ethnicity and religion actually play such a pivotal role in the leadership challenges of the country. In the end, there is enough evidence to suggest that indeed ethnicity and religion played a significant role in the leadership challenges of the country. Although not at the rate measurable by data. However, it was observed that ethnicity plays a more significant role than religion in this process.

It was further observed that because many ethnic groups have dominant religions in their region, it is very easy to confuse an action taken based on ethnocentric sentiments as if it was as a result of religious salience. Be that as it may, the truth remains that the high rates of corruption and malfeasance across the country is traceable to its multiculturalism. The findings of this study clearly shows that the challenges of African countries are mostly anthropological chiefly due to the 1884 Berlin conference, that showed little to no consideration to the anthropological antecedents in Africa while balkanising the continent into defective states. The challenge of state creation in Africa has manifested itself in the form of governance. The main thesis of this thesis, therefore, is that what we call states in Africa are mere geographical entities, put together by European colonisers, for the ease of exploitation of the continent and these states still serves the same purpose till this day. For Africa to move forward economically therefore, the continent must figure out a way to solve its anthropological challenges that makes virtually all African countries ungovernable.

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