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# Religious Pluralism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Political Implications

(Master's Thesis)

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Declaration:

Herewith I declare that I have written the Master's Thesis on my own and I have cited all sources.

Prague, 27 April 2015

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*Student's Signature*

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## List of Abbreviations

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
ANPP	All Nigeria People's Party
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
APP	All People's Party
BPU	Birom Progressive Union
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CPC	Congress for Progressive Change
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPP	Interfaith Initiative for Peace
MBPP	Middle-Belt People's Party
MZL	Middle Zone League
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NPC	Northern People's Congress
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Council
PDP	People's Democratic Party
TPU	Tiv Progressive Union
UMBC	United Middle-Belt Congress
UMP	United Muslim Party

## Introduction

Africa as a continent is a very diverse setting worth studying and I have been personally very interested in this region. While development is undoubtedly the most discussed issue, it is connected also to other issues and topics. There are many differences between Africa and Europe, or let's say the Western world. One of them can be seen in the importance of religion. It is also interesting how different cultures brought different religious orientation into the region and how it affects the society today. Thus, the aim of my master's thesis is to find out what role religion and religious pluralism play in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the selected country and its politics. Consequently, sub-aims can be defined when progressing in the analysis. I try to answer the question how religious pluralism affects conflicts and peace situation in the chosen country. For that, I have decided to make a hypothesis saying that religious pluralism leads to more conflicts in the country, than to peaceful cooperation.

Although in the past, using case studies as a tool for analysis was not very popular, it now represents 14% of the total production of scientific articles in the international relations field. *Drulák* gives a definition of a case according to which, it is a sufficiently limited aspect of historical sequence or historical sequence itself. The limitation can be one of time, topic and has to be significant enough. Then, the case study represents a detail analysis of a case, which has been set as an object of study. The goal is to provide deep understanding or explanation of the case. (Drulák a kol., 2008) For us, the object of study is religion in a chosen country and understanding of its link to politics. I believe that using the method of case study in my thesis is the best way how to reach the set aims, as it would be very difficult within the scope of the master's thesis to analyse the whole region and all the countries individually.

In the first chapter, I will focus on defining the region of Sub-Saharan Africa and its specificities. One of them are the borders of the region, which had huge influence on the development of the region. Then, I will define the term of ethnicity inside the region and how it was formed, so that we can understand the region properly. To get an introduction into the religious issues, I will also provide a religious overview of the region. Yet, another aspect to define is the specific African culture and its traits. It is important to be aware of all these aspects as they will be helpful further in the analysis. The aim of this chapter is to get the understanding of the region and its particularities as much as possible.

The second chapter concentrates on the religion and its connection to politics. Theoretical background will be provided here, which I will later use in the case study. Thus, the partial

aim is to characterize and define how religion can influence state's politics, whether it can be a factor for mobilization and unity of people or the opposite, and provide opinions and approaches by different scholars and researchers. Furthermore, the term of religious pluralism will be defined and I will also look at different opinions on how religion influences conflicts, violence or peace.

Consequently, the last chapter of the thesis offers a case study analysis. It is a single country case study where I have decided to analyse Nigeria. The country with large Muslim and Christian population could be a good example of religiously plural society and analysing it could be beneficial for fulfilling the given aims. Thus, in this chapter I will provide information and data needed to confirm or reject the hypothesis, and also to reach the aim and sub-aims of the thesis. For that I will study the religious relations inside the country, religious influence in political life and also religious influence in conflict situations. I will look at the current issues of election in Nigeria as well. In the analysis I will refer to works of authors stated in the second chapter as I try to arrive at a conclusion.

Throughout the thesis, I use analytical tools when reviewing literature on religion, ethnicity and culture of the region, academic papers and articles focusing on theoretical background on the topic and also those particularly focusing on the chosen country. Consequently, in the analysis I use synthesis and deduction to be able to fulfil the aims of the thesis. I support my analysis with tables, chart and maps to have a better understanding of the issue. Sources I use range from scholar analytical and research articles from political science journals, analysis and studies of international institutions, like Geneva Declaration, Afrobarometer and the United States Institute of Peace. Moreover, to be able to incorporate current developments into the analysis, I also use online magazines' articles.



# **1. Cultural and Historical Analysis of Sub-Saharan Africa**

In order to be able to analyse the complex issue of our topic we need to at first clarify some terms, define the region we are going to study and make sure we understand the basis of this problematics. That is why in the following chapter we will define region of Sub-Saharan Africa, and cultural and religious background of the region.

## **1.1 Sub-Saharan Africa and its Borders**

To make sure that in our analysis we stay focused on the region of Sub-Saharan Africa we first need to define it. Usually, when talking about regional division of the world in other than geographic sense, Africa is divided into North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. There are five countries which belong to the North Africa – Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The rest of the continent with its islands belongs to the Sub-Saharan Africa. This division is important, as it also marks the line between two world cultural and/or civilizational groups. The Arabic and Islamic culture is spread through the northern part of the continent while the rest of the continent belongs to the African cultural group, culture of Sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, the borders and lines between these cultures are not definite and there are many transboundary and thus transcultural areas. (Kváča, 2010)

As *Kváča* claims, there are three important transitional areas. In the North, there is the overlay with Islamic or Arabic culture, in the South we can find signs of the western culture while in the East traces of Hindu influence can be found. We will now describe these areas, though they are not the main object of our analysis, it is important to have knowledge about that too as it can become useful later on.

Firstly, there is the African-Islamic crossing. Although, as we said earlier that the lines are blurry, we can see the ethnolinguistic border here, which divides Arabic part of Africa and the Sub-Saharan part. The lines where these two cultures meet strongly can be found alongside the southern border of Sahara, in Mauretania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan. Here the Sub-Saharan population meets with Berber groups, living in the desert and semi-desert areas of south Sahara and which have been part of slave trade from Sub-Saharan Africa to Arab world. After the creation of independent states of Sahel region, these groups were not satisfied with their newly acquired minority position in the states ruled by those who were slaves for them before. This fact is very important as it is a basis for ethnic disputes which to some extend exist in this border region. Another border in this African-Islamic crossing is the religious

border, which separates the Islamic and non-Islamic Africa. The extent to which it influences relations inside the state and between more states differs. (Kváča, 2010) Though we will take a closer look on these religious encounters later, this particular crossing of religions is especially important, and also *Huntington* mentions it in his book 'Clash of Civilizations'.

These transitions areas or crossing points of cultures and thus religions are crucial as they can become places of tensions and thus wars between clans, tribes, ethnic or religious groups and nations can emerge on their territory. *Huntington* argues that these wars have very special character and often these wars are bloody and insidious, as the core question of identity of the involved parties is contested. Furthermore, they are often very lengthy and consuming.<sup>1</sup> He also claims that most of these kind of wars or conflicts were between Muslim population and non-Muslim ones. Thus, he argues that Islam has bloody borders. The most part of conflicts on the border lines happened according to him on the border line crossing Eurasia and Africa, which divides Muslims and non-Muslims. Of course, on the global level the conflict between the West and the rest of the world is the biggest, on the local level it is though the conflict between Islam and the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup>

According to various analysis made during the Cold War era, it became evident that Muslim population got involved much more in the violent actions between different groups, than other nations of any other civilization belonging. *Huntington* also claims that borders of Islam are bloody on the outside as well as on the inside. An important factor which adds to this argument is the propensity of Muslim population to militarization. In the 1980s the military coefficient as well as the military index of Muslim countries was much higher than of other countries. On the contrary, Christian countries showed considerably lower results than the other countries. The results of Muslim countries were twice as high as those of Christian countries. Muslim countries also show higher tendency towards violence, as they used it in 76 out of 142 cases of international crisis during the years 1928 – 1979. In the end, *Huntington* states that belligerence and violence of Muslim population is a reality of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and neither Muslims nor non-Muslims can deny this fact. (Huntington, 2001) The importance as well as influence of Muslim population worldwide is increasing as are also its believers. According to the data given by the CIA, the world's Christian population represents now 33.9% out of which the majority is Roman Catholic belief, while the Muslim population forms 22.74% of all the world's believers. (CIA World Factbook)

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<sup>1</sup> *Huntington* mentions conflicts such as the one on Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Croatia, Chechnya, and Sudan.

<sup>2</sup> Here *Huntington* gives the example of wars in Bosnia, Kosovo and disputes in the Caucasus region.

Furthermore, the second crossing that we can define in the region is African-Western. Even though the colonial period did not bring many western immigrants to Africa, with the exception of southern part of the continent, nowadays we can find many descendants of European origin in the South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. As the whole notion of globalization is often intertwined with 'westernization' we can now say that the Sub-Saharan region is an area where the traditional African culture and the western one overlap. (Kváča, 2010) Scholars have been very active in finding out and describing the effects of western civilization and culture on Africa as it represents probably the most influential element there. Not only western scholars but also local ones, such as *Arowolo* usually mention political effects of 'westernization', including establishment of western-style institutions, notion of liberal democracy and its implementation in practice.

Nevertheless, they are aware also of the bad influences it brought, such as distortion of natural boundaries and not taking enough into consideration the tradition institutions and the ways of governing. Economic effects usually include integration of Africa into the capitalist system as the source of raw materials, introduction of taxation and wage labour, improvement of infrastructure and also integrating ideas of neoliberalism together with trust in markets. With economic factors, the mostly criticized fact is the switch from producing less products Africa needed and still needs the most, to producing more of those not entirely necessary. The social factors of 'westernization' are probably the most criticized ones by *Arowolo*. Among others, we can mention urbanization, which is at first glance taken as a good thing in reality led to rural exodus and displacement of many people; individualism, is also not considered as a good thing because the traditional African extended family was left threatened and people thus communicate less and less; corruption is another big issue and *Arowolo* claims that the western civilization brought this phenomenon in there and it's their consequence. He also states that the impact of Christianity has to be considered as it is the most important factor in the process of 'westernization'. (Arowolo, 2010) Christianity for sure challenged the traditional values and it was connected to many spheres of development assistance provided by the West.

Lastly, the third crossing we can find is the African-Hindu, which is connected to the often neglected Indian minority in Africa. We can see that for example in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. As with the other cultural groups, we can find cases of harmonic and peaceful

coexistence of these different cultures as well as the disputes and violent conflicts based on the differences.<sup>3</sup> (Kváča, 2010)

No wonder now, that African culture does not really have a sole core. There were and still are many influences from the outside and the Sub-Saharan culture is thus not united and if we study every single country we would not find only similarities but many differences too.

## 1.2 Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa

As we established earlier, historical background of Sub-Saharan Africa is very difficult and complicated and the process influenced all the aspects of the society. Ethnicity is one of the most important elements in the region, as it is closely connected to social structure, creating different groups in the society and thus it can influence also political sphere and peace-making or possible conflict situation in a country. It is thus important to define this aspect of African society as well, before we proceed further in our analysis.

Defined in many typologies of conflicts and disputes, we can find these categories:

1. disputes stemming from ethnic diversity of the population (different races, nations, nationalities, tribes or language groups)
2. disputes stemming from religious diversity
3. disputes stemming from different status in the society

Often, the ethnic element is stated as one of the most influencing factors and causes in conflicts analysis and sometimes as their primary explanation.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it is not the only one as there are also other conflict factors, such as demography, religion and others which usually play a role in the conflict together. (Kváča, 2007) Scholars like for example *Collier* or *Posner* also agree, that ethnicity is not the underlying course of conflicts. Rather the causes are complex and include competition for resources, socioeconomic gain and political power quest. On the other side of the spectrum, there are also scholars, like *Hyden* and *Horowitz*, who believe that ethnicity is the cause of conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. For them, conflicts between ethnic groups are result of their interactions and experience with other groups and

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<sup>3</sup> Culturally very heterogeneous Mauritius and mutual fight of Indians and others against discrimination in SA can be states as an example of cooperation and harmony, while expulsion of Indians from Uganda during the rule of Amin can be given as a bad coexistence example.

<sup>4</sup> As in the case of Rwandan genocide. Because there were Hutus and Tutsis.

due to these experiences each group arrives at a certain sense of self-worth. According to it, one group feels superior to the other. (Oden-Kurz, 2011)

Consequently, ethnicity is a term, which is very hard to define. We can look at it objectively and subjectively. Nowadays, the prevailing opinion in academia is that ethnicity is a social construct and it lies in the society's belief in its common identity. Thus, there are in-group and out-group participants of this ethnic groups. So we share the identity and thus ethnicity with one group of people and we exclude the others from this sharing. The objective analysis of ethnicity works with terms like language, race, culture or genealogy. Though, to define an ethnic group objectively can be very difficult. Sometimes language is used as a primary condition of defining ethnicity but especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where many languages are not set in written form and many dialects exist, this can be tricky. There also other terms connected with defining ethnicity, being tribe or tribalism. Although, tribe is usually defined as artificially constructed division of African society by the colonial rulers. The division was made based on what was perceived as objective characteristics but it was often false. Thus, for many scholars, tribe also symbolizes something negative and that is why we will keep in mind this subjective nature and blurry explanations of this notion when used later in the countries' analysis. (Kváča, 2010)

Scholars also disagree on whether we really need the notion of ethnic identity when dealing with problems in society. We can differentiate three approaches to this. Primordialists, such as *Shils* and *Geertz*, believe that ethnicity is an inseparable factor of the society and it plays an important role as the ethnic groups always protect their interests together. On the other hand instrumentalists, such as *Banton* or *Hechter*, see ethnicity as explicitly social construct and thus it can be used by different groups in different time conditions in the political fight. They claim that ethnic identity is a same political sources as money or votes. The third approach voiced by modernists, is the one followed by many first generation politicians of African states. It is closely connected to traditional agricultural way of living of the African societies. However, it claims that with modernization and industrialization the importance and power of ethnicity and ethnic groups will decrease in favour of individualistic approach. Thus, the gravity of ethnic conflicts will decrease too. For this was the effect of western ethnocentric approach, we did not see the evidence of this yet, as ethnicity still effects conflicts in the region.

Yet, for Sub-Saharan Africa the problem with ethnicity also lies in the individual formation of states. In the process of decolonisation, new states emerged with difficult ethnic relations inside of them. Nations, which had nothing in common, were put together in one state, as the

borders of those states were inconsiderably given by the western powers. (Kváča, 2007) Thus, the notion of ethnicity is really not something easy to define in conditions of Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Ethnicity in post-colonial era

Even though, ethnicity is not the main object of our study, we believe it's important to have a closer look at it, especially in post-colonial period so we can understand the issues and developments behind political situation and religious groups in the country we decide to study later.

The post-colonial period is particularly criticized because of African elites imitating the West. Most of the new ruling elites were educated in the West and they were convinced that the right and modern form of the state is the nation state. As we mentioned earlier it was probably not the best idea for the young African states. Consequently, almost all African governments adopted a policy of some form of African nationalism in their ideologies. Thus, in those multi-ethnic states the ethnic affiliation became an obstacle and rulers were heard saying more often things in favour of unity, and against tribalism. They planned for that ethnic differences will eliminate ethnic identification which was believed to be backward element and impeding progress. A centralized state was a key to national unity and rule of single party. That is why regional and municipal elections were and still are very rare in African states as the local governments were made into a tool of official, central government or completely dissolved.

In spite of the proclaimed national unity, many political elites of these times were using the ethnic dimension for their own benefits.<sup>5</sup> Thus, later on the African governments changed the policy of building a united nation state into politics of exclusion of some ethnic groups in the political process and power sharing. This is also connected to neopatrimonial style of governance, typical for many African countries, where clientelism and ethnic identity plays an important role. (Kváča, 2007) Patronage is an important political institution affecting both ethnicity and conflict in the region for leaders will always reward fellow members for putting them and keeping them in power. All these specific elements of government in Africa emerged with politicization of ethnicity and subsequently made political decisions difficult. (Oden-Kurz, 2011) These processes then led to stronger cohesion between threatened ethnic

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<sup>5</sup> During the rule of president Youlou in Congo when Balalias were favoured; In times of Samuel Doe in Liberia when Krahns were favoured; or Arabs in Sudan

groups. Thus, groups on regional or local level started to emerge and got involved in politics. We can call them subnational. Their goals included greater equality, or efforts to get greater autonomy or even to take control over the whole country. Some of these groups had also separatist or secessionist or irredentist goals. (Kváča, 2007)

We can see that these developments led to very complicated situation in the whole African continent regarding the ethnic groups and their position in society. Some of them feel in power and some powerless. That is why they started to act in favour of their needs and wants, which led to ethnically motivated conflicts in many countries of the region. But as we said in the beginning, ethnicity is not the only factor to blame and thus we will look now more closely on the religious factors.

### **1.3 Religion in Sub-Saharan Africa**

It is interesting to see how the religious demography changed over the time in Africa. If we look at data from 1900, it shows that both Muslims and Christians were in minority there as most of the population practiced traditional African religions. When in 1900 the number of Muslim believers was estimated to 11 million, in 2010 the number was approximately 234 million, and thus it increased more than 20 times. The number of Christians in the region grew even faster, from 7 million to 470 million. To illustrate this change we can take a look at the Chart 1 enclosed in Appendices.<sup>6</sup> As there are 49 countries in the region and defining the religious beliefs in all of them here would be very lengthy, we enclose Table 1 in the Appendices, which shows division of religious faith in all the countries in percentages.

As we said earlier, the Sub-Saharan Africa's culture is different from other world cultures as it does not have many unifying factors. However, one of them is religion. While other world cultures have usually one main religion as their unifier, it is not true for African culture. There are three main religious movements, which's importance and scale differ from state to state. It is obviously Christianity, Islam and number of traditional African religions. (Kváča, 2010)

However, for the African continent the total number of believers of both religions is almost the same. Sub-Saharan Africa though, has twice as many Christians than Muslims. So it leaves the northern part of Africa heavily Muslim, as we already outlined before. And as these meet in the middle, it creates the aforementioned crossing point or the transitional area. In

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<sup>6</sup> Due to lacking exact numerical data, which prevented us to create the chart once again on our own we have decided to enclose a picture of the Chart made by Pew Forum.

fact, it is a line going from Somalia in the East to Senegal in the West.<sup>7</sup> (Pew Forum, 2010) Certainly, Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most religious regions in the world. Religion plays an important role in peoples' lives and according to the study of Pew Forum conducted in 19 Sub-Saharan countries, on average 85% of questioned people said that religion plays a very important role in their lives. Interestingly, the percentage was little bit higher for Muslims than for Christians and there are also regional differences. Nevertheless, the importance of religion stemming from the survey is much higher comparing to the rest of the world. (Zandt, 2011) We will get back to the result of this very interesting survey later in the analysis. Although the importance of religion for Sub-Saharan African states is huge, the majority of them has a secular constitution. It thus translates into the freedom of religion, when no religion is superior to others. However, we can find states which are officially Muslim, such as Sudan, Somalia, Mauritania and Comoros, and on the other side those officially Christian such as Liberia. For the principle of secularism is not a traditional feature of African culture and it was imported there from Europe.

*Kvása* defines two waves of spreading Christianity to the African continent. The first one was the wave in the first centuries A.D., when large groups of Christians headed from the Middle East to mostly northeast of Africa. This branch of Christianity survived in the form of Coptic Church in Ethiopia. One of the oldest Christian communities were found there and what in today's Eritrea as soon as in 4<sup>th</sup> century. (Zandt, 2011) As for the second wave which helped spread Christianity, it is connected with white missionaries, either catholic or protestant. (Kvása, 2010) The traces of these missionary work can be found already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it proceeding with colonisation efforts and got stronger during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, it was the missionary work by the Portuguese in the Congo and later it was followed by the French, English, Germans and Belgians throughout the whole region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the spreading of Christianity is not over yet. (Zandt, 2011) As we stated above, the number of Christians is growing faster than ever.

Islam, the second biggest imported religion in the region is mostly dominant in North Africa but if we look at the Table 1, we can see that there are many countries also in Sub-Saharan Africa where Muslims form smaller or bigger groups in the division of religious population. Islam began to spread into the region as soon as in 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. with the Arabs, which later used big camel caravans to help them cross Sahara and afterwards as they ruled the coast of Indian Ocean, with their trade they also brought their faith. So Islam did not

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<sup>7</sup> For illustration, we enclose Picture 1 in Appendices, which show the ratio of Christians and Muslims on African continent.



stay only in the North and already in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim states were created, as was Kano in the area of today's North Nigeria. (Kváča, 2010)

Nevertheless, till the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Sub-Saharan Africa was a region where these big imported world religions did not play major role and it was dominated by traditional African religious movements. There is though not one main movement or religion but a whole set of cults reflecting the ethnic diversity of Africa and thus it's difficult to highlight some of the general common features. We can though include them into animistic and polytheistic religions. As they responded to the problems of the society, the main role besides the cult of ancestors were played by healers and magic. These traditional African religious systems are much more complicated as let's say Christianity, as they include many different roles such as fortune-tellers, healers, magicians, chief of tribes, wizards, priests and more. The importance of magic in these religious movements is probably one of the main differences between other religions. (Kváča, 2010)

We can say, that Christianity as well as Islam are spreading through Africa at the expense of traditional religious movements. However, it does not mean the total end for these movements as the phenomena of religious syncretism is very common in this region. It is translated in overlapping and mixing of different religions or a state when people practice Christianity or Islam together with some elements of traditional beliefs, like rituals in honour of the spirits of ancestors. Thus, Christianity and Islam have very different forms in the conditions of Sub-Saharan region. (Kváča, 2010) We can see that in the Table 1 for example in Ghana, where 28.3% of all Christians are Pentecostal/Charismatic, or in Zimbabwe where 50% of population claim to be part of Syncretic Church. There are many types of independent African Church movements which are in essentially Christian though the Christian traditions are mixed with beliefs of traditional African movements. To explain these religions better, it's important to say that these religions have no formal creeds or sacred texts such as Bible or Koran. They use very much the oral traditions, myths, rituals, festivals, shrines, art, symbols and more to form their expressions. Although at first, they were considered as some superstitions by western scholars, nowadays these African religious traditions are fully acknowledged and studied by many scholars in the world. Another element, which can be set as a difference with Christianity or Islam is that these traditional religions primarily provide well-being for humans in the present and not in the future world as in Christianity or Islam. (Pew Forum, 2010) Even though, these syncretic tendencies seem to bring cooperation and understanding of different religions it is not always true and we can find examples of not so

peaceful, even violent clashes. Even though officially freedom of religion is proclaimed, the reality is not so bright in all the countries of the region. (Kváča, 2010)

According to *Pew Forum* survey, many people who indicate their commitment to either Christianity or Islam say they also incorporate elements of traditional religions into their daily lives. In four studied countries, Tanzania, Mali, Senegal and South Africa, more than half of the surveyed people say they believe that sacrifices to ancestors or spirits can protect them against harm. More than quarter of people in many countries also say that they believe in protective power of juju, which means charms or amulets. The position of a traditional healer in the society is also important for many interviewed people as they say they consult him when somebody from the family is sick. Rituals and ceremonies in honour of the ancestors are also common for sizeable minorities in many countries and many people also keep sacred objects, like animal skin or skulls in their home as they believe in its powers. (Pew Forum, 2010) So although not many people identify themselves primarily as believers of these traditional religions and faiths it still has its role in the African society.

#### **1.4 Cultural Traits and Values**

In order to have the full overview of the conditions in the region, we consider it important to explain some of the cultural traits of Sub-Saharan Africa and its value orientation.

As *Kváča* states it, there were not many researches made specifically on Sub-Saharan African territory and its value traits. Even the well-known, essential and often cited *Hofstede's* survey did not take this part of the world into the consideration. It was very much influenced by western cultural affiliation of the research team and especially the Sub-Saharan region was represented by very little sample. Another *World Values Survey* was also influenced by western research parameters and only conducted in Anglophone countries. Nevertheless, *Noorderhaven – Tidjani's* survey was created as a response to this deficit and though there are also shortcomings, it is very interesting as it was created with help of African scientists and thus enabled research from the inside. There are five factors stemming from these surveys in which African culture shows extreme values. We can see these values in the Table 2 below. The power distance is critical as it is extremely big comparing to other countries and thus African society takes inequality in society as something natural. Power legitimacy is not very important and in most of the cases power is above law. This relation to authority comes also from the history. However, in pre-colonial period, there were little sultanates in the Islamised regions, which were governed by absolutistic ruler. Here, we can

also mention the proven fact about Islam religion and occurrence of emirates with absolutistic ruler. The rulers hold almost unlimited power and the social mobility upwards is restricted and power shifts are often executed together with violence. In other, non-Islamic parts of Africa, the political structure is often headed by chief whose position is either purely hereditary or elected for life. Despite the role of council of elders in many societies, the post of chief was to some extent also authoritarian.

Hierarchy is important in family as well as in workplace and rules are important in school and work environment too, as people wait for orders what to do and how. In African society the individualism is replaced by collectivism. It is largely due to the fact that agriculture is still the most important economic sector in many states. These collective features are not only typical in rural areas but also in urban ones. It is also connected to typically big extended African families. In political and economic sphere the collective tendencies are often translated into nepotism or tribalism and it is not considered as something bad. (Kváča, 2010)

Table 2: Selected Values of Sub-Saharan Africa

<b>Hofstede's values</b>	<b>Value</b>
<i>Power distance</i>	big
<i>Individualism</i>	small
<b>Noorderhaven - Tidjani's values</b>	
Human goodness	small trust in it
Rules and hierarchy	strong need
Importance of religion	big

Source: Kváča, 2010

There is strong relation between humans, objects and the supernatural. Finding of equilibrium between them is a strong defining principle. Among other cultural traits found in many analysis, there is the attitude towards savings and investment. It is not very typical to have some savings, for the common people of Sub-Saharan Africa. One of the reasons is for sure poverty, as many people live from day to day and do not think ahead regarding their money issues. It is though interesting that, even if they do not have much the people tend to give it away on some occasions like marriage, circumcisions or burials. *Dia* also mentions attitude towards decision making, which is really strong as Africans always seek to reach broad consensus and unanimity. In some countries the customary norms require that the dispute should be brought to an end by songs and dances to express the agreement of the parties and engage in maintaining harmony and understanding. The strong collective elements lead also to tendency to value group and solidarity and socializing, which consequently led to

high value to leisure and attendance of rituals, ceremonies and other social activities. This importance given by Africans to leisure is often misunderstood in the West as laziness. It is not true, as for them it is an important mean of strengthening social bonds, which are so crucial for the development of the whole society. (Dia, 1991)

## **2. Linking Religion and Political Sphere**

Throughout the paper we engage in analysing the impacts of religion on politics. Before coming to study of selected individual country and the role, position, impact of religion there, we first need to clarify some theoretical concepts. We will be describing it in the following chapter.

Politics and religion have been tied together long ago. Both Athens and Rome had state religion or cults of special importance to the state. Later, all the major empires developed and took religion with them. The political-religious dynamics continued in the modern era. Religious engagement was evident in the global arena through missionary activities and also engagement of religious organizations in global issues, such as abolishing slavery. (Banchoff, 2008)

### **2.1 Religion – A Neglected Study?**

Nevertheless, once we started researching the studies on this issue, we discovered an interesting fact. The connection of religion and world politics is not highly researched. Religion is usually not a main topic of some international relations theory. In cases when it is considered, it is more like a subcategory, influencing element to something seen as more important factors, such as institutions, civilization, and terrorism. In those few cases where it is the main element, it is often characterized as fundamental, violent, radical, and militant. We can also say, that the fact that for many Western social scientists religion did not represent a crucial element in their analysis predicted its decline as a significant factor in social and political studies. *Fox and Sandler* give several reasons for this disregard of religion.

First, social sciences largely influenced by many Western social thinkers are based on rejection of religion as an explanation for the world. On this basis, the international relations evolved as a discipline which rejects religion or ethnicity as a part of modern society and in explaining how the world works. Most of the very influential Western social thinkers of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as *Comte, Durkheim, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, Voltaire* or *Weber*, believed that an enlightenment will replace religion as a basis for understanding the

world. They believed, that in modern industrialized world, there is a need for more rational and scientific means of how to explain the world we live in as also the ways how to manage it properly. Later on, modern social scientists followed these assumptions that religion has no role in modern society and politics. It was translated into modernization theory. It claims that processes which are crucial for modernization inevitably demise primordial factors such as ethnicity or religion. By these modernization processes it means economic development, urbanization, modern social institutions, pluralism, growing literacy and education as well as expanding science and technology. The modernization theory was a dominant paradigm in from the late 1950s to mid-1970s. A secularization theory, which can be described as a subset of modernization theory, focuses directly on religion. It claims that society is becoming more secular, for the same reasons as are described in the modernization theory. Thus we can say, that the more advanced society, the more secular. The notion of modern state facilitates this process as the state is based on rational and scientific principles, and legitimacy is secured by democratic institutions or ideologies, which claim that the state represents the will of people. So, religion is not needed anymore. Secular institutions have taken over roles traditionally played by religion, and both resources and time people and institutions devote to religion has fallen. In the society it means that priests and ministers were replaced by psychologists, psychiatrics and others. (Fox and Sandle, 2004)

The second reason for the disregard of religion is that international relations are probably the most Western-centric of all social science disciplines and thus, the trend to reject religion as a factor is highly persistent with the scholars. It is not because of the subject it studies but because of those who practice it. Moreover, almost all the theorists who came up with the modernization theory and secularization theory were based either in the US or in Europe. Even later on, when we look at the work of *Huntington*, we can see that his theory is connected and based to some extent on religion, he avoids this term and rather uses term civilizations. Furthermore, the argument that religion is not important in politics is not only typical for western academic scholars but to the whole western society and culture. It is connected with the advocated liberalism in which among other things Church should be separated from the state. Children who are brought up in this conditions then become social scientists and they believe in what they have been thought at home. However, there is a difference in opinions of scholars who study religion's significance in the West and those studying it elsewhere. Of course, experts on religious influence in politics in Middle East or Africa would not agree with the purely western stances. On the other side, there are many scholars in the West who study conditions in non-West countries and who see the violent role

of religion as a throwback, which will disappear as these non-West countries modernize. Although, the West may be less religious than some countries in Africa or other regions, the scholars should not close their eyes before the impacts of religion on politics. Because if it will be the case that religion continues to be important also in the modernized West, it will be very hard for them to explain. (Fox and Sandler, 2004)

Third, international relations as a discipline is influenced by behavioralism, and quantitative methodology is widely used. Thus, the scholars who use the quantitative methods are accused of ignoring those factors which cannot be measured, such as religion. While it is sure is a factor deserving the study, religion is probably one of the hardest ones to study. The aforementioned lack of attention of the scholars devoted to this topic resulted in a poor basis to develop some variables. For a variable or theory to be quantified and studied, we need extensive qualitative literature on the topic. It is not the case of religion, which consequently makes it hard for scholars to conceptualize how it may be measured. This lack of literature may also resulted in an attitude that religion is just not that important to quantify. Religion is also hard to measure, as probably the most effective way would be to directly read the minds of political actors to know what their motivations are, though this is not possible. Thus, many scholars fear to engage in measuring religious impacts and its role, as the commonly used quantitative methods are just not enough. In those cases, in which religion is included in the study the measures are quite crude. Thus, scholars often study whether there were different religions involved in the conflict or how many religious groups are present in the state. Even though, some studies measure specific aspects and influence of religion in a state, they are usually informative only in limited extent. We can see that if we compare it to study of some economic factors, which are highly more sophisticated and there are many ways to measure e.g. economic performance of a country or income and economic inequality. On the other hand, it is sure easier to study something concrete and commonly measurable as to study something as complex, complicated and intangible as religion.

Fourth reason, for why religion has been so disregarded in the international relations is that all the major theories of international relations which are widely discussed and researched are based on assumptions excluding religion as an important factor. We can use an example of realism. This, perhaps the most influential international relations paradigm excludes less tangible factors, while it concentrates on power as a driving force in states' relations. International relations as a discipline, and its core values as we know it today, developed from the national security theories, which emerged after the WW2 and which were mostly developed by the minds of NATO. (Fox and Sandler, 2004)

Nevertheless, by the early 1980s political scientists became interested in the discourse about religion and ethnicity again and re-examined their beliefs, as well as the sociologists, who began to reassess the secularization theory by the late 1980s, early 1990s. After long debates, the final argument on this topic was the total opposite of what modernization and secularization theory were saying before. Modernization was claimed to be responsible for resurgence of religion. The main argument in this reassessment is that modernity is increasing importance and role of religion in politics and society. *Fox* and *Sandler* mention many aspects to this reassessment. For example, that modernity allowed state and religious institutions to increase their spheres of influence, though resulting in more clashes between the two. The religious part of society is able to impose its views on others, as the modern political systems allow mass participation in politics. Modern communication technologies and media have made it easier for religious groups to express their views and make people aware of their activities. Another aspect is that modern religious institutions and organizations contribute to political activity. These religious institutions can provide organizations prepared for some kind of political mobilization. They are a great form of the organization as they often have access to media, assets and international networks. (Fox and Sandler, 2004)

Moreover, during the Cold War times the growing importance of religion in international affairs contrasted with secular and ideological competition of the superpowers. The beginning of a shift can be seen in the 1970s Iranian revolution, importance of Evangelicals in the US politics and John Paul II's international papacy. However, religion and religious pluralism in world affairs got strong support in contemporary dynamics and effects of globalization. It is because of the proliferation of telephone, fax, television and later Internet and new technologies that the transnational religious networks and diaspora communities were able to survive and grow. Thus, a high degree of religious pluralism in world politics was sustained. Furthermore, it also led to diversification of religious traditions. Globalization processes are also connected with spreading democracy in the world and consequently democratic processes in individual countries led to growing opportunities for the religious communities to get involved in the public sphere. For globalization has enabled more interactions and thus promoted dialogue, the possible violent actions of different transnational religious groups could also be facilitated. (Banchoff, 2008) Though when we talk about globalization, we should be aware of its negative aspects too. New technologies and media reach enabled communication but not always for the best. *Wijsen* uses example of Rwandan genocide, when media and state institutions constantly spread misleading and negative information about different groups. (Wijsen, 2007)

The rise of religious fundamentalism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is attributed to modernization as well. In many explanations, fundamentalism concerns with defining, restoring and reinforcing the basis of personal and communal identity and the dislocations caused by modernity. They refuse to accept scientific and rational explanations of the world, which threaten to replace religious morality and explanations of the world. Fundamentalists often use modern communication ways, propaganda, organizational techniques, and so it must not always be seen as a return to the past. To conclude, even though not many political scientists include religion in their analysis, not so many openly deny its influence in world politics. So religion is for sure not a thing of the past. (Fox and Sandler, 2004)

Furthermore, in the studies of religion made in the West, the religion is understood as a source of symbols, morals, and ideologies that bind people together. Often, its ability to be used as a validator of political actions is acknowledged. Mostly, religious symbols can be utilized in a critique of a political system, as they arise out of alternative position of authority. Regarding religious institutions, we mentioned before that they can be helpful in political organization of people. That's why they are sometimes describes as pro-democratic, as they promote this culture of engagement and social responsibility. However, due to cases of religious-based conflicts in the post-Cold War era the attention was shifted from solely positive effects of religion to its possible divisive nature. This turn was influenced also by the events of 9/11. Nowadays, both in the US and in the rest of the world, there appears to be somewhat intensified polarization between the secular and religious institutions, or between different religions independently. This divisive power is claimed to be especially strong namely between Christianity and Islam. (Manglos, Weinreb, 2013)

## **2.2 Religion – Divisive or Unifying?**

As mentioned earlier, probably one of the most important ways how religion can influence politics of a state is through its ability to bolster or undermine political legitimacy. (Fox, Sandler 2003 in Onapajo, 2012) It can have such attribute as being an influence to legitimize or illegitimize political regimes. This can happen in a country, where it is first of all legitimate to invoke religion in political discourse and second of all, where population is diverse in its religious views and beliefs. Religion is an important part of identity and ethnicity of population and has the capability to shape social and political activities of religious groups, and its followers. When doing so, a threat of discrimination against minority religious or identity group arises, based on the different goals and interests in the society.



Thus, upon this threat the religious organizations can act in favour of mobilization for either protest or a rebellion. The situation can get critical, when religion and its followers who feel vulnerable in a certain position support the use of force, and when their core interests are threatened. Studies on this topic show that modern religions have strong nexus with violence. (Onapajo, 2012) We found evidence of such in case of Islam also in part of *Huntington's* work, which was examined earlier in the Chapter 1.

Furthermore, due to its capacity for effective political mobilization, religion represents an important and influential social factor. There are six reasons why it is so.

1. The restriction of religious activities is often difficult for the state regimes;
  2. religious organizations often enjoy good patronage in media;
  3. religious organizations have the capability to easily unite different social groups in the society;
  4. religious organizations have the “ready-made” platform for political meetings;
  5. religious organizations are often strong in weak states;
  6. religious organizations have strong international links and enjoy global solidarity.
- (Fox, Sandler 2003 in Onapajo, 2012)

Moreover, we can differentiate four approaches linking religion and politics together. First, we can focus on church leaders as political actors and their activities of mobilization by either negotiations with the government, resistance to it or protesting against the government. *Manglos* and *Weinreb* claim that the Catholic Church tended to be the most active in resistance and protests during the 1980s and 1990s. The power in this approach depends on church size, links to transnational bureaucratic structures, financial stability of the church and independence from the state. The second approach, defines religion as an inherently political activity with its activities responding to the needs of dissatisfied people. Here the religion uses set of politically charged symbols to subvert and reinterpret the global forces acting in their local communities. Thus, politically charged language takes place through the media and that can be threatening elites' discourse. When looking at the politically charged discourse, we can say that the Catholic and Mission Protestants are more political as they have outside ties and communicate a lot through media. However, from the subversive side, this can be more intense in e.g. Pentecostal or Muslim communities who do not have direct bureaucratic ties to religious organization in Europe or the U.S. In the third approach, religion plays a key role in development of civic consciousness. Bottom-up processes of socialization, network

reorganization and exchange of ideas between people are crucial also in the relationship between religion and politics. Such studies focus on education, which promotes civic responsibility of people and also work of local congregations, through which people develop their civic and organizational skills and also they experience some kind of decision making. Religion thus motivates people in ways which are beyond clan or ethnic groups. As individuals are connecting to larger public spheres and their networks and experience with civic issues are expanding, religion is playing an inclusionary role. This approach suggests, that the more active member of a religious group the more politically interested the person becomes. The political interest and engagement is higher than with people who only affiliate themselves with one or another religion. So the association between active membership and political association is positive. The fourth approach stated by *Manglos* and *Weinreb* takes religion as both an instrument of political mobilization and political boundary making. As a result, the particular religious group is disenfranchised. This argument was though mostly used in works dealing with divisive power of religion or the tendency for inequality to be deepened along the different religious lines. (Manglos, Weinreb, 2013)

When we talk about the unifying or divisive power of religion, we have to take a look at the emergence of transnational religious actors, who are an important element nowadays. They include the global papacy, Evangelic networks, Jewish diaspora and organizations emerging from the Muslim world. They became to interact more with each other as well as with secular actors within the state and society on many issues. Since the 1980s, the Roman Catholic Church, being the world's largest religious organization, has become an important actor and started to get involved in issues such as human rights, peace and development. Under John Paul II, the church has emerged as an influential force in international sphere and got engaged with different UN institutions. Protestant and Orthodox Churches have also expanded their involvement in world affairs and policy interactions with government and international institutions. Also Evangelic congregations became widely associated with missionary activities and traditional values and developed their stances on poverty, HIV/AIDS issues or global warming. Islam, considered world's second largest religion, has also emerged as an important transnational player.

Although the vast majority of Muslim organizations are committed to peaceful cooperation in political and social affairs, it is mainly Islamic militants, such as Al-Qaeda, who have attracted most of the world's attention. Nevertheless, the last two decades have seen a large expansion of social movements and NGOs. When it comes to Judaism, the strength lies in Jewish Diaspora across the world and power of state of Israel. Israel can be seen as a

successful pluralist democracy and the diaspora is very strong, as it provides financial and political support not only for Israel but also to other causes, such as peace in the Middle East, global economic and social development and fight against anti-Semitism and racism. Buddhism and Hinduism are also growing force in international relation, though they are mostly internally diverse and there is not one strong organization. Hinduism is becoming strong mainly due to the influential Indian diaspora in the world. Regarding Buddhism, it has been engaged in politics for a long time, also thanks to diplomacy of Dalai Lama. Other religious communities acting in the world sphere and uniting people over the world include for example Sikhs and Baha'i traditions. (Banchoff, 2008)

### **2.3 Religious Pluralism**

For our thesis, it is important to set straight the term pluralism. There is obvious link between constitutionalism and pluralism. The linkage arises from history and the debates about handling the differences in society. Though, these differences of world views, religions and the conceptions of good had been and still are used as some kind of justifications for persecution and discrimination. There were many examples of such in Europe but also on the African continent, such as the Rwandan genocide. Constitutionalism, constructed in the West as political liberalism and then brought to Africa, represents a political and also moral orientation. It uses certain set of checks and balances in order to mitigate the tendency of people and groups to act badly against others on the basis of their differences. *Ilesanmi* characterizes this as a negative function of constitutionalism. On the other hand, the positive function stems from the orientation of constitutionalism for cooperation of people and groups with different persuasions and at the same time for the freedom of these people and groups to pursue their normative agenda. Thus, there is the dual relationship to pluralism. On one hand, the fact that we are aware of plurality and differences prompt us to find how best to limit its harmful effects, while at the same time the answer and response is designed in a way to confine or specify the scope of pluralism without erasing it totally.

*Ilesanmi* claims that while any constitutional regime may proclaim to permit pluralism within its scope of function, not all pluralist solutions reflect the ideals of constitutionalism both in its positive and negative functions. Thus, the degree of pluralism a particular constitutional system permits will depend on citizenship and more importantly on leader's understanding of this debate and whether the state is seen as an instrument for establishment of God's or Allah's kingdom. We will keep this in mind when studying the particular case of

African state. (Ilesanmi, 2001) Furthermore, we can differentiate three types of pluralism within the constitutional system. Minimal pluralism, which can be understood as making division between self and others. Such a system pays minimal or no attention to elasticity of identity. It requires some form of coalescence and historically it has been achieved by subordination of minority groups, religious or ethnic, to the dominant ones. The second type is limited pluralism, which proclaims toleration and acceptance of other religions, while it does not demand that all conceptions of good will be put in the same position. In practice though, this system of toleration is not working as it should be most of the time. Toleration can be paradoxical and indeterminate idea, as it can only mean that weaker parties simply have to tolerate the stronger ones as there is nothing they can do about it. It can thus hide dictatorship actions in a country. To overcome these problems, *Rosenfeld* proposes an idea of comprehensive pluralism. This system suggest putting all the conceptions of good found in a country on an equal position. It proclaims eligibility of constitutional identity on all pre-constitutional selves and guarantees rights and obligations appropriate to this identity. However, regardless of administrative system by which a state is governed, being federal, confederal or something else, citizens should not experience any type of restrictions on his/hers selves, identity. (*Rosenfeld* in Ilesanmi, 2001)

Religious pluralism is often a contested concept. It can have different understanding and definitions in different disciplines. Theology understands it as a term expressing harmony, convergence and compatibility across different religious traditions. The opposite would be religious exclusivism. More importantly for us, in sociology which affected also political thinking, the term is connected with different religions within the same social or cultural space. We can thus deal with a space of a single country or a region. Thus, it is the interaction of religious actors with one another and with society and the state around them with concrete cultural, social, economic and political agenda. It is then translated into politics, which join communities with overlapping and different ethics and interests. As we mentioned earlier, such interactions may develop into peaceful coexistence or a sharp conflict. But of course, if the conflict begins, there end the ideals of pluralism. We can see how religious pluralism works on the national democratic contexts. If in a country, freedoms of individuals, majority rule and constitutional order are guaranteed by the state institutions, there should be no place for conflict interactions between different religious communities. Later in the paper, we will find out what is the situation in the studied country. As sometimes, this conflict can evolve into civil unrest, which thus threatens democratic stability of a country. Peaceful interactions between the communities is ensured by the government institutions mostly in the western

world. Elsewhere, however the practice is not so easy. For example weak or failed states cannot protect religious minorities or transnational religious communities inside their country and to prevent religious differences and disputes emerging into bloodshed.<sup>8</sup> Apart from that, non-democratic countries also disrupt the ideals of religious pluralism, as they might keep interactions between different religious groups peaceful, however favouring some religious groups over others. Or they can marginalize the religion in the public sphere totally.<sup>9</sup> (Banchoff, 2008)

In his work, *Fox* measures government involvement in religion and describes different ways to do so. We can do it by measuring different variables of how government can get involved. *Fearon, Laitin, and Mecham* list these ones:

- “There is a state religion that is constitutionally recognized.
- The state gives added resources to adherents/elites of any religion not available to others.
- The state allows, in general, free practice of religion.
- The state requires religious groups to get approval for religious activities from a state ministry.
- The state regulates the practice of missionaries, beyond the normal bureaucratic processing for nonreligious organizations or for foreign organizations (when missionaries are foreigners).
- The state singles out a religion or sect of the population for harassment or discrimination, or permits through inaction civilians harassing members of that religion. This discrimination must be such as not justified by the rule of law.” (Fox, 2008, pp. 40-41)

After giving several other examples of how to measure government involvement, *Fox* gives his own variables, which he believes measure in a best way aforementioned involvement. These include:

- “the official role of religion in the state;
- whether the state restricts or gives preferential treatment to some or all religions;
- restrictions placed on minority religious practices;

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<sup>8</sup> As seen for example in Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria.

<sup>9</sup> As in China.

- regulation of all religion or the majority religion;
- whether the state legislates religion.” (Fox, 2008, pp. 47)

The first variable can be further divided into two different things to measure – hostility to religion and support for religion. The variable of official support can be further divided into no support or accommodation, support, cooperation, and also we look at whether state has one or more official religions or only one official religion. The variable of hostility can be structured as no hostility or accommodation, separationist, inadvertent insensitivity and hostile. When it comes to restrictions of a state on religion, *Fox* states 11 variables for measurement, which include for example restrictions on religious political parties, arrest or harassment of religious figures, restrictions on the public observance of religious practices, restrictions on access to places of worship and others. The assessment ranges from no restrictions to slight, significant restriction up to activity being illegal. Regarding the religious legislation, we can measure number of types of religious legislation including for example restrictions on conversions away from the dominant religion, restrictions on interfaith marriages, blasphemy laws, mandatory religious education, government funding for religious organizations. (Fox, 2008) These variables will be useful for us, when analysing the case study and looking at the effects of religion in the country.

## **2.4 Role of Religion in Conflicts**

Importance of religion in security studies has been outlined in the previous subchapter. Identity is an essential element of these studies. Role of religious identity in conflicts is one of many factors dividing the academia between those who claim that religion is one of the primary causes of international conflicts and on the other side those ones, who believe that religion has the opposite effect on the society, thus promoting peace. (Doležal, Kratochvíl, 2014)

As we established earlier, religion is ambivalent and complex phenomena. It's role and impact can be important in one country while not that important in another. There are several hypothesis connecting religious factor to conflict. Firstly, it looks at the issue from socio-psychological point of view. Different religious identities form a group identity and can lead to escalation of inter-group dynamics. This is similar to ethnic or other social identities. However, people often favour in-group members over out-group and as a result violent interactions become more likely. Second hypothesis is based on a fact that religious identities

are special, as they are connected to particular religious ideas. These ideas represent shared values and norms acquired through transcendental sources so they can be hard to negotiate or be a subject of compromise as people accepted their supernatural origin. Such believe can also be a factor in violent behaviour as for example some religious extremists may demand that non-believers or members of different religious groups will convert or if not, they will use force. Furthermore, conflicts over role of religion in state or society may occur if this religion claims universality. Apart from that, in some religions these combatants in violent acts can be motivated by some specific religious rewards. According to third hypothesis, religious factors may be possible mobilization resources for and in conflict. This stresses in particular the role of religious leaders in the organization of collective action. Though leaders can choose from different identities, such as religious, ethnic or other social identities in order to mobilize followers, the religious one may be often the most used. Thus, politicization of religion might increase the risk of violence in a conflict which has primary causes in political, economic or socio-economic sphere. (Basedau et al, 2011)

In his analysis of impacts of religion on conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Dowd* states that if we think about this issue on the basis of common knowledge or as he names it 'conventional wisdom', we can believe that we can expect violent conflicts or civil wars to be less likely or less deadly in societies where people share religious identity. He says, that also in history the most deadly intra-state conflicts were between people divided by religion.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, there have been also many examples of fighting between people of the same religious identity, though it may have be more subtle.<sup>11</sup> According to *Dowd*, conflicts inside the group can be more subtle because the religious leaders try very hard to prevent such conflicts as they threaten integrity of the religious institutions they lead. In the religiously plural setting, religious leaders will also act to prevent violent conflicts, although their work may lack the zeal as the conflict does not directly threatens to split the religious institutions they lead. Also, in religiously plural setting the efforts of religious leaders to mitigate the conflict can be limited as they are only preaching to one side of a conflict and thus their work is not that effective.

However, *Dowd* claims that though we would think according to our 'conventional wisdom' that violent intra-state conflicts will be less frequent or less deadly in religiously homogenous setting, it is not true. Based on his study of Sub-Saharan countries he argues that

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<sup>10</sup> Conflicts in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, India, Indonesia or more recently Sudan and Nigeria.

<sup>11</sup> Here Dowd mentions Spanish Civil War which was between divided Catholics, conflicts between Islamists and secular and moderate Muslims.

on the contrary, violent ethnic conflicts have been less frequent and less deadly in religious plural setting than in the religiously homogenous one. (Dowd, 2004) This is also supported by *Collier* and *Hoeffler*, who say that high ethno-linguistic and religious fractionalization decrease the likelihood of conflicts. (*Collier* and *Hoeffler* in Basedau et al, 2011) Dowd argues, that it is because influence of religious leaders, as religious observance is stronger in religiously plural setting and religious affiliations tend to be more meaningful if not everyone shares the same religious beliefs. Since, the more exclusive the membership is, the more meaningful it is. (Dowd, 2004) Though, we cannot make a research of all Sub-Saharan countries in the paper, we will keep this in mind when analysing chosen country.

On the other hand, *Basedau et al.* argue, that the coexistence of various religious communities in one state increases the likelihood of conflict because of the in- and out-group sentiments. Though, there is no empirical evidence for this assumption. There is little support for the claim that higher politicization of religion means increased conflict risk. Although, the resurgence of religion in politics increased, there was no increase in religious conflicts. (Basedau et al, 2011) Furthermore, the scholars usually deal with single case studies when focusing on religion and conflict, and so large comprehensive and comparative studies are lacking though needed.

### **3. Analysis of a Case Study**

If we focus on the two dominant religions in the Sub-Saharan Africa, Christianity and Islam, we can define three group of countries based on type of relationships between them. First group is formed by countries where relations are extremely volatile. The second, where we can observe peaceful coexistence between the two communities. In the third group are countries, where religious differences have no significant impact. Countries like Nigeria, Egypt, the Sudan, Central African Republic, Kenya and parts of Uganda can be put into the first category. The second group may be formed by countries like Senegal, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Africa or Ghana. Countries in the third group include Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Rwanda and Morocco, which are the countries where Christianity or Islam is so dominant that the believers of other religion constitute only a small part of population, and thus religious differences create only marginal tensions. (Iwuchukwu, 2014)

Based on our previous insight into the issue and aim of our thesis, we believe it is relevant to study particularly country belonging to the first group of countries. Thus, for the analysis in our thesis we decided to concentrate on Nigeria, which will be our case study. When it comes



to Nigeria, some research and analysis have been already done on the country and so we believe it is an interesting case to study as we can say that the relationship between religious communities is very difficult in the country. As we can see in the Table 1 enclosed in Appendices, there are 40% Christians, 50% Muslims and 10% of other believers. That is why, we believe it will serve us as a good case study for analysing the role of religion, religious relations and pluralism inside the country and its relation to conflicts. We will try to find out how these religious relations impact politics and if religion is an important factor.

### **3.1 Federal Republic of Nigeria**

Nigeria as a federation is divided into 36 states, a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) and a 774 Local Government Area structure. The system is part of Nigeria's colonial heritage. Also, in 1979 Nigeria adopted U.S. presidential system, which replaced the British parliamentary system of government. It also includes three tiers of government, being legislative, executive and judicial. The legislature is bicameral, divided into the Senate and the Federal House of Representatives, which are both commonly referred to as a National Assembly. (Brown, 2013) Nevertheless, the system has its flaws and arguments about its need for reconstruction are more and more frequent now. Regarding the political set-up of the country, there are 25 political parties registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) although, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has ruled the country almost unchallenged since the return to the civilian government in 1999. The more popular opposition parties include the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). However, they were successful in gubernatorial elections only in regions where they are originally strong. It is the south-east for APGA, the North for the CPC, and south-west for the ACN. (Dimowo, Abubakar)

Moreover, Nigeria well illustrates the complexities connected with religion and ethnicity and social conflict. It's population of 165 million people is almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians, as we can see from Table 1. (Dowd, 2014) Northern part of a country is predominantly Muslim and southern part is mostly Christian, while religious minorities can be found in both parts. In the middle part of a country, which is also called Middle Belt the numbers of Muslims and Christians are more equal. (USCIRF, 2013) Moreover, in Nigeria there are between three to four hundred different ethno-linguistic groups. Nevertheless, three particular ethnic identities make up two-thirds of the populations. It is Hausa-Fulani with

30%, Yoruba at 20% and Igbo with 17%. When it comes to their religious affiliation, Hausa-Fulani tends to be Muslim, Yoruba are divided between Muslim and Christian and Igbo are predominantly Christian. Therefore, when religious and ethnic affiliations are conjoined, it creates strong regional zones. Thus, we can define the North as predominantly Muslim with Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups while in the southwest we can find mixture of Yoruba Muslims and Christians and in the southeast we can find predominantly Christian Igbo. (Paden, 2015)<sup>12</sup>

When in 1999, the Fourth Republic was created after return to civilian rule, its basis were set upon democracy, federalism and new constitution. The 1999 constitution recognizes Nigeria's ethnic diversity while maintaining the national character.<sup>13</sup> Another objectives include reduction of possibility of future coups, and limiting the ability for dictatorships to emerge. Furthermore, constitution provides for a freedom of religion and belief and prohibits state religion. However, the constitution is not perfect, and it is not successful in protecting religious rights as there are provisions which negatively impact this. It includes provisions which confer privileges based on ethnicity and provide individual rights to states. These provisions which still make a division based on ethnicity or religion were well intended, though in reality they fuel sectarian violence, impede rule of law. Special component of the constitution is the Article 147, which legally distinguishes between "indigenes" and "settlers". Indigenes people are those whose ethnic group is considered native to a particular area while on the other hand, settlers are those whose ethnic group has roots in another part of the country. The division has practical implications in everyday life. State and also local governments issue certificates granting indigeneship, which subsequently translate into benefits and privileges such as access to government employment, lower school fees and others. As we established that ethnic and religious affiliations are often connected, thus this indigene and settlers identities often lead to ethno-religious fights to control state and local government. (USCIRF, 2013)

Another crucial part of the constitution are provisions on federalism. These create conflict between federal and state entities and it has negatively impacted religious freedom across the country, as it creates confused rule of law. This system hinders successful prosecution, as often federal and state attorneys argue over jurisdictional questions and thus, the cases often

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<sup>12</sup> We can see the division also in the Map 2 enclosed in the Appendices

<sup>13</sup> The first constitution Nigeria adopted was the Clifford Constitution of 1922, later it was followed by three colonial constitutions of 1944, 1951 and 1954. The constitutions of 1960 marked the independence though it was not the last one. It was followed by constitutions in 1963, 1979, 1989 and then 1999. This frequent constitutions making is often seen as a reflection of the instability of the system. (Ilesanmi, 2001)

results in no prosecution at all. Also, to address the historical issues of Nigeria and the cases of coups, the constitution set up a federal police force with officers being routinely rotated to new areas. Though at first glance, this system may seem efficient, it is not. Especially, in the culture where trust is so important, officers do not stay long enough in one area to build it. Trust may be very important for successful investigation of cases. Another thing is that when police is a federal entity, it means it needs the federal consent for a full deployment of troops in conflict areas. Thus, the response to outbreaks of sectarian violence is slowed down remarkably. Another problem is the application of Sharia law in the North, where Muslims and Christians disagree on this topic strongly. The argument is whether it is permitted under federalism or it violates prohibition of national religion stipulated in constitution. (USCIRF, 2013)

### **3.2 Islam in Nigeria**

The spread of Islam in Nigeria predated its contact with Christianity and era of European colonialism. As we described the spread of Islam in Africa in the first chapter, it is clear that its spreading into this region was facilitated by trade and commerce. Especially, the northern part of Nigeria is important in the history of spreading Islam in the African region south of Sahara and Nigeria in particular. Islam penetrated the area through Kanem-Borno Empire in the 11<sup>th</sup> century before spreading to other states. The encounter of local customs and their incorporation into the core of Islam led subsequently to Holy Jihad staged by Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Onapajo, 2012) It was because Islam in the North had a tremendous assimilative energy. Becoming a Muslim included no strict conditions and the convert was not expected to abandon his old religion or to fully understand the teaching of the new religion. This endangered Islam's orthodoxy. (Aguwa, 1997) The Jihad along with the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate again facilitated the spread of Islam across the region and also into some societies of Western Nigeria. (Onapajo, 2012) It is important to say that Caliphate was very successful in imposing its principles and powers. Particularly in the Hausa states, where before women were granted high measure of freedom to appear in public and also undertake other social activities, this was replaced by strict Islamic regulations. Uthman Dan Fodio is considered a founding father of Islam in Nigeria. He was a charismatic reformer, militant preacher and a celebrated Muslim scholar. He believed that politics and government, social and economic matters, civil, criminal or constitutional laws are all legitimized by the Quran and the Sharia. (Aguwa, 1997)

Later on, Islam penetrated also the traditional societies of Yoruba people in the southwest of Nigeria through their established commercial ties with the people from the North. Islam soon found its acceptance in the region as it could provide people with answers to some of their spiritual concerns to which Christianity was not enough. Moreover, with returning liberated formerly enslaved people from Sierra-Leone and Brazil in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic influence grew in the region. (Onapajo, 2012) So the Islam penetrated into Nigeria through two ways, commercial and military. During the colonial times, the policy of Indirect Rule allowed Muslim leaders to stay in power and preserve the Islamic system intact, including also Islamic legal system. The offices of Caliphate and the Emirs were recognized and their authority enhanced when the colonial government wanted to extend its rule over the northern areas. With the consent of British, the Emirs were able to outlaw Christianity and missionary activities in their emirates. Thus, till the 1940s missionary activities were not allowed in the northern areas, which were under Muslim control. This is one of underlying causes for difficult relations between Christians and Muslims. (Aguwa, 1997)

#### Islam and Nigerian Politics

Due to the fact that colonial rule acknowledged the Islamic system and the philosophy of Islam as a complete way of life, its growth of influence over political life in the North came naturally. Moreover, the Hausa-Fulani ethnics in the North saw themselves as the descendants of the Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio, the symbol of Holy Jihad. A prominent Hausa-Fulani Muslim cleric also argued that Islam has worked well to unite people of the region. Thus, Islam has since been understood as a synonym for the North in the political matrix of the country and became a focal point of the North's political interests. (Onapajo, 2012) It is truly by the nature of Islam that Muslims will always want to keep religion and politics at the same level, tied together. Muslims seek to sacralise the whole political terrain with legitimacy granted only by religious norms. Thus, majority of Muslims favour Islamic state, a theocratic concept of government structure where the head of state is Allah. (Aguwa, 1997)

It is no surprise then, that the first political party which emerged from the North, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), was based on Islam's ideas. Consequently, the non-Muslims of the North grouped in various oppositional groupings and parties to protest against this hegemony. We can mention, Tiv Progressive Union (TPU), Middle Zone League (MZL), Middle-Belt People's Party (MBPP), United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC), Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League, Birom Progressive Union (BPU) with a strong backing from the

Christian missionaries. However, soon the non-Muslim areas of the region were left out of developmental program and other activities, as the North was controlled by the NPC. However, Islam was also an instrument of de-mobilization and de-legitimation against the too powerful and arrogant regimes of the NPC. That's why the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) was established by the Muslims of Yoruba minority of the North. It partnered also with Nigerian Muslim Congress against the NPC and pushed for modernization of Islam and also had its own political agenda. Moreover, the United Muslim Party (UMP) was established in the southwest, which also has a large population of Muslims, in order to protest against Christian-dominated ruling party in the region. Citizens complained about religious discrimination. Thus, the motto of UMP was "All Muslims Are One", which strongly called for Muslim unity across the country. (Onapajo, 2012)

However, for a democratic political system it is crucial to stick to attributes mentioned by *Aguwa*. He argues that the government's primary role is to foster solidarity among the various ethnic, religious and different kinds of people, promote understanding and thus peace. Though, when the government is not sure about constitutional secularity of some Nigerian state, religious conflicts and riots will continue to occur. But governments of certain states use religion to achieve its goals anyway. For example, when the government of Abraham Babangida secretly registered Nigeria as a member of the Organization of the Islamic Council (OIC) in 1986. Goal of this organization is the total Islamization of a member country. Thus, this action clearly shows how far the Muslim-led government could go in their pursuit of Islamization of the whole country. Understandably, it was followed by major protests from the Christian community and even though the membership became frozen, Christians lost their faith in the government and the ability to rule the country. (Aguwa, 1997) Here again we see the seed of the difficult and troubling situation in the relations today. Moreover, with the dramatic events on international and national arena during the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>14</sup> the tempo of Islam in Nigeria heightened and new groups emerged, which aimed for challenging the status-quo and provided impetus for modernization. Nevertheless, this changes prepared grounds for radical groups of Islamic youth movements, such as the "transformed" Muslim Students Society, the Dawa group, the Brothers of Ikhwan and the Islamic Movement. (Onapajo, 2012) An interesting movement emerged also around Alhaji Muhammadu Maroua, known as Maitatsine. He used the resentment of the marginalized Muslim youth and presented literal interpretations of Quran. His movement was highly personal though

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<sup>14</sup> Mainly Iranian revolution in 1979, and the growing disappointment of the Muslim world by the West. (Onapajo, 2012)

unorthodox in nature. The movement was also responsible for riots in Kano in 1980. Though it did not bring any fundamental changes to Nigerian government, it gives us an example of mobilizing capacity of Islam and it also had effect on empowering authoritarian rule. As the Islamic leadership in the North could not support these activities then also other groups moved more towards to mainstream. (Afrobarometer, 2009) However, the most pressing issue now is the prevailing violent acts of Boko Haram group and constant inability of government to prevent these incidents. We will look at this group more closely later on.

Major point when talking about Islam and politics in Nigeria is the question of Sharia law. Long before the democratic process of Nigeria, there were efforts to install Sharia law as a legal code in Northern Nigeria. This revealed the strong position of Islam in the North. However, up till the independence, no part of Nigeria successfully converted to Sharia law. After the independence however, several groups were formed in order to disagree with the secular constitution of 1979. In 1999, third wave of democratization hit Nigeria and the Hausa military domination of the Nigerian politics was impossible to maintain due to international pressures. Thus, in a move towards more pluralistic structure of governance, Olesugun Obasanjo, a Christian Yoruba from the South was elected president in 1999 Nigeria's first democratic elections. It dramatically changed the government structure of Nigeria and left the former ruling Hausa community from the North threatened. Thus, the political elites in the North connected over the issue of religion and it was manifested in the promotion of Sharia integration. (Afrobarometer, 2009) Christians saw these efforts as a clear-cut political strategy of the Hausa Muslims with a goal to destabilize regime of a new Christian president. (Onapajo, 2012) In this case, they used Sharia and religion as such for acquiring personal goals. Again, it can be seen as a strong mobilization factor. Northern elites used Sharia for gaining support mainly from the mostly rural population of the North, which is usually illiterate and politically marginalized. Talking about Sharia law gives the citizens feeling that they are included in the political process as laws are formed based on their own religious identity. (Afrobarometer, 2009)

Thus, since 1999 all 12 predominantly Muslim states of the North established or announced plans to establish their interpretations of Sharia law into their criminal codes. (USCIRF, 2013) The state of Zamfara was the first to implement Sharia based system of governance. The plan was constructed under Ahmed Yarima, under the platform of All People's Party (APP), which later transformed to ANPP. The party had an image of the old ruling political parties in the North advocating conservative Islamic ideology. Thus, it became the most popular party in the North and also represented opposition to the ruling PDP. After

Sharia became adopted in another 11 states except Zamfara, and Shariacracy created a huge uproar in the nation. (Onapajo, 2012) Major impact of introducing Sharia among others was an increase in number of religious riots and clashes. We can say that introduction of Sharia in November 1999 had destabilizing effect on Nigeria. Religious and ethnic divisions exacerbated and riots for example in Kaduna and Jos only showed how religious tensions tightened. Furthermore, Nigeria brought onto itself an international attention due to many controversial cases of jurisdiction or favouring Muslim population in some cases. Yet another consequence of Sharia was that many non-Muslims in the northern Sharia states started to convert to Islam or that indigenous groups opposing the Hausa-Fulani hegemony rather resorted to ethnic antagonism. Moreover, due to Sharia the number of armed militias particularly in the Christian South increased considerably and they were also violating constitutional rights. (Afrobarometer, 2009)

According to the Afrobarometer's survey the support for Sharia in Sharia states increased from 55% to 60% and in non-Sharia states from 10% to 28%. This non-Sharia states' support may seem strange but it can be explained in a sense that these states as well want to enact some separate legal system and they see Sharia as a precedent. Furthermore, support for Sharia among Muslims increased from 53% to 57% and Christians' support also increased from 13% to 23%. Most dramatically, members of other religions moved in support for Sharia from 9% to 35%. This increasing support among Christians and members of other religions could be explained by their recognition that Sharia is not in fact affecting the lives of Christians or other non-Muslims as deeply as expected. (Afrobarometer, 2009)

### **3.3 Christianity in Nigeria**

Christianity did not reach the African continent for long and it's ideas of political secularity and separation of Church and the State as well. Not until the colonial powers grabbed the influence and soon after their missionaries came to the region. (Aguwa, 1997) The arrival of Roman and Catholic missionaries can be dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They visited the coastal areas of the Niger-Delta region in the southern part of country. (Onapajo, 2012) This milestone is obviously linked with the spread of Christianity in Africa. People started to use Gregorian calendar, symbol of cross as an emblem for health institutions and many other Christian practices. (Aguwa, 1997) Although some churches were built and converts recorded, the expansion of Christianity got stronger only after the return of liberated slaves from Sierra-Leone and Brazil in 1842. Thus, Christianity soon recorded boom in the southern

region due to its opposition towards slave trade and promotion of western education. However, in 1888 the first indigenous Church was established after breaking away from the foreign missionary leadership and this event marked the emergence of indigenous Christian churches in Nigeria. The breakaway happened due to alleged racial discrimination. Later on, the proliferation continued and the second wave of indigenous Christianization of Nigeria was marked by emergence of Aladura churches. Nevertheless, this process was smooth only in the South. (Onapajo, 2012) We must keep in mind that Islam was already present and established in the North and thus the Muslim population saw these actions and the inherited colonial setup as simply Christian, and most of all favouring Christians. (Aguwa, 1997) In spite of the fact, that British government banned missionary activities in the region in the first 30 years of their rule, some of the missionary groups were able to penetrate the non-Muslim societies in the North. It is important to note, that these societies were already not on good terms with Muslims due to domination of Islam. Thus, by accepting Christianity they expressed their opposition to the Hausa-Fulanis even more. (Onapajo, 2012) These changes were predominantly happening during the colonial era, though even after the colonialists left, the set-up of the state was seen by Muslims in the country as strongly pro-Christian and any attempt to adjust this system is met with hostility by the Christians in a country which is not wholly Christian. (Aguwa, 1997)

There are five main clusters of Christianity in Nigeria. It includes Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical, Pentecostal, and syncretistic groups, which mix Christianity with indigenous religions. Evangelicals can be found main in the Middle-Belt and syncretists mainly in the southwest. On the other hand, Pentecostals, mainstream Protestants as well as Roman Catholics are spread throughout the whole country. As a result of western missionary movements, Evangelic and Pentecostal groups based in Middle-Belt had a more confrontational stance with Muslims in the northern region. This became very clear especially in the Plateau State. In some states, for example in Kaduna, there are strict no-go zones in the cities, dividing Christian and Muslim parts. We will get to the different conflicts and their analysis later. Nevertheless, in the southwest, Christians and Muslims tend to live quite peacefully. (Paden, 2015)

### Christianity and Nigerian Politics

Some scholars, e.g. *Falola* suggest that Christians in Nigeria became interested in politics due to challenges posed by Islam. Though it may be partly true for the Christian minority in



the North, the southern Christians were not that backed by the Muslims and thus their actions were also fuelled by expected political gains. Christians in the Middle-Belt however, started to feel discriminated by the NPC-led government, which could be translated to Islamic rule. Thus, they mobilized themselves and established the Northern Nigerian Non-Muslim League. The League had a strong backing from the Christian missions in a country and thus it provided an organizational framework for formation of the MZL, a political party with main agenda of countering Islamic expansions. The Birom Progressive Union merged with MZL in 1955 and together they formed the UMBC. So both religiously-based parties hold a lot of power. It is argued, that the coup in 1966 and in 1990 were orchestrated solely on religious grounds, against the Muslims. Muslims accused The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) of being an architect of the aborted coup. When Pentecostal churches emerged with their doctrine of prosperity, the 'church money' started to be a real phenomenon in Nigeria. Church attracted many wealthy people and thus also nowadays 'church money' is considered the highest source of wealth in informal sector opposed to 'oil money', which stays in the formal sector. (Onapajo, 2012)

Another aspect of the Christian involvement in politics is its influence over educational-economic sector. The Christian-Western education link was present since the colonisation times and laid good foundations for Christians also after independence. Often, Muslim students had to prove their truly Christian identity in order to get accepted to the school, as it was the primary condition. Also, Muslim students were denied Islamic education and were forced to receive Bible knowledge in missionary school. Thanks to this strong influence, Christians were able to politically dominate in the South although there were large numbers of Muslims as well. Thus, Christians saw it negatively, when a project of free education and takeover of all missionary schools was introduced. They felt threatened, as it could lower their influence in economic and political life of the country. Thus, CAN as a strong organization attacked this idea many times. (Onapajo, 2012)

CAN is made out of five blocks: the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, the Evangelic Fellowship of West Africa and the Organization of African Instituted Churches. The organization includes also youth and women groups, there is national executive council of 105 members electing the president and a general assembly of 304 members. The latest president is Ayo Oritsejafor. However, CAN as an umbrella organization shows also signs of internal tensions. Although the different churches cooperated for a long time and created an ecumenical centre in Abuja, in 2015 the Roman Catholics have suspended their membership in CAN due to allegedly too close

relations and association of Pentecostal leaders and the government of President Goodluck Jonathan. Later on, the Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor's jet was detained with nearly ten million dollars in cash. It raised suspicion in the North that this money were to be used for pastor's private militia, Christian Soldiers for Christ, and that they were arming for a confrontation with Muslims. Officially, such statements were denied and it was said that the money were for the federal government. Many Muslims however, do not believe that version of a story. (Paden, 2015)

### **3.4 Religion and Conflicts in Nigeria**

In the previous sections we described how both Islam and Christianity influenced the political life in Nigeria. Clearly, both religious groups were set to compete with each other and thus, it is no surprise that religious clashes appeared throughout the country. Firstly, Nigerian civil war, which was of the bloodiest civil wars in Africa, started after military coup and social upheaval in 1966. However, soon it was evident that in fact it was a war with religious grounds, between the majority Muslims from the North and Christians from the eastern region. At least this was a dominant view on the issue by Christians from the South. (Aguwa, 1997) Since the 1970s and 1980s, thousands of lives have been lost in religiously motivated violence in Nigeria. Mostly, in the northern part where the number of Christians increased over the years. (Dowd, 2014) The northern cities of Kano, Kaduna, Kafanchan and Zaria were most hit by the unrest. Researches started to be worried that a less tolerant division of Islam have been bred in the North and it could be dangerous if spilled across the country. (Aguwa, 1997) Nevertheless, also in other parts of the country where on the contrary the Muslim population increased significantly, the inter-religious violence has also been significant. (Dowd, 2014)

Now, we will look at cases of conflicts in the city of Jos. It's a capital city in the northern Plateau State. So as we already know, the Muslim majority was and still is more powerful there. Interestingly, when it comes to conflicts, there is little if any evidence of inter-religious conflicts before 1990s in Jos or other part of Middle-Belt area. However, since then the violence became relatively common. According to the statement made by Nigerian government, between 1999 and 2004, 54 000 people died in the inter-communal violence. (Dowd, 2014) Violent conflict were also regular since 2004 onwards and left thousands of death people, displaced hundreds of thousands and made the whole region and also the surrounding ones fall into instability. The conflict in Jos is often described as inter-religious

or inter-ethnic between Christian groups of the Anaguta, Afizere, and Berom and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani group. Nevertheless, there are also socio-economic factor that play an important role. The city of Jos was established in 1915 and soon became an important trade centre and transportation camp and thus attracted immigration. Nowadays, the city has almost 1 million inhabitants. Before the 1990s, the slogan of the city 'the home of peace and tourism' expressed the peaceful coexistence of different communities living there. Schools were often mixed, and in business it didn't matter for ethnic or religious affiliations. It began to change as the certificates of indigeneship were implemented. Though at first, it was meant to allay concerns of the minority groups about their traditional customs being overwhelmed by larger ethnic and religious groups, it soon became to determine in reality who can participate in politics, own land, get a job or go to school. It is grounded in Nigerian constitution of 1999. Special bodies were created to overlook the process around indigene certificates. Also, local officials are able to issue certificate to citizens which they feel are qualified. This was a huge point, as the elected officials often used certificates to consolidate ethnic majorities. Moreover, defining the indigeneship as a process is extremely arbitrary. Even though a family has lived in an area for many years, they are not sure to get the certificate as their ethnic group is not originally from that area. If they would return to the area where their ethnic group predominates, the officials could reject their request too due to long time spent in another state and other connections. (Kwaja, 2011)

The situation worsened when Nigeria was hit with falling government revenues and so with increasing migration to one of Nigeria's fastest growing regions, the officials in Jos began to restrict the distribution of certificates more. This action, though perfectly legal, seemed to deny indigeneship to many Muslims and other ethnic groups from northern Nigeria. First communal violence occurred in 1994, as General Sani Abacha dissolved all democratic structure and appointed military governors in the region. (Kwaja, 2011) After Sharia was introduced in some northern states in 2000, the tensions started to escalate as Christians worried that Muslims from Jos will strive to implement it as well. (Onapajo, 2012)

In 2001, another conflict broke out after appointment of Hausa Muslim as a Director of the federal's government's poverty alleviation programme. Christians were strongly opposed to this appointment as they feared that it would give opportunity for Muslims to strengthen their political and economic interests. (Onapajo, 2012) Fighting broke out in a central poor area surrounded by dominantly Muslim neighbourhoods. In the riots, Christian and Muslim youth faced each other with homemade weapons, such as arrows, sticks, machetes and also guns. (Krause, 2011) Youth groups were very much behind the attacks in Muslim and

Christian neighbourhoods, attacks on mosques and churches and even schools. It is estimated that 1 000 to 3 000 people died in the clashes and violence spread also out of the Plateau state. Conflicts and attacks continued also in 2002 and 2003, while as many as 72 villages were destroyed. In 2004, the situation got tense again after the national elections held in Plateau. The elections were eventually postponed. The federal government appointed temporary replacement for the state governor. The conflict left 1 000 killed in attacks against Muslim and Christian villages and 250 000 displaced. (Kwaja, 2011)

Attacks occurred also in 2008, over the local government elections party nominees and results. A Muslim candidate from the ANPP won eventually, and members of Christian community started to protests in belief that the elections were rigged by the state. (Onapajo, 2012) It is estimated that at least 700 and possibly more than 850 people died in riots. Muslim community reported that 632 people lost life, 5 000 were injured. Moreover, 20 Islamic schools were destroyed, 22 mosques burnt and 891 residential buildings destroyed. The Christian community reported 23 killed and at least 600 houses destroyed. In 2010 fights broke out again, and lasted with some interruptions throughout the whole year. The causes of the violent outbreak are disputed. It deals with a reconstruction of a house, burnt down during the 2008 crisis. Muslims argued that the man was just repairing the house while the Christians claimed he used armed men and threatened Christians passing by. Due to this unclear argument, fights broke out and at least 400 people are estimated to have died in the conflict and 18 000 more were displaced. However, the Muslim community in Jos reported much higher numbers. Consequently, there is not trust among the communities, they are blaming each other of collecting weapons and preparing for next attacks. Also the proliferation of arms is a great problem in the region. (Krause, 2011)

Moreover, part of the problem in Jos is major disconnection of authority. As we mentioned before, police and armed forces are centralized at federal level and need to wait for consent before any action is taken. Finger pointing and blame trading across security sector and government are common. In some conflicts, the perpetrators are also seen wearing police or military uniforms. Justice and accountability have also been lacking in cases of Jos and some perpetrators are still free of any charges. As government is not able to handle the situation and people do not believe in its forces, they often turn to non-state actors. However, some community organizations only stimulate the polarization. Muslim as well as Christian faith-based organizations and many youth groups such as the Berom Youth Movement, Anaguta Youth Movement and the Jawasa Development Association have played major part in spreading exclusionary ideologies and consequently violence. Thus, without credible and

accountable state authorities, their influence can only be expected to grow and so will the conflict. (Kwaja, 2011)

Another example of religious conflicts is the city of Kano. It is an important northern city. During the British rule and until the 1930s, Christian missionaries were not welcome in the city, as they were seen by Muslims as a threat which could harm Muslim and traditional culture. However, with the increasing migration to the northern region of Nigeria, Christianity spread more. Protestant churches engaged in evangelization but their efforts to convert the Muslims were in vain. On the other hand, the Catholic Church did not attempt to evangelize the Islamic areas. Nevertheless, Nigerian analysts, e.g. *Wakili*, see the problem between Christians and Muslims being laid in the colonial period, connected to the Christian missionaries. Thus, the conflict in 1991 was seen as just a continuation of this long-term rivalry. In October 1991, Christians attempted to host the biggest evangelic meeting in the predominantly Muslim city Kano. It was seen as an offensive attack against Islam. In reality, Christians proposed a crusade to take place in the city, with over 500 000 participants and delegates. Muslim population to express their disapproval, organized a peaceful protest march. Yet, the protest later escalated into religious conflict between Muslims and Christians when rioters carrying weapons destroyed buildings, shops, Churches, attacked women and men on the streets who seemed Christian. Casualties were high on both sides. Muslim groups later even formed into militias and started hunting for Christians and their property. The crisis ended only when police part of the army decided to come and help. Meanwhile, the riots cost more than 200 lives, 16 Churches and 3 mosques destroyed, 558 shops looted and many people leaving the region. However, the religious aspect is not the only cause of the conflict. Socio-economic situation in the region also worsened the tensions. Many young people were unemployed and as we mentioned earlier, they organized in the faith-based organizations which were not really promoting cooperation and understanding. Another cause could be seen in implementing Sharia law in Kano, as well as the rise of fundamentalism in the whole northern Nigeria. This was due to economic problems and also financing from abroad, mainly Iran. Regarding the fundamentalism, it is important to mention the conflict between Muslims and Christians which broke out in 1991 in the city of Katsina. It was led by Mallam Yakuba, follower of Mallam Ibrahim Yakuba El-Zak-Zaky, the national leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Nigeria. (Deegan, 2009)

Further example of religiously influence conflicts and riots can be found in the city of Kaduna. Kaduna is a state in northern Nigeria where both Muslims and the Christians claim to be the majority in the state. Muslims are located in the northern part of the state, while

Christians more in the southern part. What triggered the violence in this setting was the implementation of Sharia by the state government in 2000. Consequently, series of rallies followed in opposition to the bill by Christians and for its support by Muslims. Again, the starting point of the crisis is unclear. On one side, Muslims claim that it was started by Christians when they started burning mosques and killed a Muslim. On the other, Christians claim that it started with the Muslim youth who in support of Sharia and irritated by their Christian counterparts started to stone the protesters. Nevertheless, the conflict lasted for three days and took a toll of 609 deaths, 123 churches and 55 mosques burnt. Moreover, 1 944 houses and 746 vehicles were vandalised and what is more, 125 000 displaced people emerged from the crisis. (Onapajo, 2012)

### **3.5 Boko Haram**

There is no doubt, that with the creation and growing of Islamic militant group Boko Haram, the inter-religious tensions increased as well. In Hausa language its name can be translated as 'western education is a sin'. (USCIRF, 2013) Boko Haram originated in 2002 from the group of radical Islamist group who worshiped the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri. At first, they declared the city and its Islamic establishment to be corrupt and irredeemable. Thus, the group moved from the city to the village called Kanama in Yobe state. Its leader was Mohammed Ali, who called for other Muslims to join them and get back to life under true Islamic law away from the corrupt establishment. The first conflict of the group with police was in 2003 over fishing rights in the local pond. Even though at first the group overpowered officers, it then lead to siege of the mosque, where at the end most of the groups' members were killed, including its leader.

From its creation, the group was not considered a significant threat. However, it got attention of the media as many of its members were the sons of wealthy and influential people in Nigeria's northern part. Allegedly, also the son of Yobe governor was their member. After the killings in Kanama, the group returned to Maidiguri and Mohammed Yusuf became the new leader. They built a new mosque there and analysis say that they literally created a state within state. It is important to keep in mind that they attracted many people thanks to welfare handouts, food and shelter. But these people were often poor, uneducated ones, refugees or unemployed Nigerian youth. Key point in the development of Boko Haram is seen in the killing of popular cleric Sheikh Ja'afar in 2007, who started to criticize groups' ideology and

predicted clashes with state. From this point on, it was impossible to turn Yusuf and his followers back to the mainstream. (Okechukwu Innocent, Toy O, 2014)

Boko Haram rejects the secular state and strive for implementation of what they consider pure Sharia law to resolve the straits facing northern Nigerian Muslims. They also call for all the Christians from northern Nigeria to leave the region. Group's leader Yusuf was killed in police custody in 2009, as well as well as hundreds of his followers were arrested. Nevertheless, the group got stronger and bigger and now operates in the whole region of northern Nigeria. Police stations, government buildings, churches, schools, banks, Christian and Muslim public and also politicians and critics are their target. Their tactics includes drive-by shooting on motorcycles, suicide bombing and improvised explosive devices. Boko Haram attacks on Christians only aggravate the tensions stemming from the historical events as we mentioned above. Current leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau claims that their attacks on Christians are in retaliation for Christians killing Muslims in 2011 during Muslim prayer at the then of Ramadan. The most targeted places by Boko Haram are cities in the northern part which already have history of religious violence, it is Kaduna, Bauchi and Jos. (USCIRF, 2013)

Violence by Boko Haram resulted in an estimated 10 000 deaths between 2011 and 2013. Since 2012, at least 70 teachers, 100 schoolchildren and students have been killed or wounded. At least 50 schools were burnt or damaged and another 60 have been forced to close. Thousands of children across Yobe, Kaduna, Adamawa and Borno states have been forced to leave schools. (Owolade, 2014) Big Boko Haram attacks include bombings on Christmas Day in 2011, when bombs exploded in Niger, Plateau and Yobe states, killing 45 people. In January 2012 groups of gunmen organized attacks on three government buildings in Kano, when more than 200 people were killed. (Okechukwu Innocent, Toy O, 2014) Later, the abduction of Chibok girls from the school in April 2014 in Borno attracted huge world attention. Furthermore, bombing of the Central Mosque in Kano sent a message that not even traditional Muslim places were safe. Boko Haram's violent attacks extended to the Middle-Belt in the second quarter of 2014. It is estimated that bombings in this zone included at least 10 attacks and killed 343 people. As a result of their ongoing activities, Boko Haram declared an Islamic Caliphate in Gwoza, which is near the Cameroon borders, in August 2014. They also took the second largest city in Borno, called Bama and started to prepare for attacks in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno. However, in October the government announced a cease-fire with Boko Haram and return of abducted girls. The girls did not return so far and Boko Haram only increased the rate of abductions. Later in October 2014, they have even taken

over another city of Mubi, the second largest city in Adamawa state. According to estimates, 20 percent of Nigerian territory was in Boko Haram hands in December 2014. (Paden, 2015)

In 2015, Nigerian army has claimed victories over Boko Haram and said that with help of neighbouring countries Chad, Niger and Cameroon they recaptured 11 out of 14 districts, which have been under militant control. However, there are increasing speculations about these statements as Boko Haram attacks continue and government has made similar statements also before but it never stopped the conflicts. President Goodluck Jonathan has been hugely criticized for his handling of the crisis situation but he seems unwilling to admit that any mistakes have been made. His statements about winning over Boko Haram are often seen in this pre-election time as a way to soothe the electorate. What is even more disturbing, Boko Haram recently pledged their allegiance to Islamic State militants, controlling large parts of Syria and Iraq. (BBC News, How Nigeria's presidential election works, 2015)

Thus, the problem with Boko Haram is not solved in Nigeria, although the President stays very optimistic. The government has implemented measures to decrease the level of conflicts and violence, yet it is very difficult. Especially because the group has infiltrated both the government and military. Corruption and general distrust in Nigerian government within its population is also a cause why many people begin to be more open to the ideology of the group. Soldiers are not motivated to fight in the conflicts as they are usually the ones getting killed and they are not motivated by their salary to take that risk. (Okechukwu Innocent, Toy O, 2014) Nevertheless, as we see from the analysis, Boko Haram gave rise to inter-religious conflicts but its origins are not connected solely to the Christianity-Islam violence in Nigeria. On the contrary, it is more connected to intra-religions conflicts in the Muslim community in the northern region. Also, its emergence can be linked to poverty and lack of development in northern states of Nigeria. Thus, its actions are not solely religiously-stimulated. It has been also reported that now Boko Haram does not interact with local Muslim population of the northern states. Moreover, majority of Nigeria's Muslim population do not support activities of the group. (Owolade, 2014) However, without strong government actions against it and continuous efforts to increase trust and credibility among population, it will be very difficult to defeat such a group.

### **3.6 How to Stop Religious Violence**

It is crucial that government focuses on areas where inter-religious violence often takes place and takes measure to prevent it. Though government tried to do it already before, it was



not successful so far. Since 1999, more than dozen commissions of inquiry have been formed by federal and also state government. Their role was to look into the causes of religious-related violence and make recommendations of how to best prevent it in the future. Throughout the times, the recommendations are often the same, it includes prosecution and arrest of the perpetrators, better training of police forces, improving inter-religious dialogues, it also called for repealing of indigeneship in the constitution, as it is seen as a major cause of all the problems. Furthermore, it also includes monitoring of religious institutions for hate speech and provocation to violence and improving the system of early warnings. (USCIRF, 2013) If these and other recommendations have been implemented by the officials since then, we could be looking at different Nigeria now. Especially, if they would address growing youth religious organizations, as they are bringing together outraged and discontent young people and using them in the acts of violence. Also poorly-trained police and army forces are persistent problem.

However, some efforts have actually been made. After 2001 crisis in Jos, the government set up the Inter-Religious Committee for Peace and Harmony in Plateau State. The committee is jointly chaired by the chairman of the CAN in Plateau State and Emir of Wase. Their role was to preach for peace and reaching out to the locals throughout the state. (Krause, 2011) Setting up such communities also in other cities could lay down foundations for sustainable stability. However, it can only be done by fostering the climate of political inclusiveness, so that the people and their communities do not feel like they have to compete each other, and furthermore also reconciliation practices need to be implemented. This can invoke a much needed shared sense of Nigeria's identity. (Kwaja, 2011) *Aguwa* also mentions the model of peace coexistence of Yoruba city in the southwest. Although Islam has not shared long tradition in Yoruba, it got implemented in the original traditional religious culture very well. The same happened with Christianity. He claims that traditional religion can act as a wedge to Islam and Christianity and thus enable accommodation, moderation and toleration in the society. (Aguwa, 1997) However, nowadays the strength of traditional religion can be already too weakened to be able to act as some kind of reconciliation factor.

On the positive note though, in some parts of the state, community activities between the farmers and herders have taken place, which also helped the environment and eased some tensions. But it was not possible to implement in the most violent areas. In Dadin Kowa's mixed community, with majority of Christian population and a significant Muslim minority, women were the ones bringing peace, talking to religious leaders and helping displaced persons to come back. (Krause, 2011) Moreover, since 2010 a special security task force

composed of army, police and other security services has been present in the city of Jos and its surroundings. This helped a lot to prevent large-scale outbreaks by responding quickly to emerging violence. (USCIRF, 2013)

Another important part of conflict prevention are the religious leaders and NGOs. A great example of this is the Interfaith Initiative for Peace (IIP). Some five hundred religious leaders, academics and senior government officials at all levels and from different regions met on their conference in August 2014. In the future they want to focus their dialogue on conflict resolution between various political parties, which are also a cause of the whole issue. They want to include religious leaders from abroad too, take part in the dialogue and so far for example highly respected imams in Saudi Arabia have expressed their support as they condemned Boko Haram as un-Islamic. (Paden, 2015)

### **3.7 Elections in Nigeria and Religious Links**

Elections are an important issue in Nigeria. Often, they are connected to the series of bloodshed as citizens are discontented with political developments in the country. It was also the case of 2011 presidential elections. Two candidates were fighting for the highest post in the country, PDP candidate Jonathan<sup>15</sup> and General Buhari of the CPC. Before the final results were given, news were in air about Jonathan's victory in the South. Thus, outraged supporters of Buhari went on rampage. Protesting youth attacked the INEC staff, members of PDP, Christians and northern elites of PDP. At first, the protests started in Kaduna but as soon as the final results were in, which suggested that Jonathan won in 23 states, the violence spread across other parts of the North.<sup>16</sup> It happened for the first time that also traditional rulers who so far enjoyed absolute loyalty from the people, were attacked. Those attacked were believed to be conspirators working with Jonathan's PDP to rig elections. Police authorities reported that 520 people lost life in Kaduna and Niger states alone. Also, 157 churches, 46 mosques, 1 435 houses and many more vehicles were burnt or destroyed. The Human Rights Watch reported 800 lost lives in the violence across the North. (Onapajo, 2012) Thus, worries were in place for 2015 presidential elections and whether peaceful situation can be well maintained. Moreover, in 2013 a state of emergency was declared in

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<sup>15</sup> When Jonathan took the office in 2010 after President Umaru Yar'Adua (a northern Muslim) died, he promised he will finish Yar'Adua's term and wait until 2015 elections because it was still the North's turn. However, he ran for reelection in 2011 and thus violated the system of power alternation. (Campbell)

<sup>16</sup> You can see the election results in the Map 2 enclosed in the Appendices.

Borno, Yobe and Adamawa due to the continuous attacks by Boko Haram. The INEC was concerned that it will not be possible to conduct elections there. (Dimowo, Abubakar)

The 2015 Presidential elections were planned to be held in February. The presidential and National Assembly elections would be held on February 14 and the gubernatorial and State Assembly elections on February 28. Tensions between the election camps started to get high when in August 2014 a national conference in Abuja concluded its deliberation. The final conference report included number of last-minute surprises which only increased tensions between northern and southern delegates. Nevertheless, on August 13 the debate on conference report was overshadowed by introduction of new 2014 constitution. Nobody expected this as there were no previous negotiations. The new constitution would guarantee for office holders under previous constitution that they are still entitled to two terms. This would be in favour of Jonathan. Muslim delegates were worried and Christian delegates were welcoming the supposed idea behind new constitution; creation of Greater South, to include Christian Middle-Belt. This could largely divide the country and destabilize Nigeria. (Paden, 2015)

Furthermore, the 2015 Presidential elections could bring something new to the political scene. The All Progressives Congress (APC) could be large enough to defeat the ruling PDP. Created in early 2013, APC emerged when three major opposition parties CPC, ACN and ANPP came together with a faction of APGA in a broad coalition. This meant bringing about a third of state governors and national legislators together in one single opposition party. The creation of APC was tied with massive defections from the PDP, suffering a crisis. Yet, APC is a new party and it can be fragile, party members who feel that their interests are not being represented may get fed up and leave the party. Although, PDP is not as stable as before, too. Bamanga Tukur resigned from the position of national party chairman and defections are nothing special nowadays. New chairman Adamu Mu'azu will have a difficult task now to reconcile the party. The party candidate, Jonathan is still more and more criticized for the crisis of party as well as for not being able to resolve Boko Haram situation. (Dimowo, Abubakar)

Just one week before the presidential elections, on February 7, the INEC announced 6 weeks delay. The delay was explained as a necessity as the military would not be able to provide security during the voting because they are committed to fights with Boko Haram. (BBC News, How Nigeria's presidential election works, 2015) The officials around Jonathan seemed to be in favour of the postponement. It is presented as the best choice due to the security situation. However, the opposition coalition is opposed to it. At least the electoral

officials will have more time to deliver around 30 million voter cards, which is almost a half from 68.8 million registered voters. (The Guardian, 2015) It is clear, that from the 14 candidates contesting the election, only Jonathan and General Buhari (representing APC) are the ones competing and having a chance of winning. The two main candidates met already in 2011 elections, where Jonathan won and election results were followed by massive violent outbreaks. Also now, the religious factor plays a large role in the voting. Jonathan is supported mainly by the Christian South, in spite of the critique mentioned above. On the contrary, General Buhari is largely supported in the predominantly Muslim North as in the past he supported implementation of Islamic law there. He also promised to crush Islamic insurgency within months if elected. This can be a huge signal of hope for tormented northern population, especially when they perceive Jonathan to fail repeatedly. (BBC News, How Nigeria's presidential election works, 2015) What could help Buhari win are his extensive ties in the southwest. However, in the southeast he is sometimes vilified as a Muslim extremist. (Paden, 2015) Regarding the trust of citizens in state apparatus, it is important to improve the perception of INEC and its neutrality, as it is largely seen as manipulated and viewed with suspicion. Also, local and international observers must be allowed to monitor the elections and well-trained security staff should be deployed in volatile areas to ensure that there are no violent break outs or so that they could stop them. (Adibe)

After all, the delayed election took place in Nigeria on March 28. News worldwide announced that the candidate of the APC, General Buhari is the winner. This result is seen by many as a proof, that Nigeria has embraced democracy and people believe in this as they expressed their opinion in the voting. It also gives a sing to people that it is possible to remove politicians through the ballot box. Moreover, observers have generally appreciated the election, though some allegations of fraud have been present.<sup>17</sup> The result is seen as a step forward, as Buhari is the first opposition candidate to win a presidential elections in Nigeria and never before the sitting president has been defeated in the election. This is the fourth time that Buhari run in the presidential elections. As a Muslim from northern Nigeria, it is no surprise that he gained much support in the North and particularly in the northeast, which suffered from Boko Haram's insurgency. Interestingly, he won 94% of votes in Born, the worst affected state. To illustrate the distribution of votes in favour of the candidates, we enclose Map 3 in the Appendices. (BBC News, Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari hails 'vote for change', 2015)

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<sup>17</sup> In the time of writing the thesis, there have not been any deeper analysis of the elections available.

Thus, the power shifted again from Christian representative Jonathan to the Muslim one, Buhari. Could Buhari's win also symbolize the power and growing influence of the Muslim society in Nigeria? Well, now we cannot tell for sure although among the reasons why Jonathan lost and Buhari won, it does not represent a considerable factor. Reasons seem to be tied with coordination and monitoring of the election process, so that it may not be rigged easily, as allegedly the elections in the past. Also, Jonathan's PDP lost control over some key states prior to the 2015 election and the party was struggling with internal problems as well. On the contrary, the opposition seemed very united and called on people to vote for a change. Apparently, people chose the change also because they were fed up with Jonathan's inability to fight Boko Haram and they were not able to feel the benefits of growing Nigerian economy. Because even though, the national income is due to grow by 5%, still nearly half of the population lives under the poverty line. (Zane, 2015)

Now, in the period after the election, it is important as ever to prevent possibility of violence. So far no clashes occurred however, prior to the election representatives of both camps were threatening violence if their candidate does not win. So it is important that the events from 2011 will not repeat. We will only see how Buhari will keep his pre-election promises, what reactions his election will bring from the Christian population and also how effective he will be in ensuring peace and defeating Boko Haram.

### **3.8 Discussion**

It is clear, that religion plays an important role in Nigeria and its politics. We see that it is not a new factor, and thus we find surprising that not many scholars deal with the issue of religion and religious pluralism as a factor affecting politics and also conflicts, particularly in Africa. Often, other causes such as economic and social factors are taken with much higher importance. Nevertheless, after analysing the situation in Nigeria, we feel that these factors would be easier to mitigate if the religious factors are addressed properly. Although generally, Africans rank unemployment, corruption and crime as bigger problems than religious conflict, in Nigeria six-in-ten people say that religious conflict is very big problem in their country.<sup>18</sup> From our point of view, the underestimation of religious influence is the main problem. Religion should be given much higher priority, as it is reported that 87% of people in Nigeria say that religion is very important in their lives. (Pew Forum, 2010)

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<sup>18</sup> Nigeria has the same result here, which is 58% of people who think so, as Rwanda.

While religion is tremendously important, so is ethnicity. When it comes to ethnicity and its role in Nigerian society, we agree with instrumentalists such as *Banton* or *Hechter*, who claim that it can be used by different groups in various conditions in political fight. Furthermore, they argue that ethnicity is a political sources just like money or votes. We could see in our analysis, that different ethnic groups are linked to different religious beliefs and thus sometimes, when the conflict is primarily in the ethnic line, it becomes immediately connected to religion, as in cases of conflicts between Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups. So, political elites use not only religious differentiation as a tool but also the ethnic one, as ethnic affiliations are usually strong as well. Thus, studying religion should also be connected with studying ethnicity in the conditions of a given country.

Stemming from the paper we can confirm, that we are dealing with pluralistic society in Nigeria. There are different ethnic, religious groups but the whole term pluralism is also contested. *Rosenfeld* offered three types of pluralism within the constitutional system, which Nigeria is. Based on our study, we suppose that we could classify Nigeria as a country with limited pluralism. This system proclaims toleration, and so does Nigeria. Although in practice, the term toleration can be vague and in reality the weaker group has to accept the rule of stronger one. There is also another option for them, to revolt, which is the case in Nigeria when Christians are not satisfied with the situation and measures taken against the Islamic rule and the other way around. From our point of view, always one group will feels subordinate and less tolerated in respect to the other. For the pluralism to work, the joint effort of government and religious leaders is needed as without changing the minds of people towards toleration and acceptance, nothing will change. Aforementioned committees and communal actions taken by cities like Jos, can be a way out of limited pluralism. However, year by year Nigeria is placed within the ranking of world's failed states and the situation could only get worse if the right measures won't be taken by the government. Thus, although the protection of religious groups and mutual tolerance is stipulated in the constitution, Nigeria must find ways how to make it in reality, too.

According to *Dowd*, there are different ways to look at religious diversity. According to him, a society with more distinctive religious groups (Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others) is more diverse than a society with fewer distinctive groups. So Nigeria is not as diverse in this regard. However, he also claims that size of the community matters. Thus, he considers a state where half of the population belongs to one religious community and the other half belongs to another community, more diverse than a population where even though there are more religious communities, one of them includes 90% of the population. In this

sense, Nigeria is highly diverse as proportion of Christians and Muslims is almost equal. (Dowd, 2014)

If we use our common sense when talking about connection between religious plurality and violence as noted by *Dowd*, we can agree that as a whole Nigeria can be an example of a country, where religious pluralism promotes violence. But when we look within the country, we may find that location matters. *Dowd* claims that religious violence has been less common in Nigeria's most religiously diverse locations. On the other hand, it has been more frequent in more religiously homogenous locations or places which are religiously diverse but are also highly segregated along the religious lines. The later include cases of violence in cities like Jos and Kaduna. An example of more religiously homogenous setting where conflict often occurs is provided in the case of Kano, predominantly Muslim city. Although nowadays, the situation may be subject to change due to continuous attacks by Boko Haram and their move forward to another areas. Nevertheless, we think we can agree with *Dowd's* findings claiming that there is more positive association between religious communities' engagement and their respect for rights and freedoms in religiously diverse states of Nigeria, being those where neither Christians nor Muslims represent more than 60% of the population. Thus, if we look at the cases of violence mentioned earlier, that is why conflicts in Jos and Kano have been more frequent and more severe than in Kaduna. (Dowd, 2014) However, in the survey made by Pew Forum answering the question if people see others as free to practice faith, 71% of Nigerians answered affirmatively and said it is a good thing. So we can suppose, that the hatred and perception of religious repression is present not in the whole country but only in the troublesome areas. Interestingly, according to the survey, Muslims are seen more violent than Christians. While 38% of Christians see Muslims as violent, only 13% of Muslims see Christians violent. (Pew Forum, 2010) We could explain this finding by ongoing Boko Haram attacks, Islamic fundamentalism emerging across Africa or by the fact that violent conflicts occurring in Nigeria usually do so in predominantly Muslim cities.

Moreover, the way how religious leaders influence the relationships between communities is different depending on the setting. In religiously more diverse setting, *Dowd* found that religious leaders are more encouraging of respect and religious liberty and are opposed of using state-granted privileges to spread one faith on the expense of other. He also claims, that in religiously plural setting the actual influence of religious leaders as well as the religious observance is higher. Thus, religious leaders can project the values of liberty and express their ideas more easily on their followers. Presumably due to this fact, religious conflicts are less likely in more religiously diverse settings. On the other side, in more homogenous setting,

religious leaders are more prone to promoting their religion through government and state support, as they are striving for dominance over another religious community. The evidence from Jos also suggests, that both Christian and Muslim leaders are mobilizing their followers in order to get greater influence and supremacy. (Dowd, 2014) Although generally, neither Christianity nor Islam has grown significantly at the expense of other, in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, there is also no net change in the percentage of raised Christians/Muslims and the percentage of current Christian/Muslim adherents. (Pew Forum, 2010) Nevertheless, regarding the influence of religious leaders on their adherence, we have to take into account the cultural traits of African society. As mentioned earlier by *Kváča* and *Dia*, culturally the religion plays an important role and so is important the collectivist sentiment. People need to feel like they are part of the group, like they belong somewhere. Also, they need the rules and hierarchy, which is set in the religious organizations. Thus, they feel the commitment towards religious leaders and activities and opinions they are proclaiming. Another important thing regarding influence of religious leaders in the country is the money. As it was mentioned before, 'church money' became a huge issue in Nigeria as many elites, rich businessmen joined religious communities and religiously-based political parties.

However, when it comes to the question of country's politics, the evidence is clear. We agree with the argument made by *Basedau*, saying that politicization of religion may increase the risk of violence in conflict situations where primary causes are found in political, economic or social sphere. Moreover, there is no doubt that religion is a strong mobilizing factor in Nigeria's politics. It gets critical during the times of elections, either on federal or state level, or when implementing bills and introducing new laws. When the community feels threatened or vulnerable, they organize much easily. Given the strong relations inside the group and strong adherence, it all gets easier. When talking about different approaches of linking religion and politics by *Manglos* and *Weinreb*, we can directly make a link of it in Nigeria. Religious leaders are of high importance, as established above. Religion is often used by officials for achieving political gains, though it is not discussed that openly. Also, political discourse is religiously charged, given that Muslim and Christian representatives compete each other.

Based on definitions of government involvement in religion given by *Fox* and based on our analysis, we can say that government and religion is not separate in Nigeria. Although, there is no state religion, religion has a huge importance and is linked to the government. Officially, the state does not give any preferential treatment to religious groups, as it claims to



be tolerant to all however, the rotation of Christian and Muslim presidential candidates has undeniable impact on religious groups. Although, the state does not regulate religion, in a sense as in the past when for example Christian missionaries were not allowed in certain parts of northern states, it can influence it by issuing different regulations and acts. Major intervention of state into religious affairs was the introduction of indigeneship certificates, which are highly seen as the cause of trouble, and yet another intervention can be seen in the implementation of Sharia law. The implementation of Sharia law can be also seen as a huge mobilization factor for the Muslim part of the population. Even though Sharia was not forced by government to be implemented in all the states of Nigeria, it was a huge step. From our point of view, it only divided the population more, as Muslims were enthusiastic about this change but Christians felt threatened and left aside from the decision making process. Also, it could have only enforced Muslims' ambitions in making the whole Nigeria more Muslim.

Regarding the matter of religion's divisive or unifying power, we see two sides of the story in Nigeria. On one hand, religion is strongly uniting. It is religion which connects people from different backgrounds; officials, elites, poorer layers of the society. People feel more connected by religion. Thus, when a Christian is elected as president, all the Christians across the country have a feeling of some kind of connection. Of course, there is always critique even from the inside of religious groups but we think that on this level, religion plays an important unifying factor. However, from the evidence of Nigerian conflicts, it is clear that religion is also a strong divisive factor. The disintegration impacts the whole society and it is not only the split between different religions, moreover the split inside the specific religious group that can have huge implications. We are referring to the overall Muslim population in Nigeria and Boko Haram relation. Although, with right instruments and efforts of the government the uniting potential of religion can be greatly supported. Nevertheless, the country cannot be run solidly, and religion will never be truly an unifying factor when 70% of Christians favour making Bible the official law whereas on other side, 71% of Muslims are in favour of making Sharia the official law of Nigeria. In this setting, to reach a compromise and make all the people satisfied will be very difficult.

Perhaps, given the results of 2015 presidential elections, more measures will be taken in this sphere. What can be seen as a small sign of hope that things in Nigeria are moving forward and not backwards may be the answer of 67% of Nigeria's population. They responded that they feel their lives are better than five years ago. (Pew Forum, 2010) Thus, it would be interesting to see how the same question would be answered today, or five, ten years later. Now, the new President Buhari promises to tackle Boko Haram's insurgency, corruption

and Nigeria's struggling economy. The general change and amelioration of conditions of living for Nigerian people could as well be translated in more calm situation and better relations between the different religious groups in the future.

## Conclusion

In the previous three chapters, I have tried to find out what role religion and religious pluralism as such play in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa and particularly, what is the influence of religion in politics of a chosen country. In order to better understand the conditions in the region, I have gathered information about its specificities from the scholarly articles, analysis and studies and used it in the first chapter to give some kind of overview. It provided a useful, general definition of the region, its religious, ethnic and cultural aspects. Consequently, the second chapter which aimed at describing different theoretical approaches and opinions on religious influence in politics, served us as a stepping stone further in the analysis. Most of the scholars and researches whose work I reviewed were Western-based, though I also used analysis of African scholars. For the analysis of a case study, which I recognized as the best way of conducting the analysis, I chose Nigeria. In my opinion, it is a great case to study, as it is religiously pluralistic country, one of the most important countries in the region, ethnically diverse and in recent years, there has been recorded ethno-religious violence. Thus, I was able to fulfil also the sub-aims set in the introduction, like relation and effects of religion on violence and conflicts or peace, and whether religion in the religiously plural setting is unifying or divisive factor.

Based on the conducted analysis, we can say that religion plays an important role both in the region and in Nigeria alone. Its importance stems from historical developments, ethno-religious nexus and also from cultural traits of the region, which apply for Nigeria as well. These findings are also supported by public poll results, where people say that religion is an important factor in their lives. Moreover, the region itself is very religious and religiously plural, as both Christianity and Islam enjoy large believers' base. Furthermore, there are also traditional religions, which are still very popular, and different types of Christian groups.

According to the analysis of the case study, I would claim that religion is an important factor in Nigerian politics and it has been such for a long time now. The pluralistic character of a country is yet another aspect strengthening the religious influence. Nigeria is an interesting case as both Muslims and Christian communities are almost equal in size but due to their involvement in politics, they can differ in power. The sole concept of rotating presidency between Muslim and Christian candidate is very interesting, and only shows how strong religion is connected to politics and thus to the lives of people. Introduction of Sharia law in some states of Nigeria explicitly shows the level of influence. Also, through religious communities people feel connected to politics and decision making and thus, still many

people practice one or other religion and it is not predicted to decline in the future. Although the country has no official religion, with increasing number of Muslim and Christian adherents, we can see the future attempts to expand the religious influence and to introduce more religious laws. It will be interesting to see how the new Muslim president will handle these issues, and whether he will be overtly supporting the Muslim community in efforts to strengthen its position and increase power.

The question whether religion in such a pluralistic setting is unifying or divisive factor cannot be solved easily. There are many other issues which would need to be looked at, such as to study further the motives, actions and speeches of religious leaders, who have the influence over people. Nevertheless, the obviously strong bond inside the religious community for sure means something to the people, and thus matters such as the introduction of Sharia law can be seen as a mobilizing factor of the Muslim part of population. However, religion can also be a mobilizing factor but not for the best cause, like in the case of Boko Haram insurgency. In conflicts, religion is both unifying and divisive factor, depending on from which side we look at it.

Thus, the connection between religion and conflicts or violence is very strong, as shown in conflict cases in Nigeria. Although, it is not always solely religious, the causes of conflict are often related to religion in some way. Yet, religious pluralism need not lead only to constant conflicts between different groups. Thought, the comprehensive pluralism suggested by scholars would require government efforts in this sphere, more and better communication between religious leaders and also between the public. The hypothesis set in the introduction is thus very tricky. We can confirm it by saying that countries where more religions meet tend to be more prone to conflict, as these communities compete each other. Like in the case of Nigeria, religiously plural country, it tends to lead to conflict. However, I agree more with the position of *Dowd* and his argument that religiously plural settings inside the country are more peaceful than the homogenous ones. It can be proved also by the studied cases of conflicts, where we can see that conflicts were more frequent in religiously more homogenous settings than in diverse settings. However, this would of course need much more analysis and study of different settings, motivation of believers and their behaviour. Nevertheless, after analysing the case of Nigeria, I would reject the hypothesis made by saying that with the right measures taken by the government and efforts made by religious leaders, religious pluralism can lead to more cooperation and peace, as people become more tolerant, open-minded and adaptable. It is only with segregation, uncontrolled rise of hate, fundamentalism and misunderstanding that pluralism can promote violence and conflict.

It will be interesting to see how importance and influence of religion will evolve in the future, especially when it depends so much on the government as well. In my opinion, Nigeria should find some factor of unity amongst people, like common fight against Boko Haram or support for economic growth and economic reforms of the country, so that the line between Christians and Muslims disappears both in political and social life of people. As I see it, the problem is not religious influence on politics, rather the way how elites use this as a tool for their own gains and not the gains and good of people. This also needs to change in order to benefit from pluralistic religious society.

## Appendices

Table 1: Division of Religious Faith in Sub-Saharan Africa

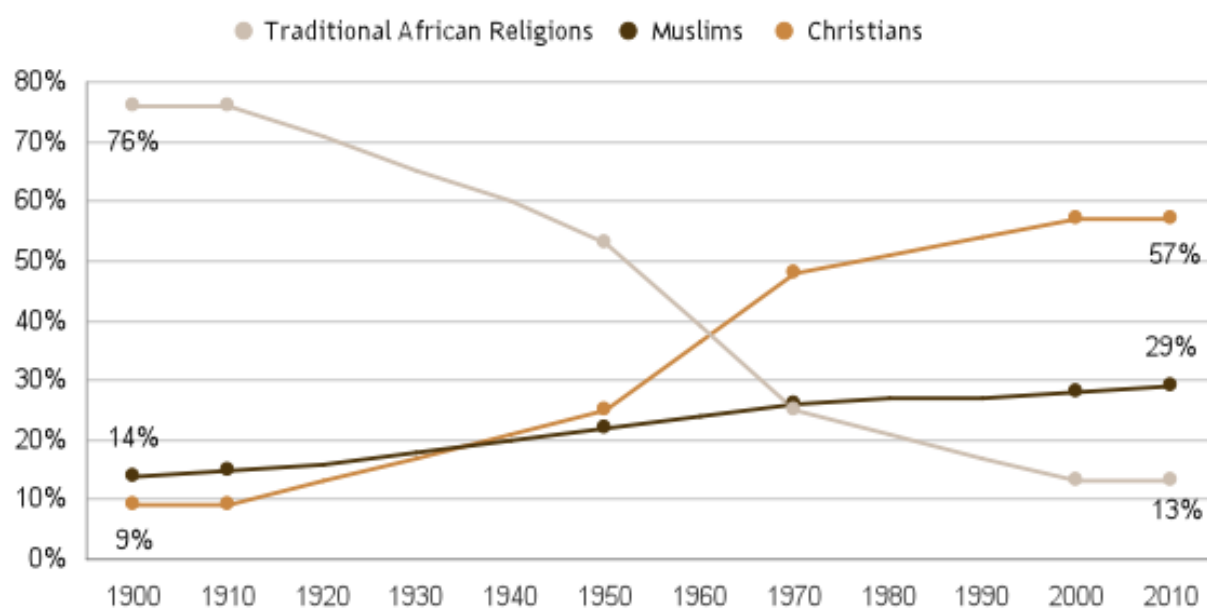
Country	Christians	Muslims	Other
<i>Angola</i>	Roman Catholic - 38%, Protestant - 15%	–	Indigenous beliefs - 47%
<i>Benin</i>	Catholic - 27.10%, Protestant - 10.4%	24.4%	Vodoun 17.3%, (Celestial 5%, Methodist 3.2%, other Protestant 2.2%), other Christian 5.3%, other 15.5%
<i>Burundi</i>	Catholic 62.1%, Protestant 23.9% (includes Adventist 2.3% and other Protestant 21.6%)	2.5%	3.6%, unspecified 7.9%
<i>Democratic Republic of the Congo</i>	Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 20%	10%	Kimbanguist 10%, other (includes syncretic sects and indigenous beliefs) 10%
<i>Rwanda</i>	Roman Catholic 49.5%, Protestant 39.4% (includes Adventist 12.2% and other Protestant 27.2%), other Christian 4.5%	1.8%	Animist 0.1%, other 0.6%, unspecified 0.5%
<i>Sao Tomé and Príncipe</i>	55.7%	–	Adventist 4.1%, Assembly of God 3.4%, New Apostolic 2.9%, Mana 2.3%, Universal Kingdom of God 2%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 6.2%
<i>Cameroon</i>	40%	20%	Indigenous 40%
<i>Cenral African Republic</i>	Protestant 25%, Roman Catholic 25%	15%	Indigenous beliefs 35%
<i>Chad</i>	Catholic 20.1%, Protestant 14.2%	53.1%	Animist 7.3%, other 0.5%
<i>Republic of the Congo</i>	Roman Catholic 33.1%, Awakening Churches/Christian Revival 22.3%, Protestant 19.9%	1.6%	Salutiste 2.2%, Kimbanguiste 1.5%, other 8.1%
<i>Equatorial Guinea</i>	predominantly Roman Catholic	–	–
<i>Gabon</i>	55-75%	<1%	
<i>Kenya</i>	82.5%	11.1% / Zanzibar - 99%	Traditionalists 1.6%, other 1.7%
<i>Tanzania</i>	30%	35%	Indigenous 35%
<i>Uganda</i>	Roman Catholic 41.9%, Protestant 42%	12.1%	3.1%
<i>Sudan</i>	small part	yes	–
<i>South Sudan</i>	yes	–	Animist
<i>Djibouti</i>	6%	94%	
<i>Eritrea</i>	yes	yes	–
<i>Ethiopia</i>	Protestant 18.5%, Catholic 0.7%	33.9%	Ethiopian Orthodox 43.5%, traditional 2.7%, other 0.6%

<i>Somalia</i>	–	Official - Sunni Muslim	–
<i>Botswana</i>	71.6%		Badimo 6%, other 1.4%, unspecified 0.4%, none 20.6%
<i>Comoros</i>	2%	98%	–
<i>Lesotho</i>	80%	–	Indigenous beliefs 20%
<i>Madagascar</i>	41%	7%	Indigenous beliefs 52%
<i>Malawi</i>	82.6%	13%	1.9%
<i>Mauritius</i>	Roman Catholic 26.3%, other Christian 6.4%	17.3%	Hindu 48.5%, other 0.6%, unspecified 0.1%
<i>Mozambique</i>	Roman Catholic 28.4%, Zionist Christian 15.5%, Protestant 12.2%	17.9%	Other 6.7%, unspecified 0.7%
<i>Namibia</i>	80-90%	–	Indigenous 10-20%
<i>Seychelles</i>	Roman Catholic 76.2%, Protestant 10.6%, other Christian 2.4%	1.6%	Hindu 2.4%, other non-Christian 1.1%, unspecified 4.8%
<i>South Africa</i>	Protestant 36.6%, Catholic 7.1%, other Christian 36%	1.5%	Other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%
<i>Swaziland</i>	Roman Catholic 20%, Zionist 40%	10%	Other (includes Anglican, Baha'i, Methodist, Mormon, Jewish) 30%
<i>Zambia</i>	Protestant 75.3%, Roman Catholic 20.2%	–	Other 2.7% (includes Muslim Buddhist, Hindu, and Baha'i)
<i>Zimbabwe</i>	25%	1%	Syncretic (part Christian, part indigenous beliefs) 50%, indigenous beliefs 24%
<i>Mali</i>	2.4%	94.8%	Animist 2%, unspecified 0.3%
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	Catholic 19%, Protestant 4.2%	60.5%	Animist 15.3%, other 0.6%
<i>Cape Verde</i>	Roman Catholic 77.3%, Protestant 3.7%, other Christian 4.3%	1.8%	1.3%
<i>Côte d'Ivoire</i>	32.8%	38.6%	Indigenous 11.9%
<i>Gambia</i>	8%	90%	Indigenous 2%
<i>Ghana</i>	Christian 71.2% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 28.3%, Protestant 18.4%, Catholic 13.1%, other 11.4%)	17.6%	Traditional 5.2%, other 0.8%
<i>Guinea</i>	8%	85%	Indigenous 7%
<i>Guinea - Bissau</i>	10%	50%	Indigenous 40%
<i>Liberia</i>	85.6%	12.2%	0.8%
<i>Mauritania</i>		100%	
<i>Niger</i>	–	80%	other (includes indigenous beliefs and Christian) 20%
<i>Nigeria</i>	40%	50%	Indigenous 10%
<i>Senegal</i>	5%	94%	1%
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	10%	60%	Indigenous beliefs 30%
<i>Togo</i>	29%	20%	Indigenous beliefs 51%

Source: CIA World Factbook

Chart 1

### Growth of Islam & Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa Since 1900



Source: World Religion Database. Historical data draw on government records, historical atlases and reports of religious organizations at the time. Later figures draw on U.N. population estimates, surveys and censuses.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

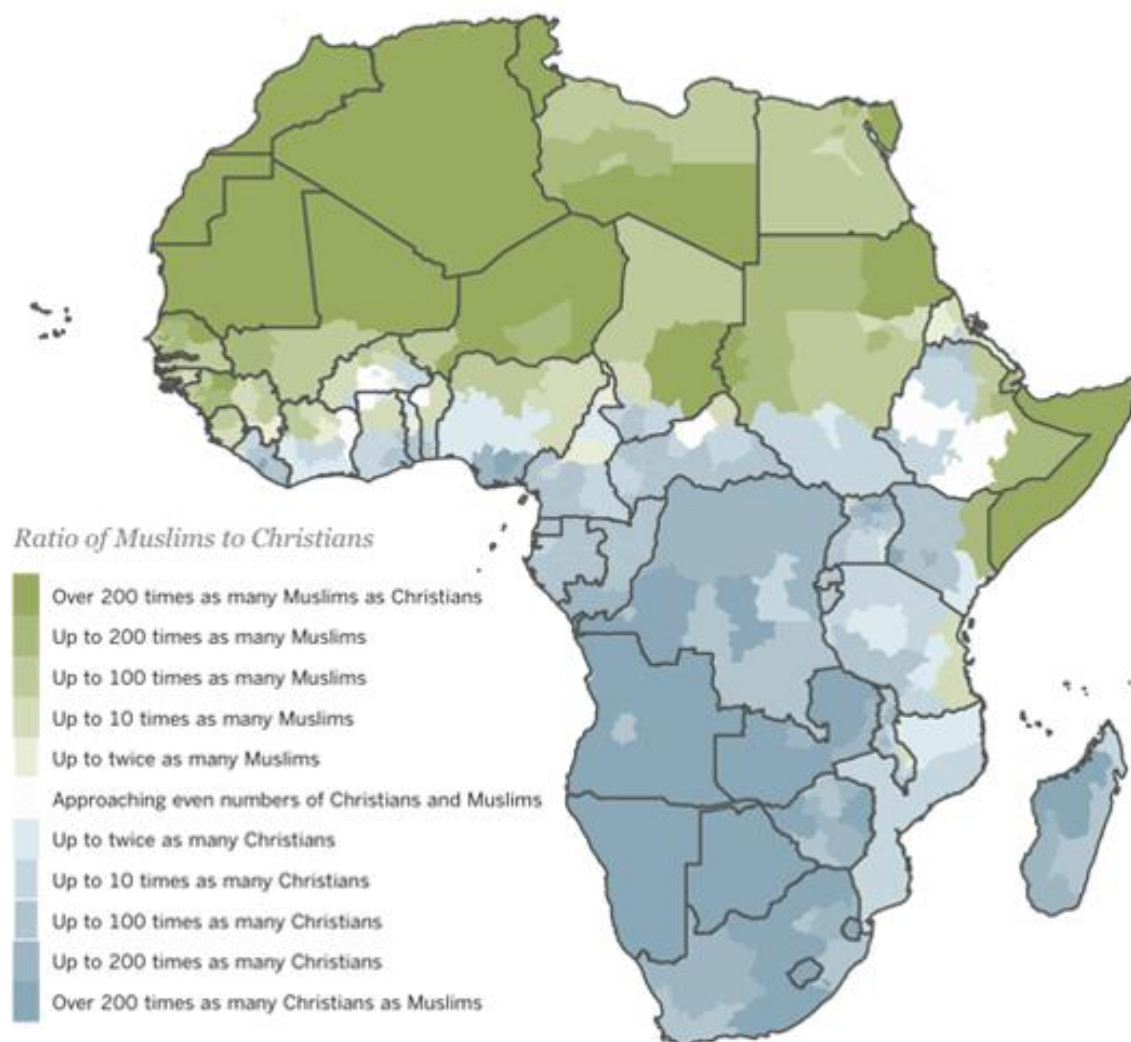
Source: Pew Forum



Picture 1

## Muslims and Christians in Africa

*This map shows the ratio of Muslims to Christians in each country and province. The north is heavily Muslim, and the south is heavily Christian.*

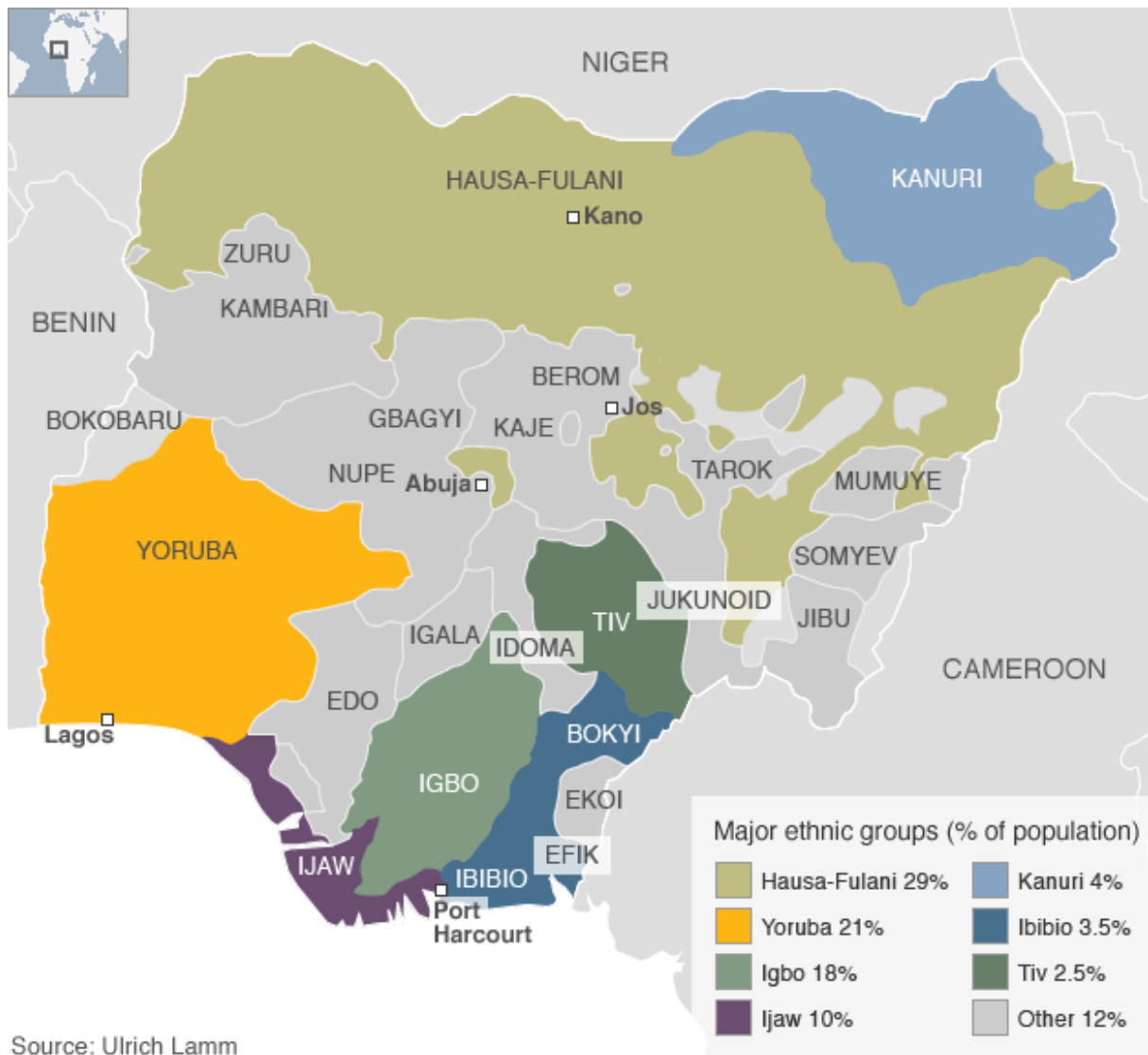


Sources: censuses, demographic and health surveys,  
and the World Religion Database

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

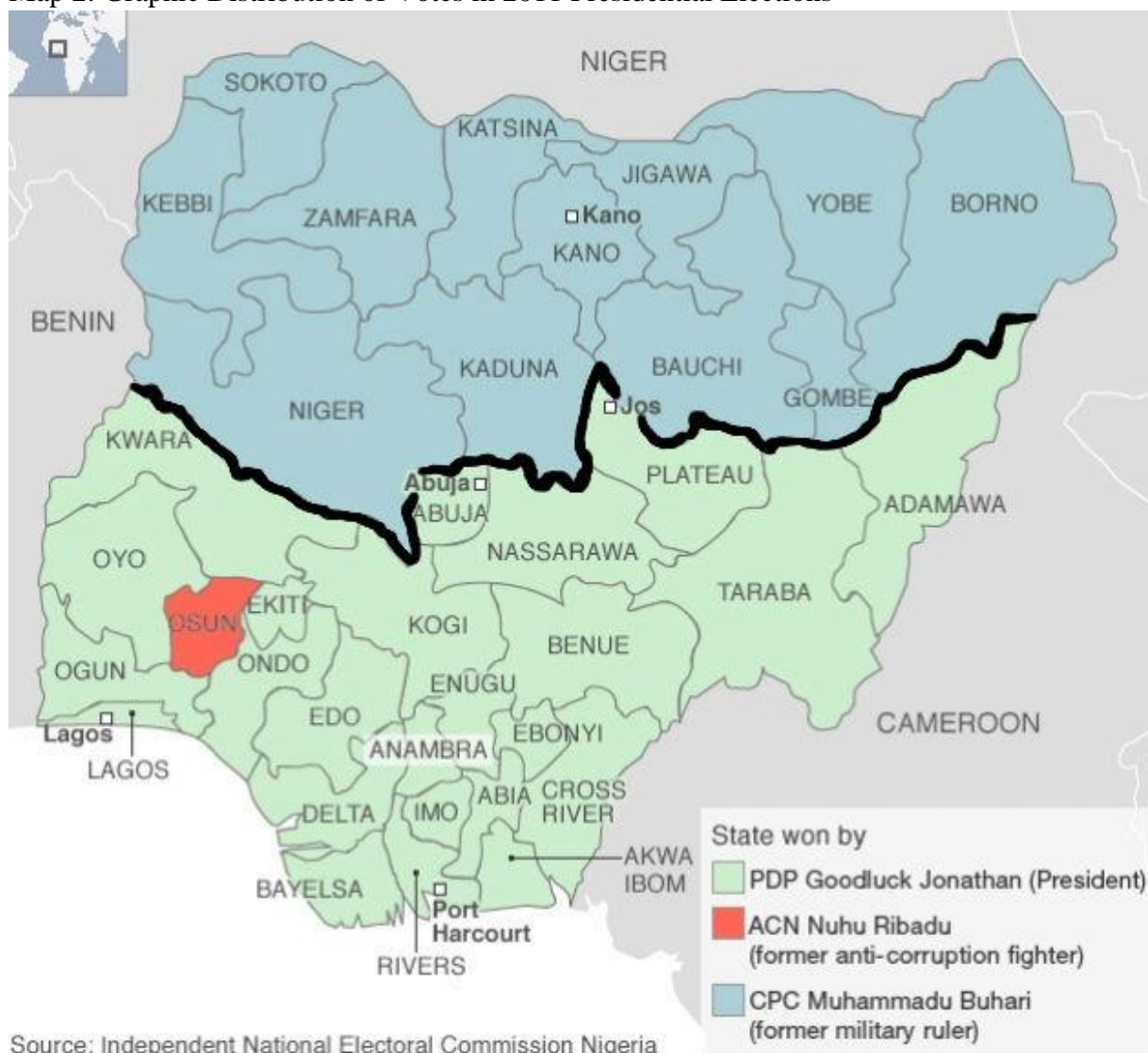
Source: Pew Forum

Map 1: Ethnic Affiliation in Nigeria



Source: BBC News, 2011

Map 2: Graphic Distribution of Votes in 2011 Presidential Elections



Source: Independent National Electoral Commission Nigeria

Source: Campbell, Council on Foreign Relations

Map 3: Presidential Election Results by State

## Presidential election results by state



Source: Inec

BBC

Source: BBC News, 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari hails 'vote for change'', 2015

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