# AFRICA INTERANATIONAL UNIVERSITY

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: AN
EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF MAUDUDI'S POLITICAL
INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM ON THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS
CONFLICTS, AND ITS EFFECT ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM
RELATIONS.

BY
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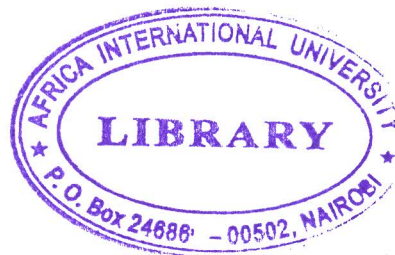
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ABSTRACT

This research examines the role of theological or Islamic interpretation in promoting religious conflicts in northern Nigeria. Specifically, this research examines the impact of Maududi's political interpretation of Islam on the rise of religious conflicts in northern Nigeria. This research questions the sufficiency of the claim that religious conflicts in northern Nigeria are caused by socio-political and socio-economic factors as postulated by several scholars. Maududi is chosen because of his acknowledged influence, globally and in northern Nigeria specifically, as the father of modern fundamentalism. The research was conducted in the cities of Kano in Kano state and Zaria and Kaduna in Kaduna state of northern Nigeria. These states are considered representational. The research employed the qualitative method and interviewed 159 Muslims assisted by Muslim research assistants. This is in addition to qualitative content analysis of some relevant materials and observations.

The findings support the claim that there is a strong relationship between theology and fundamentalism in northern Nigeria. In essence, there is a strong Maududian influence on fundamentalism in northern Nigeria. It is evident that Maududi's ideology and political interpretation of Islam is a major influence on fundamentalism and interreligious conflicts in northern Nigeria majorly beginning with the Muslim Student Society (MSS) in northern Nigerian univerisities. His ideology radicalized these young Muslim students. These students moved into the society with these fundamentalist ideology and established groups. These groups played a strong role in the Islamic militancy and religious conflicts being experienced today. In addition, it is discovered that there is a strong influence of Maududian ideology on the initial leaders of Boko Haram. There is also evidently a historical link to Maududian fundamentalist ideology through Sudan, Pakistan and Egypt as well as Saudi Arabia and Iran within the political and religious leadership in northern Nigeria.

The data also reveal that within majority Muslims interviewed, there is a selective adoption of Maududi's ideologies. A theory, therefore, emerges that the clash between fundamentalist and orthodox ideologies trigger cognitive dissonance, which through dissonance resolution process leads to selective adoption. This selective adoption produces diversity of Islamic views with consequneces on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The data also supports the theory that fundamentalist ideology creates the propensity for collective violence especially when supported by relational and cultural distance, functional independence and inequality. This happens when an ideology in culture (religion) emphasizes "otherness" and is internalized as an individual or collective system of meaning (Silberman 2005, 535) as well as when it corresponds with the social and psychological needs of a group or people (de la Roche 1996).

The application of Synthetic Triangular Approach (STA) in the research, exposes the ordinariness in Muslims including those holding a fundamentalist idea. It revealed that the way Muslims understand, react to or handle conflicts is mostly not different from how other human beings do. These findings have implications for Christian-Mulsim relations in northern Nigeria. In this regard, recommendations are made for the government, Christians and Muslims.