Religious revivalism and its cyclical effects: The Nigerian experience

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Abstract

Religious revivalism in Nigeria has significantly hindered peace and growth by causing a tremendous amount of worry, anxiety, and unrest among Nigerians. This article examines the cyclical negative effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria. The study offers insights into Nigerian culture and the pervasive influences of religious revivalism via comparison and critical analysis. The paper makes use of participant observation, descriptive, and analytical methodologies and reveals, among other things, that the reawakening of religion in Nigeria has bred and promoted religious intolerance, egoism, exclusivism, religion-state fusion, violent behaviour, economic exploitation, violations of human rights and freedoms, identity loss, religious delusions, moral and cultural decay, and a loss of work ethics, among others. The paper argues and concludes that genuine religious revivalism can produce and encourage tolerance, communalism, inclusiveness, political integrity, ethical behaviour, economic exploration, respect for human rights and freedom, valued identity, therapeutic tendencies, and moral and cultural reenactment.

Keywords: Religious Revivalism, Cyclical Effects, Nigeria, Culture, political, Religion.

Introduction

With more than 7.39 billion people worldwide identifying with one religion or another, religion plays a significant role in the world. The most common faiths in the world, apart from Christianity and Islam, are Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, yet a significant percentage of the world's population does not practise any of them. For instance, adherents of Islam live all across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia-Pacific, whereas Hindus and Buddhists live in the Asia-Pacific area. Geographical disparities in the propagation of faiths vary from nation to nation. Although Christianity is more evenly distributed across all of these locations, Jews dwell in the United States, the Middle East, and North Africa. According to Ottuh and Idjakpo[1] and Ottuh and Jemegbe[2], religion has had a significant impact on cultural growth and societal shifts. It is considered a leader in promoting morality and harmonious coexistence and has influenced

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[1] Ottuh, P.O.O. & Idjakpo, O.G. "Problem of God and the Absolute: The Radhakrishnan View". *Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanity and Social Studies*, 1, no. 3 (2021): 26-36.
[2] Ottuh, P.O.O. & Jemegbe, M.O. "Communication in religion and its integrative implications for Society". *Pinisi Discretion Review,* 4, no. 1 (2020): 1-10.

how people and God interact with the world. Nigeria is a nation that is known to be associated with religion. According to Rimansikwe and Achunike, every religion is flourishing in Nigeria, where vices also coexist side by side with religious devotion at an alarming rate.[3] Nigeria is a multicultural society with many different tribes and faiths. As religion has an impact on every aspect of Nigerian society today, it is highly considered to be a significant phenomenon. Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religions are the three main faiths in Nigeria, besides other minor religions.

As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation, Nigeria's diverse religious landscape is a reflection of the historic exposures of its northern people to Islam via the Trans-Saharan commerce and the prosperity of Christian missionary business in numerous of its southern regions. The contemporary state of religion has a transformational and integrative role in Nigeria today, making it a significant source of delight. Religions in Nigerian society have also contributed to a great deal of stress, anxiety, and upheaval among Nigerians. With apparent animosity, friction, and problems, the religious issue in Nigeria is growing more and more prominent.[4] Nigeria's religious conflicts provide a significant barrier to peace and progress in the nation. Faiths in Nigeria have unquestionably had a significant impact on the country's population, both favourably and unfavourably. In Nigeria, religions and ethno-regional identities are intertwined, and since the 1970s after the Civil War, Christianity and Islam have shown intense political rivalry. As a result, activities related to religion are increasing, and syncretism among Nigerian Christians and Muslims is observably significant. In addition, the religious identity crisis has been made worse by religion revivalism, which has prompted a quest for new sources of inspiration to reassemble dispersed religious identities.

This essay uses participant observation, descriptive, and analytical methods to look at the cyclical negative effects of Nigeria's past and present religious renaissance, which are putting the country's corporate survival and social, political, and economic integrity at risk. As a result, the study identifies the cyclical consequences of religion revivalism in Nigeria to include religious intolerance towards one another's religion, egoism, exclusivism, religion-state fusion, violent behaviour, economic exploitation, human rights and freedom abuses, identity loss, religious delusions, moral and cultural decay, and loss of work ethics (laziness), among others. Using the theories of globalization and secularization as a theoretical framework, the study argues that the reawakening of religion in Nigeria should be geared towards reviving religious tolerance, communalism, inclusiveness, political integrity, ethical behaviour, economic exploration, respect for human rights and freedom, valued identity, therapeutic tendencies, moral and cultural reenactment, and imbibing hard work ethics. This study is essential because it offers critical analytical and comparative insights into Nigerian society as well as the pervasive consequences of religious revivalism.

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[3] Rimansikwe, I. & Achunike, H.C. "Religion in Nigeria from 1900 – 2013". *Journals of Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3, no. 18 (2015): 45–46.
[4] Ngbeaa, G.T. "Religion: Past and Present in Nigeria". *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR),* 17, no. 2 (2014): 156-174.

The Nigerian Religious Landscape

Nigeria is a nation in West Africa, formally known also as the Federal Republic of Nigeria or simply Nigeria. It is the world's sixth-most populated nation. It is the 32nd-biggest nation in the world by land area. Nigeria's population as of 2022 is estimated to be about 180 million, and it is projected to reach over 224 million in 2023, according to the United Nations.[5] Islam and Christianity are the two most frequently practised religions in Nigeria, which also includes a vast range of other faiths. Yet, Nigeria's Christian and Muslim populations have changed throughout time. Nigeria's population is split equally between Muslims and Christians, with the Christian population currently outnumbering Muslims by a ratio of 50% to 40%. According to a 2012 Pew Research Centre survey concerning religion and public life, in 2010, 49.3% of Nigeria's inhabitants were Christians, 48.8% were Muslims, and 1.9% was unaffiliated, indigenous, or practised another religion.

The population stands at 53.5% Islam, 45.9% Christian (10.6% Roman Catholic as well as 35.3% other Christian), and 0.6% other, in accordance with a 2018 estimation in the World Factbook by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[6] The Yoruba nation was composed of 55% Muslims, 35% Christians, and 10% members of other faiths. The Hausa ethnicity comprised 95% Muslims and 5% Christians, while the Igbos and Ijaw comprised 98% Christians and 2% professing traditional religions, respectively. The majority of the minority ethnic groups in Nigeria's middle belt practise traditional faiths and Christianity, with a smaller number of Muslims. Nigeria currently serves as a nexus for both the Grail Movement and Hare Krishna in Africa and is home to the biggest Eckankar temple, which can accommodate 10,000 worshippers.[7] The most prevalent religion in the nation has been assessed by several sources and is shown in the table below.

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[5] United Nations. "World Population Prospects". 2022.
https://www.findeasy.in/population-of-nigeria/ (Accessed February, 2023).
[6] Ottuh, P.O.O. & Eboh, A. "Analysis of religious economy and its participation rates in Nigeria". *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*, no.1 (2021): 240-261.
[7] Audi, R. "The Separation of Church and State and the Obligations of Citizenship". *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 18, no.3 (1989): 259-296.

Table 1: Showing religions and their population

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Year	Islam	Christianity	Others	Source
2018	53.5%	45.9%	0.6%	CIA estimate in The World Fact-book, 2018
2015	50%	48.1%	1.9%	Pew Research Centre, 2015
2010	48.8%	49.3%	1.9%	Pew Research Centre, 2012
2008	53%	45%	2%	MEASURE Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2008
2008	50%	49%	1%	Afrobarometer poll, 2008
2007	52%	46%	2%	Pew's own survey, 2007
2006	50%	40%	10%	Nigeria Census, 2006
1963	47%	34%	19%	Nigerian census, 1963

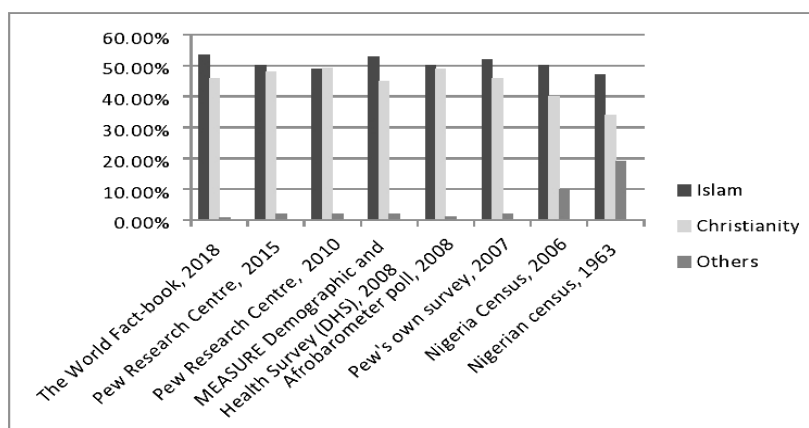*Source: Field survey and personal interviews, 2023*

Fig. 1: A Chart showing religious affiliations of Nigeria's population
Source: Table 1 above

In particular, slam is the main religion in the Northwest and Northeast of Nigeria, though there are still large Christian communities there. On the other hand, Christianity is the dominant religious tradition in the southwest of the country. Religious organisations, such as Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists, make up the majority in the south-east area. There is a sizable Christian plurality in the South. Muslims are few but increasing in number in the South and Southeast. The South East, South West, and North Central areas are seeing fast growth in the number of evangelical Christian denominations. There is still a very small population of Ahmadi Muslims in a number of locations, particularly Lagos and Abuja. Although Nigerian Jews and organisations with a Judaic focus are common in the South East, Shia Muslims are concentrated largely in the North West. From the above, Christians and Muslims are almost split equally, with the majority of Christians being Protestant or Catholic and the majority of Muslims being Sunni or non-denominational.

On the other hand, according to the Maliki school of thought, Sunnis make up the majority of Nigerian Muslims, with a small Shia minority in certain states such as Kano, Sokoto, Yobe, Osun, and Kaduna, among others. While the two most common faiths in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity, some individuals have chosen to uphold traditional beliefs. Before the rise of modern religions, gods were considered to be sovereign beings. Hinduism, which was brought to Nigeria by Indian immigrants from that country and Hare Krishna missionaries, is also practised by certain individuals. Throughout the nation, approximately 25,000 Hindus can be identified, with a sizable portion of them located in Lagos. The followers of Chrislam, a fusion of Islam and Christianity, are among the others. Individuals who practise Chrislam have both Christian and Islamic religious beliefs. The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF), which was established in 1914, is another religious organisation. The ROF accepts adult members who embrace a non-idolatrous belief in God.

Religious Revivalism in Nigeria

Ottuh and Idjakpo posit that *religion is an act of subordination to a superior being, a rereading of objects or occurrences to worship God, and a connection between both the visible and unseen worlds.*[8] *Religious revivalism is a common phenomenon all over the globe. In most cases, a* worldwide surge of religious revivalism has resulted from popular discontent with secular nation governments, Westernized ruling classes, and Western influences. The emergence of educated young people and urbanization, as well as economic and demographic issues including slow economic growth, income disparity, and social mobility, all played a role in the religious renaissance. *Religious revivalism or* resurgence can also be signaled by certain political occurrences. In Nigeria, both Muslim and Christian communities have seen a surge of fundamentalism since the middle of the 1970s. For instance, the Izalatual Bidiati-wa-Ikamatul Sunati and the Shiites are two of the classic Islamic fraternities in Nigeria.[9] The Maitatsine is a militant, fanatical, and syncretistic cult. Fundamentalist Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches, whose members were less accommodating in their attitudes towards interreligious cooperation and more active in their missionary activities, were proliferating among Christians. Thus, as can be seen from the circumstances that led to these disturbances and their effects, these variables contributed to the frequency and severity of religious upheavals in Nigeria.

The modern Islamic renaissance in Nigeria is a sophisticated, diverse, and reactionary movement that wants to end the current global crisis and turn modern society into a true Islamic order. It is made up of a number of different Islamic revivalist groups and shows that people are becoming much more aware of Islam. Its main trait is that it wants to strengthen Islam's grip on all

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[8] Ottuh & Idjakpo, 29.
[9] Adesoji, A. "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria". *GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies,* 45, no. 2 (2010): 95-108.

parts of life and return to its Islamic roots. According to Ottuh[10] and Onimhawo and Ottuh[11], contemporary Islamic revivalism in Nigeria is a resurgence of an antiquated religious movement that is considered hostile to Western interests, socially conservative, and focused on building an Islamic state based on the Sharia in Nigeria. Part of this religious revivalism is the OIC membership of Ibrahim Babangida's administration in 1986, which had a significant influence on the socio-political environment, resulting in riots and conflicts between religious groups. This event caused a serious rift among Christians and Muslims on many different levels. In Nigeria, the conflict involving Islam and Christianity throughout the 20th and 21st centuries had led to divisions among the Muslim population, the rise of extreme ideas, and the formation of armed religious organisations. As a result, there is no coexistence seen between the two religious factions in Nigerian society, and politicians, academics, and the general public all harbour mistrust of one another. In addition, the historical roots of the struggle between Muslims and Christians go back to the early days of the Roman Empire, and other political and global causes have since had an impact.

The operations of the Islamic Education Trust (IET) and the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN) can be understood in terms of religious revivalism in the Nigerian state. In Nigeria, contemporary religious groups and organisations are emphasizing women's education, fusing Islamic education with western institutions, and defending the religious freedom of Muslim students while mobilizing public opinion against globalization and westernizing influences. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation with divergent perspectives on the state's secularism. Christians and Muslims in Nigeria vigorously debated and opposed the 1979 Constitution's inclusion of a Sharia Appeal Court, arguing that doing so undermined the need for Nigeria to remain a secular state. The Nigerian legal system is also heavily influenced by Christian teachings and values; this is because it is believed that Nigeria's legal system is rooted in the British Common Law. Secondly, the Christian cross is used as an emblem of healthcare and medical facilities in government-owned establishments. Third, the Gregorian calendar was adopted for official use. Fourth, the first day of January is designated as a work-free day. Fifth, long holidays are set to coincide with the Easter and Christmas celebrations without corresponding structures for the Muslim holidays. Unaware that even if secularism was going to be implemented, all these Christian expressions would have to be eliminated, to date, certain Christian leaders are still clamouring for it in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a secular state, but religion has been a source of law for a long time. This has not hurt the state's secularism in any way. Nevertheless, consistency has occurred because religion has been elevated to the status of a formalized or statutory source of law. For example, in Dickson Ojiegbe v. Marcus W. Ubani, the question of whether holding an election on a day that is unfavourable to a religious organization constitutes a violation of that group's freedom to practise

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[10] Ottuh, P.O.O. "Sharia, secularism and secularization: an appraisal of the Nigerian experience". *SAU Journal of Humanities*, 1, no.1 (2012): 216-228.
[11] Onimhawo, J.A. & Ottuh, P.O.O. "Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria: Sharia Law and the Rule of Law Re-Examined". *Iroro: A Journal of Arts*, 10, nos. 1&2 (2005): 189-199.

its faith and conscience According to the United States (US) Supreme Court, an election's result was unaffected by a group's lack of participation.[12] The court dismissed arguments that rules requiring public holidays on Sundays violated the constitution's provisions for freedom of religion. The Chief Justice pointed out that although the initial laws were influenced by religious causes, they are now secular and have no connection to any one faith. Thus, the topic of constitutional conformity is raised by the Christianization of the calendars, the use of public holidays, and the observance of holidays important to Christians.[13] In addition, Christian actions such as using loudspeakers to urge people to an outdoor religious revival have led to riots and fights among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

Theoretical Invocation

This study looks at the current theoretical debates about globalization and secularization in order to understand how important and dangerous the cyclical effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria are. The theory of globalization looks at current events on a global scale in terms of growth, economic circumstances, social situations, and political as well as cultural impacts.[14] On the other hand, secularization theory focuses on the desire for religion, thus making religion less prevalent as cultures advance.[15] The theory of globalization highlights dynamic communication systems and fluid economic circumstances as its two primary themes. There are new opportunities and difficulties in the delicate interplay between globalization and religion.[16] On the one hand, religion benefits from advancements in communication and transportation while also are providing a safe haven for individuals who are opposed to its influence.[17] But, everyday interaction made possible by globalization creates a vicious loop of conflict where religions start to recognize their status as universal faiths.[18] In this sense, it could be contended that the issues associated with the complicated link between religion and globalization are only getting worse.

Globalization leads to greater religious tolerance, but it also upends established communities, causes economic marginalization, and stresses people out. Religions are also caught up in a circle of disagreements, which makes them stronger as separate groups.[19] Globalization has created international

[12] Ogbu, O.N. "Is Nigeria a Secular State? Law, Human Rights and Religion in Context". *The Transnational Human Rights Review*, 1, no.1 (2014): 135-178.
[13] Ogbu, 141.
[14] Hopkins, D.N., Lorentzen, L.A., Mendieta, E. & Batstone, D. *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001), 33.
[15] McClay, W.M. "Two concepts of Secularization". *Journal of Policy History*, 13, no. 1 (2001): 47-72.
[16] Bandchoff, T. *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 57.
[17] Azzouzi, M. "Religion and Globalization: Benefits and Challenges". R*omanian Review of Political Science and International Relations,* 10 (2013): 150-154.
[18] Azzouzi, 153.
[19] Idike, A.A & Emi, O.I. "Ethno-Religious Identities in Nigeria: Implications for Governance in Nigeria". *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 9, no. 5 (2015): 72-87.

organisations like the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organization (WHO) as well as regional organisations such as the European Union (EU), Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and African Union (AU) that serve as global political platforms that integrate cultural, racial, and religious diversity.[20] These groups engage in negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy while adhering to many of the same fundamental principles as religious traditions, including peace, human dignity, and equality.

Globalization and secularization, which go hand in hand, made Nigeria's identity problem worse and made people look for new ideas to put back together the country's broken religious identities. Social scientists and historians have debated the connection between religion and globalization. In this regard, Woodhead and Heelas recognize three sub-theses, namely: disintegration (religion is on the verge of disappearing), differentiation (religion is moving from the public to the personal realm), and de-intensification (religion persists but in a weak form).[21] Several viewpoints exist about the factors that also contribute to secularization, including intellectual shifts, sociocultural diversity, pluralism, and the consumerization of religion. According to Ottuh, secularization is the removal of religion from politics, the arts, and the public sphere in favour of a private realm where it only has influence on its adherents.[22] Modernization theory, which asserted that religion must decrease as industry, urbanization, rationalism, and religious plurality expand, was the foundation for earlier interpretations of secularization.[23] Secularization is often portrayed as either a deterministic result of modernity that alters religion-state relations or as an intellectual triumph of liberalism that results in a Universalist public arena with a common and neutralized language.

Burgess, like several other academics, has questioned the secularization hypothesis in light of the current worldwide religious revival, and the so-called sacralization idea focuses on religion's growth in the contemporary era.[24] Accordingly, both trends—secularization and sacralization—are present in today's society, and although secularization does occur in certain situations, in others, religions continue to be active and even expand. In modern sociological discussion, the question of how religious plurality and religious life are related is at the forefront. Ottuh and Eboh assert that although rational choice theorists contend that religious demand is continuous and that competitive pluralism boosts religious vitality and involvement, secularization theorists contend that religion increasingly becomes a matter of alternatives, lifestyles, and

[20] Annan, K. "Secretary-General, Addressing Millennium Summit of Religious, Spiritual Leaders, Urges Participants to Set Example of Interfaith Cooperation," August 29, 2000. http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000829.sgsm7520.doc.html (Accessed January 30, 2023.

[21] Woodhead, L. & Heelas. P. (Eds.). *Religion in Modern Times* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 6.

[22] Ottuh, 221.

[23] Wilson, B. "Reflections on Secularization and Toleration". In Walker, A. & Martin, D. (Eds.), *Restoring the Image*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 39.

[24] Burgess, R.H. "The Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal Progeny: A Religious Movement Among The Igbo People Of Eastern Nigeria (1967-2002)". Unpublished Ph.D Thesis (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham, 2004).

preferences.[25] The economic system model is a useful analytical tool for understanding contemporary religious developments in Nigeria, as individuals prefer to reject ineffective religious expressions in favour of more effective ones and religious liberty is constitutionally protected. Due to globalization and the growth of liberal beliefs, there are now new conflicts in relationships between the state, religion, and society.[26] They include calls for legalizing adolescent marriage, inter-marriage, and homosexual marriage, all of which have the potential to undermine pre-existing religion-state accords and eliminate the liberal remedy of non-intervention. Religious politics and conflicts among religion and secular impulses have reemerged in many countries notwithstanding the secularization idea.[27] According to detractors of the secularization idea, it is not a conflict of ideologies but rather a collection of customs influenced by globalization and daily life.

With their ability to impact politics and society, religious organisations and practitioners play a significant role in Nigeria's public life. This is accomplished by reading management in its entirety, particularly as it pertains to the creation of public policy and its implementation. Through political manifestos, voting trends, the selection of politicians as well as party leadership, and the taking of the oath of office, this is conveyed. Due to people's propensity to disregard society's standards while yet relying on religion for legitimacy, the government is seen as the agent for enforcing religion. By employing allusions to God as well as religious terminology instead of political language during elections in Nigeria's second republic, religion was brought into the political process.[28] Due to the assumption that the party could have been founded to further Islam's path against Christianity, this caused hostility and speculation in certain areas. Muslim leaders encouraged Muslims in the north of the nation not to support the Unity Party of Nigeria since they believed that the party's lifting of two fingers represented the worship of two gods, which constitutes polytheism.[29] The National Advance Party (NAP) transformed its political agenda from getting rid of rats, mosquito larvae, cockroaches, etc. to getting the great nation back to God in 1983 to fight against the country's paraplegia, transcendental decay, and callousness but failed to secure one seat at any level at the end of the numerous national elections that year. This suggests that God may not have anything to do with the election or that appealing to religious impulses may not always ensure a winner. Even though it was generally thought that a fellow Muslim won the Nigerian presidential race, President Babangida used religious language to show the sincerity of his resolve to cede power to the winner before being

[25] Ottuh and Eboh, 245.

[26] Audi, 264.

[27] Kinnvall, C. "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security". *Political Psychology*, 25 (2004): 741-767, Norris, P. & Ingelhart, R. *Sacred and Secular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128.

[28] Ottuh, P.O.O. & Idjakpo, O.G. "Ludwig Wittgenstein: Language Game and Religious Belief". *Interference: Journal of Languange, Literature, and Linguistics*, 1, no. 2 (2020): 166-81.

[29] Ayantayo, J.K. Religious Factors in the Nigerian Public Sphere: Burdens and Prospects. *Africa Development*, XXXIV, no. 3&4 (2009): 93-109; Abdullah, H.J. "Religious Revivalism, Human Rights Activism and the Struggle for Women's Rights in Nigeria". In Mamdani, M. (Ed.), *Beyond Rights Talk and Culture Talk: Comparative Essays on Political Rights and Culture* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2000, pp.96-120.

driven out of office.[30] Political elections in Nigeria have also been spiritualized by giving the impression that winning an election is the result of divine intervention, divine assistance, manipulation, or inducement rather than of wisdom, foresight, a logical plan, massive political travel, excellent propaganda, adequate political logistics, or people-oriented political manifestos.

The Cyclical Effects of Religious Revivalism in Nigeria

In Nigeria, religious revivalism has resulted in intolerance towards other religions, egoism, exclusivism, religion-state fusion, violent behaviour, economic exploitation, human rights abuses, identity loss, religious delusional beliefs, societal moral and cultural decay, and laziness, among others. The recycling negative effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria are illustrated in the Figure 2 below.
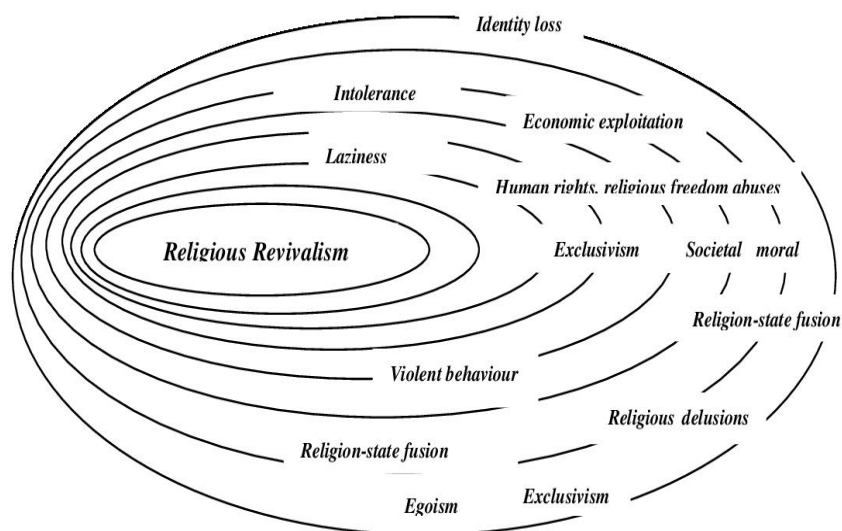

Fig. 2: A diagram showing the cyclical consequences of religious revivalism

Religious intolerance

Religious intolerance is one of the cyclical effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria. The inability of a member of a certain religion to respect, accept, and recognize the rights of others to practise a different religion is known as religious intolerance. This is a result of their conviction that their faith is the sole route to spiritual awakening and immorality in paradise that has been divinely given. Religious intolerance is a ruthless, focused, and unfavourable mental and psychological attitude towards religious practises and ideas that are opposed to one's own. When led by extremism or fundamentalism, it may result in bloodshed and the loss of lives and property. According to Ottuh, religious

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[30] Ngbeaa, 158.

violence throughout Nigeria is mostly caused by religious intolerance, which is the inability of followers to reconcile religious doctrine with daily life.[31] Three viewpoints may be used to analyze religious intolerance: a cognitive understanding, a cultural theory perspective, and a social movement viewpoint. It conveys moral rigour, particularity, exclusivity, and literalness.

Religious egoism (Individualism)

The second religious revivalist effect that has had a cyclical effect in Nigeria is individualism. According to Friedman, the contemporary person is a miniature society unto himself, with a concept of self that is disembodied from social interactions.[32] A stronger sense of individualism, such as liberating oneself from the limitations of extended family and the local community, is fostered by globalization. The emphasis on personal regeneration and redemption, the quest for a message of balance between equity and justice, the emphasis mostly on nuclear family, and the repudiation of traditional authority are only a few characteristics of religious renaissance movements in Nigeria that attest to the impact of Western individualism. This properly points out that the Nigerian nation has historically and culturally valued individuality.

Religious exclusivism

Religious exclusivism is a serious recycling effect of religious revivalism in Nigeria. Religious exclusivism or denominationalism is the belief that only adherents of a certain religion or denomination will enter Paradise and that everyone else will suffer everlasting damnation. On the other hand, the idea that everyone will ultimately participate in God's everlasting benefits can be known as universalism. The exclusion of those who do not adhere to Jewish monotheism first from the messianic future world is a practise that is most common in Jewish tradition among Abrahamic faiths. The previous beliefs of both the Roman Catholic Church and the contemporary teachings of a number of churches in Christianity demonstrate that only people who hold to the genuine religion will enter heaven, while those who do not belong to the real church will perish in hell. The exclusivist nature of Islam may be observed in its recognition of devout Jews and Christians as fellow "people of the Book" alongside Muslims while rejecting competing religious traditions as "unbelievers" who have no place with Allah or heaven. Religious warfare, forced conversions, restrictions on interfaith friendship and union, and discrimination against religious minorities may all result from exclusivism. Yet it is also feasible to follow an exclusive religion and uphold the rights of nonbelievers. Several religions adhere to a milder type of exclusivism whereby other faiths are acknowledged as valid but inferior to the real faith in terms of holiness. Ottuh and Aitufe opine that the importance of religious exclusivism and extremism is rising among religions in Nigeria, as evident in the daily

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[31] Ottuh, P.O.O. "Human Rights Abuses and Violations: The Sharia experience." *Iroro: A Journal of Arts*, 13, no. 1 (2008): 63-71.
[32] Ngbeaa, 161.

kidnappings and killings by the Fulani herdsmen in the country.[33] According to Onimhawo and Ottuh, this ugly scenario is becoming more dangerous on a daily basis to the corporate unity and existence of the Nigerian nation.[34] In this day of global conflict, genuine dialogue and collaboration between religious communities are crucial, but they can only be done with knowledge and sensitivity to the exclusionary and Universalist inclinations within religious institutions.

Religion-State fusion

The fusion of religion and state is a cyclical effect of religious revivalism in Nigeria. In this sense, competitive party political operations are being utilized to incite groups, strengthen identities, create violent young gangsters and militants, and encourage ethnic divisions and disputes throughout the present democratic transition. Any measures, even violent ones, are employed by the elite in their pursuit of zero-sum political engagements in order to further their own narrowly focused goals. This poses a danger to the consolidation and longevity of democracy in Nigeria and calls for a coordinated effort from all parties involved to minimize causes of conflict, defuse ethnic and religious animosity, and stop or limit violent outbursts. The constitution forbids religious discrimination, forbids the state and federal governments from establishing a state religion, and guarantees people's right to choose, practise, spread, or change their faith.[35] Together with common law civil courts, it also allows governments to set up courts founded on sharia or customary law, with civil courts having priority. Nigeria is a stressful nation as a result of ethno-religious tensions that have strained national alliances, national identity components, and national fabrics. Nigeria has to resolve this tension in order to go forward and flourish in the twenty-first century. This tension arising from the fusion of religion and state has resulted in deadly conflicts.

Violent behaviour and religious extremism

Violent behaviour and religious violence are two of the reoccurring negative effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria. Religious confrontations in Nigeria should be seen as clashes between secular-religious or extremely secular groups, identities, and interests. Any act by a person that threatens, causes real harms to, injures, or damages the person, others, or property is considered violent conduct. Verbal threats are a frequent starting point for violent conduct, which gradually progresses to actual injury. Violence against people or things because of their faith is referred to as religious violence. Violence inspired by or in response to religious concepts, scriptures, or precepts is referred to as

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[33] Ottuh, P.O.O. & Aitufe, V.O. "Kidnapping and moral society: An ethico-religious evaluation of the Nigerian experience". *European Scientific Journal*, 10, no. 14 (2014): 420-434.

[34] Onimhawo, J.A. & Ottuh, P.O.O. "Religious extremism: A challenge to national unity and development". The Nigeria Journal of Christian Studies, 3, no. 2 (2007): 54-66.

[35] Griffiths, P. *Problems of Religious Diversity. Exploring the Philosophy of Religion* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 31.

religious violence.[36] It encompasses actions performed by religious organisations as well as aggression against religious institutions, individuals, things, or events. Differentiating, dehumanizing, stigmatizing, and demonizing others is the goal of violence. Ethno-religious conflicts have plagued Nigeria's political history and had a detrimental impact on political, social, and economic growth. In the modern democratic era, partisan political competition utilizes religion to rally groups, strengthen identities, and increase ethnic tensions and conflicts. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom estimates that at least 12,000 people have died in sectarian and communal attacks and retaliation that have resulted from religious violence between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria, which has also resulted in thousands of deaths, injuries, and displacements.[37] If the Nigerian government had handled religious disagreements at a neutral level, religious violence may not have continued to be an issue in the nation.

Economic exploitation

Due to the religious revival in Nigeria, religion has become a way to take advantage of the economy. This level of revivalism is featured in Nigeria in the form of prosperity preaching or gospel. Economic exploitation by religion is becoming so common that some religious leaders now prey on people by coercing them into giving them money, sexual favours, or even property in return for financial transformation or healing. Some religious leaders often use people's ignorance and trust for their own purposes. The current depictions of the Nigerian economy as a dark system of government rooted in patrimonialism, corruption, and superstition are challenged by evidence of the beneficial impacts of unstructured economic and religious networks for entrepreneurship and accumulation in Nigeria.[38] In Nigeria, witchcraft and human sacrifice have received greater attention than more mainstream religious groups in attempts to comprehend the regulatory consequences of globalization, economic formalization, and religious revivalism. The more progressive and conventional religious reactions to neoliberal policies and economic hardship are sometimes overshadowed by these portrayals of indigenous economic governing systems marred by religious revivalism. Due to the financial, sexual, and health risks associated with religious exploitation, regulation is now required. Religious leaders sometimes coerce people into paying them in order to get divine favours; hence, false information has also been disseminated to congregations by fake pastors or prophets, especially to individuals who are suffering from serious illnesses. Female congregation members are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation because they are often led to believe that having sex with the religious leader would solve all of their life issues.

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[36] Wellman, J. & Tokuno, K. Is Religious Violence Inevitable? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 4, no. 3 (2004): 291.

[37] Ottuh, P. & Erhabor, F. "Radical Islamism: Trajectories of human rights violations and abuses in Africa". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 8, no. 1 (2022): 243-264; Odikpa, S. & Emeje, A.Y. "Religion as a Barrier to Nation-Building in Nigeria". *Philosophy and Praxis*, 10, no. 1 (2020): 107-117; Adesoji, 97.

[38] Jega, A. "Tackling Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria". *The Nigerian Social Scientist*, 5, no. 2 (2002): 35-39.

Human rights and freedom abuses

Human rights apply to everyone, no matter what race, gender, sex, religion, level of health, clothing, socioeconomic status, etc., they are. Ottuh and Erhabor argue that religious revivalism in Nigeria is a cause of violations of human rights and abuses of human freedom.[39] For example, human rights and freedom are violated by Muslim fundamentalists in Nigeria, who frequently voice their worry and dread over the spread of westernization, secularization, and Christian culture in the nation. The fundamentalist position involves assigning humanity to a theological claim that establishes responsibilities and subjects' interactions with themselves and others under a particular form of regime. They try to compare Nigeria to an Islamic state, where they only accept Islamic politics that are governed mostly by the Quran and Sunnah. The North West area in particular has seen an upsurge in overall insecurity and human rights abuses, according to civil society groups and the media.[40] Zeal for one's religion can be beneficial, but it can also be dangerous and aimed at an abuse of human rights. In Nigeria, human rights are seriously threatened by religious intolerance because it aims to change how identities are assigned and negotiated. According to Ottuh and Erhabor, armed organisations, such as Boko Haram (BH) and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), kept on carrying out war crimes and acts against human rights and freedom in the north-eastern region of Nigeria by murdering and kidnapping people, robbing businesses, and assaulting women and girls sexually.[41]

Identity loss

Identity is a socio-political notion that possesses an individualist and communal connotation. It is the process of creating meaning based on a cultural characteristic or a group of related cultural characteristics that is given precedence over all other sources of significance. Religion offers solutions to problems about one's self-identity because it believes that God has established the laws and made them impossible to contradict; at the same time, religion can also alter such self-identity. Recertification of individualistic cultures and identities is correlated with religion. In Nigeria, ethnicity as well as faith is two examples of identity politics, and contemporary writing has stressed the beneficial function of religion in fostering peace. Yet according to a study by the Pew Religious Forum, religion is the nation's most prominent identity.[42] Christian activists and fundamentalists are worried about the Nigerian national identity concerning what they see as the danger of the country becoming more Islamic, the implementation of Sharia on non-Muslims, and the use of public funds to support Muslim activities. Due to feelings of discrimination and the incapacity of certain communities to enjoy certain rights and civil freedoms, ethnic-regional identities are becoming problematic in Nigeria. The mainstays

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[39] Ottuh & Erhabor, 255.
[40] Daudu. M. "Inter-religious Harmony and a Sound Moral Foundation: Prerequisite for national survival." *A journal of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions,* 13 (2001): 62-70.
[41] Ottuh & Erhabor, 250.
[42] Adesoji, 96.

of religious divergence and conflict have been Christian and Muslim identities, with Nigerian Muslims being more likely to exhibit or communicate a religious identity than Christians.[43] The rise of religious extremism across the nation is crucial to understanding how religious identities evolve and how disagreement turns into violence. Extremist organisations exhibit a great deal of hatred against both members of their own faith and members of other religions.

Religious delusion

Religion, which ought to serve therapeutic purposes, has now turned to delusion. Delusion is a deceptive, unshakable thought or conviction that is inconsistent with the person's upbringing, including their education, culture, and social standing. It is characterized by more conviction and pervasiveness, penetrating the person's whole experience on a larger level. Instead of cultural background, the immediate social milieu as well as the patient's familial context has an impact on the contents of religious delusions. Owing to such spiritual and supernatural aspects underlying religious beliefs, including the self-referential character of the beliefs, the prevalence of psychiatric symptomatology, and the impact on functioning, differential diagnosis is challenging. Religious issues are the most important in today's society, with linguistic, political, sociocultural, and economic issues following. This creates a problem for nation-building in what seems like a religious country like Nigeria since social vices are more prevalent, multiplying, degenerating, and endemic in societies with multiple faiths. For Ottuh, this is a result of religious fanaticism and hypocrisy, which run counter to the main tenants of religion—morality, faith, and reason; ethics and beauty.[44] It is ironic that a social institution connected to religion is disguised as something they do not preach, defend, or seek.

Societal moral and cultural deconstruction

It's hard for a society to have either a culture without religion or a religion without culture, since the two are so closely linked and intertwined. No civilization has ever arisen or evolved apart from religion. Magnificent ideals found in culture include a reverence for humanity and individual freedom, a love of truthfulness and integrity, social solidarity, and a belief in vengeance and recompense after death, among others. These fundamental components of contemporary cultural values were valued and strengthened by the tri-religion in Nigeria in the past. Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion are human, moral, spiritual, as well as cultural forces to be feared in all of their institutional, social, and cultural manifestations. Its arguments are indeed human and divine as a religion. These religions have shown themselves throughout human history to be the custodians and advocates of human ideals and also the preservers of a people's cultural legacy due to their human

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[43] Ibrahim, M. & Ibrahim, J. "Religious Identity in the Context of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria". In Jega, A. (Ed.), *Identity transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*. Kano: The Centre For Research and Documentation, 2003.

[44] Ottuh, P.O.O. "An Evaluation of Religious Skepticism in Relation to Human Suffering and Pain: Towards a Theodical Synthesis". *ICOANA CREDINTEI International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research*, *8*, no. 16 (2022a): 50-61.

nature.[45] Growing awareness of how societies and people are impacted by global flows is reflected in part in the rise of identity-related concerns. The barriers of independent cultures are more vulnerable to interdependence and perforation in today's globalized environment. With exchanges of knowledge, images, and people, cultures are becoming deterritorialized, presenting individuals and groups with a variety of cultural and moral codes with which to create their identities.[46] But today, due to religious revivalism and competitionism, all the above-described virtues of religion have been compromised. Most religions in Nigeria now teach against existing cultures and traditions. For example, some Christian churches are teaching against the traditional marriage system, cultural festivals, rites of passage, and traditional justice system, among others. All these cultural and traditional practises are the preservers and protectors of societal morality and ethics.

The Way Forward

Modern religious great awakenings are a response to domestic corruption, unstable and stagnant economies, and tyrannical and oppressive political ideologies. Religious adherents who are now on the margins due to religious revivalism's consequences go through it. This confirms Ottuh, Ottuh and Aitufe argument that many individuals, particularly young individuals in many cities in Nigeria, have become disillusioned and angry as a result of the worsening economic conditions, rising unemployment, and shortage of educational and employment possibilities.[47] Genuine religious revivalists in Nigeria are worried not just about the predicament of adherents but also about how modern religions are affecting all human beings in the country. In Nigeria, genuine religious revivalism is expected to contribute to high levels of individual and political freedom, in addition to high-quality infrastructure, health, and social supports. For example, it is expected that the cultural influence of Christianity and Islam will be crucial for the rebirth of Nigeria and the emergence of a contemporary Nigeria where respect for human rights and freedom flourish. There are several factors at work in the evolving Nigerian scene that works to prevent the achievement of indisputable human ideals. To this extent, religions in Nigeria are infused with an unrestrained sensibility that opens them up to fresh perspectives. Both religious traditions of Christianity and Islam can now thrive on the stream of renewal, and Nigeria should evolve into a test-bed for the two religions' newest ideas, movements, and models. In this way, a dynamic Nigerian milieu that affects both politics and religion should be permitted to alter both Christianity and Islam and other religions in the land. Similar to these new expectations from religions in Nigeria, globalization promised people a good life and unrestricted development, unwavering faith in instrumental reason, unrestricted faith in professional expertise, and long-term planning and management of the environment, organizational operations, and societal factors.

[45] Odikpa & Emeje, 110.
[46] Uche, O.O.C. "Religion in the Nigerian culture". In N. Okediadi, O.O.C. Uche & S. Okeke (Eds.), *Themes in Nigerian peoples and culture*. Enugu: John Jacobs, 2009, pp. 150-167.
[47] Ottuh, P.O.O., Ottuh, J.A., & Aitufe, V. O. "Distributive justice and inclusive society: Role of religion in the equitable distribution of wealth". *European Scientific Journal*, 10, no. 23 (2014): 196-213.

Globalization has been connected to the rise in religious revival movements in Nigeria, which has been ascribed to the colonialists' and missionaries' imposition of Western culture, education, and civilization. Due to the exposure of Nigerian society to commercial culture, materialism, atheism, and moral relativism, these religious revival movements should exacerbate the nation's identity issue. By their support of prosperity preaching, Pentecostals in Nigeria should encourage economic individuality and a consumerism ethic that will result in a welcome addition to the library of scripts available for Nigerian national identity creation.[48] The contemporary revival of religion in Nigeria should be seen by globalization theorists as a significant manifestation of a world in which religion, as a transnational phenomenon, spreads via global flows and with a specific relevance in reaction to weak nation-states. Throughout the history of the Nigerian diaspora, particularly in the Atlantic region, religious groups have been a significant medium for both the expression of Nigerian as well as black identity. In this sense, Nigeria's transnational experience in the global period should be marked by migrant flows of all forms and intensities, connections between the motherland and the diaspora, and processes that represent complex migrations of individuals, ideas, cultures, and faiths.

With the doctrine of abilities, religions in the country should encourage women in Nigerian communities to engage in small-scale business via the use of a credit system and skills-training programmes that are reminiscent of Nigeria's native apprenticeship programmes or trades. Personal progress and the demoralization of public life are values shared by reformist religious groups.[49] Religions should investigate how contemporary religious groups can channel the current political and social angst of urban youth in productive ways. Religious conversion and renewal have historically supported movements of popular opposition, economic growth, and class formation. These processes are reflected in the virtue signaling and enterprise-promoting inclinations of Nigerian religious traditions. Nigerian women's interests should be promoted via international networking, particularly in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Along this line, certain women's organisations, including the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), have argued for changes using religious allegory and disputes over doctrinal interpretation.[50] Significantly, a culture of plurality brought forth by globalization should allow for interaction across faiths with overlapping but different ethical and intellectual concerns. As a result, religions aligning with globalization should encourage more religious tolerance in Nigeria's politics and economy.

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[48] Ojo, M.A. "Nigerian Pentecostalism and transnational religious networks in West African coastal regions". *Entreprises religieuses transnationales en Afrique de l'Ouest*, (2005): 395-415.

[49] Fouchard, L., Mary, A. & Otayek, R. (Eds.). *Entreprises religieuses transnationales en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Ibadan, Paris: IFRA-Karthala, 2005), 24.

[50] Abdullah, H.J. "Religious Revivalism, Human Rights Activism and the Struggle for Women's Rights in Nigeria". In Mamdani, M. (Ed.), *Beyond Rights Talk and Culture Talk: Comparative Essays on Political Rights and Culture*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2000, pp.96-120.

The United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), and regional organisations such as the European Union (EU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), or perhaps the African Union, have all been created as a result of globalization (AU). These groups adhere to many of the same fundamental principles as religious traditions, including respect for human dignity and equality. It is obvious that people resort to faith for protection, stability, and straightforward solutions when globalization upends traditional communities, leads to economic marginalization, and increases mental stress. Even though religions in Nigeria now compete with one another and engage in disputes, there is little probability that they will do so in the future. They will, however, employ their guiding principles to see beyond their disagreements. The Nigerian national ideals of the constitution include morality and ethics, and it is prescribed by law that religious manipulation in religious places be regarded seriously and forbidden. While the current Nigerian laws' registration requirements for religious groups or organizations are commendable, what occurs following registration should be guarded against, especially the exploitation of adherents. In this sense, it would be helpful to define religious exploitation properly in order to regulate legislation against it. More action, such as punishing religious figures who are abusing their flocks, would go a long way towards ending the issue. Effective religious oversight to guarantee legal compliance would benefit from a continuous and improved relationship between both the government regulating bodies and religious umbrella organisations.

The Bible, Qur'an, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights assert that everyone has the right to religious freedom since everyone is made in God's image and likeness and has intrinsic dignity. According to the Declaration on Religious Liberty, everyone has the right to civil and social freedom in religious issues, and that freedom includes freedom from compulsion by other people, social groupings, or any human authority. Instead of religions invading human rights and freedom, they should direct their revivalistic efforts towards promoting them. For fear of religious extremism, most states in Nigeria have resorted to formulating their own regional security outfits to complement the Nigerian regular security services. One example of this regional security outfit is the Western Nigerian security network called Amotekun. According to Ottuh, the idea of Amotekun was developed to function in tandem with the country's traditional security services and to lessen or stop the killing of innocent people in the south-western region of the nation because of rituals, religious intolerance, or political motives.[51] To further overcome the cyclical evil effects of religious revivalism in Nigeria, other states or regions in the country should be encouraged to establish more state-owned or regional security outfits.

Conclusion

This article explores how Nigeria's religious renaissance has had cyclical negative impacts that threaten the nation's corporate viability and undermine

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[51] Ottuh, P.O.O. "Amotekun: Assessing the Religious Paradox of a Community Policing Typology in South-Western States of Nigeria". *Matondang Journal*, 1, no. 2 (2022b): 54-64.

its political, social, and economic integrity. Intolerant attitudes towards other religions, individualism, exclusivism, the merging of religion and state, violent behaviour, exploitation, assaults on human rights, identity loss, delusional religious beliefs, broader social moral and cultural deterioration, and laziness are all identified as cyclical effects of the religion renaissance in Nigeria. It makes the case that religion's great awakening has made Nigeria's religious identity issue worse, which has led to a search for fresh sources of inspiration to piece together fragmented religious identities. This research is important because it provides comparative and critical analytical insights into Nigerian culture and the widespread effects of religious revivalism. More religious tolerance can result from globalization which can also uphold established communities. Genuine religious revivalism should inspire people and groups to help the Nigerian nation restore its broken identities. Moreover, sincere religious revivalism ought to foster and promote tolerance, communalism, inclusivity, political integrity, basic morality, economic explorations, concern for human rights and freedom, treasured individuality, therapeutic inclinations, and cultural and moral reenactment. Although many scholars have questioned the secularization theory, as the sacralization notion focuses on religion's expansion in the modern age, secularization can make religion decline as a result of industry, urbanization, rationality and promote religious pluralism (which is healthy for Nigeria) in the light of the present global religious resurgence. All of these processes are evident in Nigeria's contemporary culture, and even though secularization does take place in certain contexts, in others, religions remain alive and even grow in modern human society.