

DIVERGENT SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAMIC SCHOLARS ON DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS IN OGUN STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESS

**AKINDOYIN M. A. (PhD), General Studies Department,
akindoyinalani11@gmail.com, +2348163881045**

&

**FOLARIN Jamiu, Mass Communication Department,
Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria,
folarinjamiu@gmail.com, +2347033773993 (Corresponding author).**

Abstract

There have been claims that Nigeria is a secular state or multi-religious nation, and an advocacy that the State should be separated from religion. The influence of religion in democracy and partisan politics continued to be a recurring decimal as Nigeria transits from one political dispensation to the other. It is within these diverse assertions that what is termed political Islam is considered the appropriate model while others insist that Islam and Democracy are two parallel lines. It is on this background that this paper investigated the opinions of Islamic scholars on political Islam, Democracy and involvement of Muslims in Ogun State in Nigerian Democracy. It also reviewed the divergent scriptural interpretations of the Islamic scholars on political participation. This paper adopted a survey research design to obtain data from selected Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State in order to answer the research questions. The Islamic scholars and Muslims were selected from the three Senatorial districts (Ogun Central, East and West) in Ogun State. Questionnaires were distributed to members of the League of Imams and Alfas as well as the scholars and Muslims from selected Islamic Societies in Ogun State. The study is significant as it offers stakeholders the opportunity to understand the dynamics of Muslims' participation or non-participation in the political process. It will also enable them to understand the thoughts of the scholars on the phenomenon as a way of providing an intellectual basis on which the knotty issues around Islam and Democracy would be better understood, practically dissected and possibly resolved.

Keywords: Democracy and politics, Scriptural Interpretations, Islamic scholars.

Introduction

There have been claims that Nigeria is a secular state or multi-religious nation, and an advocacy that the State should be separated from religion. The influence of religion in democracy and partisan politics continued to be a recurring decimal as Nigeria transits from one political dispensation to the other. That was why Onapajo (2016) quoted Gill (2001) as saying: "If there ever were an award for the most durable, yet outdated, theoretical perspective in the social sciences, secularisation theory would be the winner, or at least a close runner-up." Onapajo also cited Stark and Finke (2000) to buttress the assertion: "After nearly three centuries of utterly failed prophecies and misrepresentations ... It seems time to carry the secularisation doctrine to the graveyard of failed theories, and there to whisper "requies cat in pace."

It is within these diverse assertions that what is termed political Islam is considered the appropriate model while others insist that Islam and Democracy are two parallel lines (Cavatorta 2021, Hashemi 2021). Political Islam in this study refers to the belief that Muslims' participation in the political process whether purely or strictly Islamic (under Islamic State) or executed within

other political ideologies (such as Democracy) is sanctioned by Islam. To this end, Onapajo (2016) submitted: “Clearly, this shows why religion cannot be ignored as a salient factor in the mobilisation for votes and party support during elections, even in those advanced democracies supposedly built on secularism”.

Islam is not a religion in the strictest sense in which the term is used to connote a religion as a system of belief in god, or gods with its set of rituals and form of worship of the gods in sanctuaries and religious houses. Islam is considered to be a way of life, that is comprehensive and total guidance to humanity in all spheres of human endeavours be it physical, social, spiritual, economic and political. The focus of this paper however is on the political question, as addressed by Islam, herein referred to as political Islam.

There is a position that if Islam is meant to be a religion limited to a set of belief in a god and worshipping that god in a holy shrine, then there might be no need for the Hijra (Migration) of the Prophet Muhammad to Madinah which gave him the opportunity to establish a kingdom of God on earth, a practical demonstration of the political Islam for the purpose of establishing a pure, fair, just and equitable society that served as a political model for human kind. The argument goes further that if Islam were to be subservient to other mundane systems, the Prophet would have stayed put in Makkah without challenging the aristocratic rule of the Quraysh and he would have been practising his new religion alongside the polytheistic religion of the people of Makkah (Haider 2022, Suberu & Yusuf 2020, Al-Qaradaw 1998, Mawdudi 1986).

Therefore, Islam has been abinitio conceived as a political system that can stand on its own without having to co-exist or be under another political system. Supporting this view, Mawdudi (1986) submits that the political system of Islam is based on three principles of Tawhid (Unity of Godhead), Risalat (Prophethood) and Khalifah (Vicegerency). This implies that God is the Creator, Sustainer and Master of the universe and all things that inhabit it, be it organic or inorganic. Therefore, the sovereignty of this kingdom is vested only in Allah alone. He alone has the right to legislate, to command and to forbid. He is the only One that deserves to be worshipped and obeyed. This therefore negates the concept of the legal and political independence of human beings whether as individuals or as a group. No individuals or group of individuals should take up the role of the Ruler, Law giver or lawmaker. It is the exclusive prerogative and power of Allah (Quran 3 v 26-27). What some Islamic scholars considered erroneous interpretations and implementations of this principle had led to criticism with the claim that such perspectives breed extremism and intolerance especially in countries such as Nigeria with diverse religions and ethnicities. It was argued that extremist groups such as Boko Haram want to compel all Nigerians to be ruled under Islamic political system through the instrument of force.

Risalat is the medium by which humankind receives the law of Allah and this has been given through two main sources. One is the Book of Allah (al-Quran) and the other is the Sunnah of His Prophet which is the authoritative interpretation and example par excellence of practicability of the Quran (Quran 33 v 21). The third of the tripod is the *Khilafah* which connotes vicegerency. Islam teaches that Man is the representative of Allah on earth and by the virtue of the powers invested in him, by Allah, he is expected to fulfil the will of Allah within the limits set by Allah (Quran 2 v 30). Islamic scholars who criticized ideologies such as that of Boko Haram argued that Muslims can be part of the political process in a country which is not strictly under Islamic rules or political system. However, this perspective has been criticized and

condemned by describing Muslims participation in political processes under non-Islamic systems such as western democracy as a form of *Kufur* (Disbelief). This has resulted into divergent opinions and rulings among different scholars of thought in Islam which is the focus of this paper.

Statement of the Research Problem

Ogun State is located in South West Nigeria that borders Lagos, Oyo States, Osun, Ondo States and the Republic of Benin (Oladehinde, Olayiwola and Popoola 2018; GRID3, n.d). It is the home of the first newspaper and regarded as a bastion of civilization in Nigeria (Kayode-Adedeji, 2012). It houses the headquarters of many religious organizations. History has shown that notable political controversies and resolutions with national ripple effects that resonate in all parts of Nigeria start in Ogun State. Of recent, the 2023 Presidential candidate of All Progressive Congress (APC), Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu outburst during campaign in Abeokuta ahead of the party presidential primary (Olawunmi 2022); as well as the 2015 visit of two prominent religious clerics to Abeokuta to resolve the disagreement between former President Olusegun Obasanjo and his former Vice, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar is a pointer to this (The Punch 2018). The State serves as the source of political debates and produces one of the highest number of top political leaders in Nigeria including late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, late Chief MKO Abiola, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, former House of Representatives speaker Rt. Hon. Dimeji Bankole and a host of others. Despite these records, the data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) indicated that Ogun State was at the bottom of the ladder in the collection of Permanent Voters' Card (PVC) and low turnout of voters in the 2019 general elections in the State (INEC 2020). Numerous factors have been adduced to be responsible for political apathy among Nigerians but literature search indicated that religious factor has not been adequately interrogated. INEC, National Orientation Agency (NOA), the media, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders had adopted different strategies such as political education to address issues of political apathy and misconceptions. There has not been remarkable improvement going by the number of those who voted during elections since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999.

The religious leaders are supposed to be part of the stakeholders that will address this challenge of political apathy and misconceptions. Meanwhile, different Islamic schools of thought and scholars have divergent views on the desirability or otherwise of Muslims participation in the political process. While the model of political Islam is being adduced, there are also debates that Muslims' participation in democracy is a form of disbelief (*Kufur*). What is the implication(s) of these developments to the participation of Muslims in Ogun State in the political process? Is there any relationship between divergent scriptural interpretations and political misconceptions among Muslims in Ogun State? These are the problems this paper attempted to address.

It is on this background that this paper investigated the opinions of Islamic scholars on political Islam, Democracy and involvement of Muslims in Ogun State in Nigeria Democracy. It also reviewed the divergent Scriptural interpretations of the Islamic scholars on political participation.

Research Objectives

- 1 To examine the level of divergence of Islamic scholars' jurisprudential opinions on democracy
- 2.To find out whether divergent scriptural interpretations by Islamic scholars have influence on political participation;
- 3.To determine whether divergent scriptural interpretations have influence on political communication among Islamic scholars

Research Questions

1. What is the level of divergence of Islamic scholars' jurisprudential opinions on democracy?
2. Do divergent scriptural interpretations by Islamic scholars have influence on political participation?
3. Do divergent scriptural interpretations have influence on political communication among Islamic scholars?

Significance of the study

The study is significant as it offered stakeholders the opportunity to understand the dynamics of Muslims' participation or non-participation in party politics. It enabled them to understand the thoughts of the scholars on the political phenomenon as a way of providing an intellectual basis on which the knotty issues around Islam and Democracy would be better understood, practically dissected and possibly resolved.

Research Methodology

This paper adopted a survey research design to obtain data from selected Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State in order to answer the research questions. The Islamic scholars and Muslims were selected from the three Senatorial districts (Ogun Central, East and West) in Ogun State. Questionnaires were distributed to members of the League of Imams and Alfas as well as the scholars and Muslims from selected Islamic Societies in Ogun State. One hundred and four people responded to the questionnaires and were analyzed using simple percentage, tables and charts.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In a bid to address the issue raised on political questions addressed by Islam within the divergent scriptural interpretations by scholars, the researchers generated data to establish the implications of this on Muslims participation in the political process. Researchers tried to establish the influence of divergent scriptural interpretations on political apathy and political communication among Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State. Questionnaires were distributed among members of League of Imams and Alfas, representatives of Islamic organisations in Ogun State and selected Muslims who participated in voters' education programmes organised by the Ogun State Muslim Community. The questionnaires were distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire which was generated through Google Form has 27 items, four of which were used to generate demographic data of the respondents while the other 23 items were aimed at obtaining responses that would answer the three research questions. The questionnaires were distributed between Wednesday 13th to Monday 18th July, 2022. 65 responses were gotten from the Google form link distributed through WhatsApp while 39 were received from the offline distribution. In all, 104 questionnaires were retrieved out of 120 respondents targeted. The analysis of the data generated from the questions were done based on the research questions earlier noted.

Islamic scholars' divergence jurisprudential opinions on democracy

In an attempt to answer this research question, five items in the questions are relevant. These are: Is there basic Islamic legislation on governance? Is there basic Islamic legislation on democracy as practised in Nigeria? Which of the Islamic schools of thoughts do you predominantly subscribe to? Does the school of thought you predominantly subscribe to rule on democracy? Islam is not against Muslims participation in democratic politics.

Islamic Schools of Thought

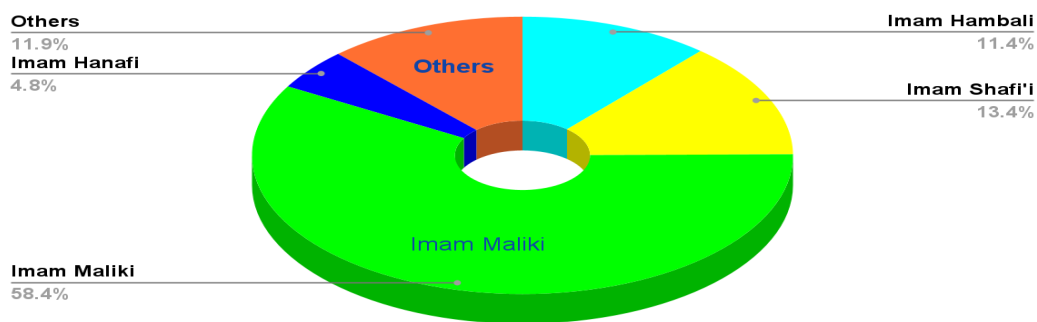


Fig.1: Schools of Thought to which Respondents subscribe

TABLE 1: Respondents level of divergence on Islamic jurisprudential opinions on democracy

Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Is there basic Islamic legislation on governance?	67.3	16.3	16.3
Is there basic Islamic legislation on democracy as practised in Nigeria?	30.8	54.8	14.4
Does the school of thought you predominantly subscribe to rule on democracy?	48.1	26.9	25
Islam is not against Muslims participation in democratic politics.	82.7	13.5	3.8

Source: Field Survey, July, 2022

Are there basic Islamic legislation on governance
104 responses

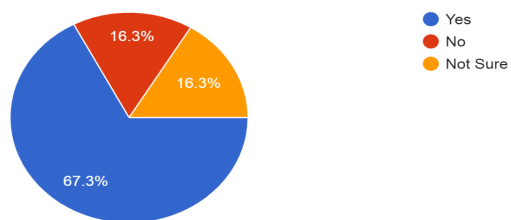


Fig. 2: Respondents perception on Islamic legislation on governance

Are there basic Islamic legislation on democracy as practiced in Nigeria
104 responses

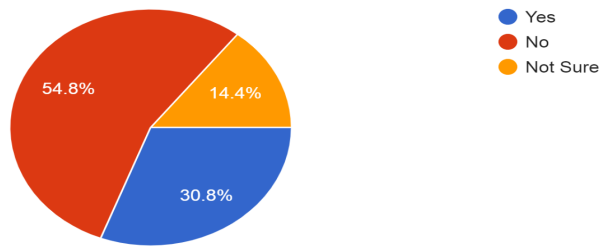


Fig.3: Respondents perception on Islamic legislation on democracy in Nigeria

Islam is not against Muslims participation in democratic politics
104 responses

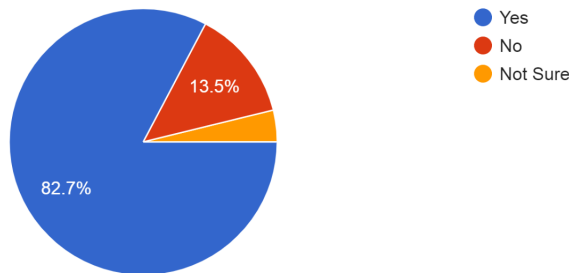


Fig.4: Respondents perception on Islamic legislation on democracy in Nigeria

The above table shows the level of divergence of the Ogun State Islamic scholars and Muslims on their jurisprudential opinions on democracy. Though 67.3 percent of the respondents accepted that there is basic Islamic legislation on governance, and 82.7 percent submitted that Islam is not against Muslims participation in democratic politics; but 54.8 percent said there is no such legislation on democracy as being practised in Nigeria while 51.1 percent of the respondents are either categorical or not sure that the Islamic school of thoughts they predominantly subscribe to rule on democracy.

Auda (2012) submits that those described as Islamists argued among themselves on the permissibility of Muslims' participation in democracy. While one group argued that democracy is prohibited, another group would say it is not prohibited and that democracy is a form of *Shura* (consultation) and therefore part of Islam.

Influence of Islamic scholars' divergent scriptural interpretations on political participation

For the second research question, the respondents answered six close ended questions and three open ended questions in order to establish the influence of divergent Scriptural interpretations on participation in the political process. Auda (2012) also noted that some scholars argue on the permissibility of Muslims participating in parliamentary elections. One group argues that participating in parliamentary elections is prohibited as the parliament does not apply the *Sharia* and the other would argue that joining the parliament would enable Muslims to have their voices heard and call for the application of *Sharia*.

TABLE 2: Respondents level of interest in the participation in the political process

Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Do you belong to a political party?	23.1	76	1
Do you have Permanent Voter's Card (PVC)	84.6	15.4	0
Do you vote during elections in Nigeria?	73.1	26.9	0
Do you conduct sermons on Islam and democracy among your congregations?	73.1	24	2.9
Does your congregation take to your rulings on Muslims participation in the electoral process?	60.6	8.7	30.8

Source: Field Survey July, 2022

Do you have a Permanent Voter's Card (PVC)?
104 responses

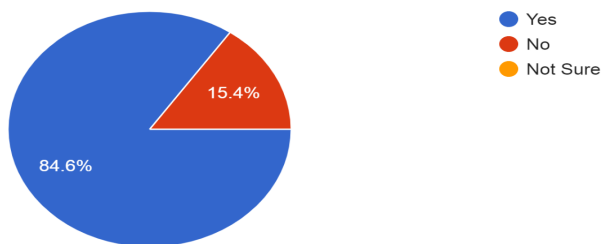


Fig.5: Respondents level of possession of PVCs

Do you vote during elections in Nigeria?
104 responses

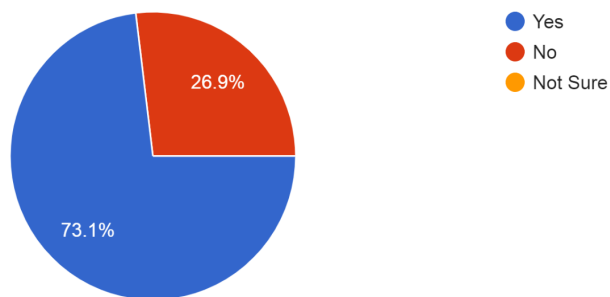


Fig.6: Respondents participation in elections in Nigeria

Is it a form of disbelief (kufr) to participate in elections?
104 responses

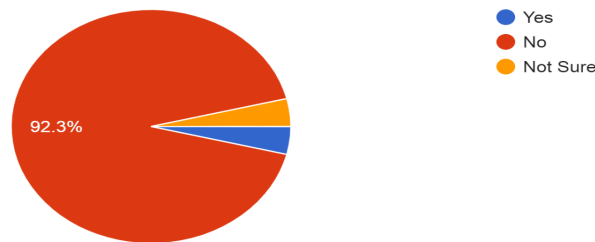


Fig.7: Respondents perception of Muslims participation in elections

Table 2 shows the respondents' level of divergence on Islamic jurisprudential opinions on democracy. With the open-ended questions, data revealed that divergent Scriptural interpretations on democracy have a positive influence on political participation. This indicated that divergent views are not responsible for political apathy of Muslims. Though only 23 percent of the respondents are members of political parties, between 73 and 84 percent of the respondents conduct sermons on Islam and democracy, have PVCs, and vote during elections in Nigeria. 60.6 percent of the respondents affirms that their congregations take to their rulings that Islam supports Muslims participation in the electoral process, with 8.7 percent of the respondents saying no and 30.8 percent saying that they are not sure. This brings the relevance of the two-step flow theory which establishes the influence of opinion leaders on the interpretations of communication messages. Similarly, the agenda setting theory is also relevant here, where the Islamic scholars through their sermons to their congratulations set an agenda on Islam, Democracy and political participation.

The 73.1 percent of the respondents who stated that they exercise their franchise during elections in Nigeria gave various reasons for their participation:

“To vote for a rightful aspirant whether he/she win or loss. It is my right to vote and be voted for.”

Yes, it is my civil right to exercise my franchise, so as to vote for the candidate who fears God and makes the life of citizens for betterment. Examples, in case of employment, agriculture, social amenities and so on.

To observe my civic right as a Nigerian and Towards National Development

Is because of interest of Islam. To propagate Islam.

To discharge my Civic right and demonstrate my love for my country as taught by Islam

Because I want Muslim to emerge, therefore, Kufr system would not take over the Muslims' affairs.

Because I have to be part of the process to select a good leader if not I am part of those that enable election to be rigged by not voting

Voting during election is not against my doctrine and also it is my right as a Nigerian to vote

Because I want to vote and choose for the candidates of my choice who will not be bias in religion or tribe.

Because I believe Islam is a religion of universe that left nothing behind.

According to Quran 3 vs 100-105

According to the majority of the Islamic scholars, it is a duty for Muslim to be involved in choosing the leader that will be more favourable and sympathetic to the cause of Islam.

Muslims are expected to participate in the country electioneering process. So I see it as my citizenship right.

So as to vote Muslims who will represent Muslims in governance and remove obstacles against Islam. Also, so that the rights of Muslims could not be trampled upon by Non-Muslims in government e.g right to wear Hijab by our female folds, right to attend any school of choice by Muslims without molestation, right to employment by Muslims without unnecessary discrimination, right to worship Allah at appropriate time without being hindered by any force/agent e.t.c

To pick the best out of those who are going to manage our affairs, if not the worst will be voted”

The reasons given by the respondents for voting during elections in Nigeria are motivated by their religious affiliations, prove of being responsible citizens, as a form of protest of bad governance and influence decision making, especially the ones that have do with their rights and privileges.

Respondents who noted that they do not vote during elections in Nigeria (26.9 percent) attributed it to the following reasons:

Because politics in Nigeria has no regard for Islam

I don't like Nigerian political leaders behaviour.

I have been unable to collect my PVC

Asides my Islamic stand, times have proven that except where a voter benefits from partial favouritism, his lot is regret. Elected officials for the benefit of the deen do more harm to the deen.

They do not count on our votes.

I am very busy

My stance on democracy is against how it is being practised in Nigeria

I've lost hope in politics

Because it's not Islamic

Islam does not subscribe to democratic politics

I don't like voting and I guess Islam didn't support this voting system of Nigeria

Influence of Islamic scholars' divergent scriptural interpretations on political communication

This paper also attempted to establish whether Islamic scholars' divergent scriptural interpretations had influence on political communication among Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State. In order to establish this, the respondents answered nine related close and open-ended questions.

TABLE 3: Respondents level of (dis)agreement to political misconceptions

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Participation in politics lead Muslim into Kufur	76	8.7	8.7	6.7
Politics is part of Islam	5.8	2.9	4.8	86.5
Participation in democracy corrupt Muslims	49	14.4	14.4	22.1
It is acceptable in Islam to present oneself for elective post in democracy	25	6.7	18.3	50
According to Shariah, it is haram to allow non-Muslim to rule over Muslim and Non-Muslims in Nigeria	32.7	20.2	16.3	30.8
Divergent rulings among different Islamic Schools of thought leads to political misconception	22.1	17.3	21.2	39.4

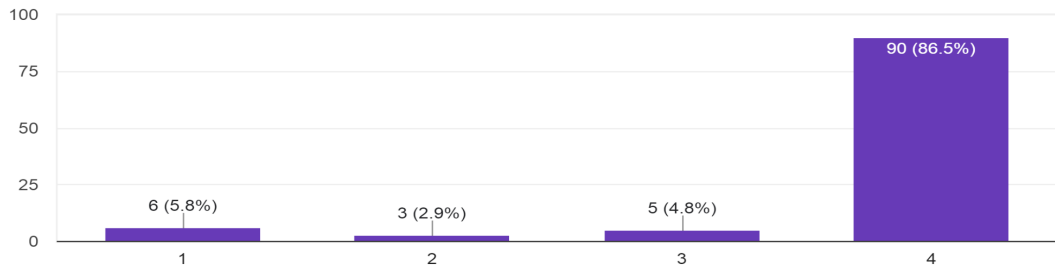
Source: Field Survey July, 2022

Table 3 above shows the respondents' level of (dis)agreement with political misconceptions with 76 to 86 percent of the respondents disagreeing with the notion that Muslims' participation in politics leads to disbelief (Kufur). About 63 percent of the respondents also disagree that participation in democracy corrupts Muslims, while agreeing that it is acceptable in Islam to present oneself for elective post in democracy. When the respondents were asked whether they agreed that "Divergent rulings among different Islamic Schools of thought leads to political misconception", 60.4 percent of the respondents agree while 39.4 percent disagree.

On whether it is haram according to Shariah to allow non-Muslims to rule over Muslims and non-Muslims in Nigeria, the table shows 52.9 percent which represent a simple majority among

the Islamic scholars disagreeing to this position while 47.1 percent agree. While quoting Ibn Taymiyyah, follower of Imaam Ahmad Hambali, writes that unjust state shall perish, even if it belongs to the Muslims land or its people are Muslims. It is through justice that the affairs of people are best managed in this world even when justice is mixed with a degree of sins. God supports the just State even if it is non-muslim, yet withhold His help from the oppressive State even if it is Muslim.

Politics is part of Islam.
104 responses



1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree

Fig.8: Respondents perception on Islam and politics

Divergent rulings among different Islamic Schools of thought leads to political misconceptions
104 responses

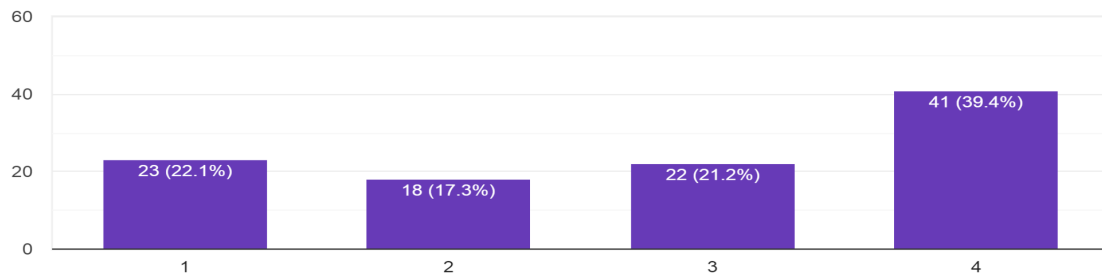


Fig.9: Respondents perception on influence of schools of thought on political misconceptions

TABLE 4: Respondents perception on the influence of religious affiliations on future elections in Nigeria

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Do you see Nigerians voting along religious lines in the 2023 elections?	68.3	14.4	17.3
Given the agitations for religious balancing in the selection of party candidates, do you see more Muslims voting in 2023 general elections?	76.9	8.7	14.4

Source: Field Survey July, 2022

Table 4 above shows that 68.3 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that Nigerians would vote along religious lines in the 2023 elections. While 14.4 percent of the respondents stated the contrary, 17.3 percent said they were not sure. Similarly, 76.9 percent of the respondents concluded that more Muslims would be going to vote in the 2023 general elections due to the agitation for religious balancing in the selection of party candidates ahead of the elections.

Do you see Nigerians voting along religious line in 2023 elections?
104 responses

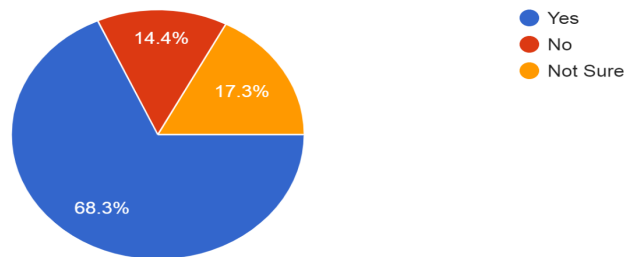


Fig.10: Respondents perception on influence of religious affiliations on future elections in Nigeria

Given the the agitations for religious balancing in the selection of party candidates, do you see more Muslims voting in 2023 general elections?
104 responses

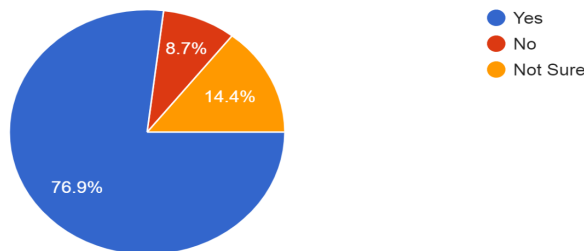


Fig.11: Respondents perception on influence of Muslims religious affiliations on political participation in future elections

Before asking the respondents on their view on the influence of religion on voting patterns in the 2023 elections in Nigeria, the study attempted to understand their specific views on “Muslims subscribing to non-Islamic system of government such as the democracy as practised in Nigeria”.

I dont think democracy is non islamic. The principles of democracy including freedom, equality, and social justice, are all enshrined in Islam.

I have no I'll feelings about it as long as it brings progress to the Country

Muslim brothers and sisters should be able to participate in system of government (democracy) to change their mind and intention.

It is not good but we have no choice.

It is the way to institute good government which will make people know that Islamic government is the best.

So far our nation is not practising shari'a, then we must practice the alternative for the nation to be at peace.

I have said it earlier that it is part of our constitutional right to participate in politics particularly in election whether community, local, State and National election. If we should fold our arms, it means we are giving room for non-believers to win the elections and rule over us.

Since Islamic system of government is not in place, Muslims would have a no option but to subscribe to non-Islamic system of government otherwise Kufar (unbelievers) will take control in of all affairs.

For as long as we don't have an alternative, Nigerian Muslims should participate fully in democracy.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer Q5:44-47, Q23:55

Since we don't operate on the Islamic system of government right from the beginning of Nigeria, then we don't have the choice to enforce the Shariah and it's allowed for us to participate in Democracy in moderation and hope that the Islamic system will be used one day.

Nigeria is a kind of country formed by multiregional tribes and sects. we share difference believes ,thoughts and religion.

To practise islamic system in a country where we have 48% muslims and 32% were devotee can only bring chaos to the welfare of the that particular Nation.

So Non-islamic system of government such as the democracy practised in Nigeria is acceptable to the Muslim to abide with, since it's not christian, jews or traditional rules.....it is the rules that give everyone right to his own good wish.

It is good for Muslims to partake in politics and governance in non-Islamic system of government. They will make sure that there will be no cheating while making law. Also, they will be fighting for the interest of Muslims and non-Muslims.

It leads to injustice, nepotism, lack of conscience, and God is not part of its ideology

It is not the ideal system of government in Islam but we have to choose between two evils .i.e either to participate or not

I believe to participate is the lesser evil rather than folding our arms and let non- Muslim rule over us.

Since Nigeria is not an Islamic country, the Islamic system can't be enforced, a muslim should not be happy about it.

It is not too advisable for Muslims to subscribe to such but it is highly good if we can have an indeed Muslim who is ready to practice Sunnah and use Shariah. Since the country is multi religious, we cannot run away from this system of government but we can entrench good governance through participation

Nigeria is a multi-religious country, where Shari'ah is not in operation as a judicial system. Thus, the Islamic ruling of choosing the lesser between the two evils, will come to practice. Hence, it is preferable for Muslims to take care of their affairs through democracy than to leave it all for the non-believers.

Muslims are expected to partake in the political process as a means to influencing the system of government in the society else it will be difficult to influence the political state of the society.

As it is an evil to allow Non-Muslim to mis-rule and oppress your faith so also is voting in democratic election. Therefore, Muslim is obliged to accept the lesser evil by voting Muslim into power in Nigerian Democracy while sensitization of Muslim candidates and voters on their duties should be intensified too. Allah knows best.

Conclusion

The study has been able to dissect issues related to Islam and political participation amidst ambiguity surrounding the definitions on the term politics and divergent scriptural interpretations on the desirability or otherwise of Muslims participation in the brand of democracy practised in Nigeria. This study was conducted to show the significant impact the diverse scriptural interpretations would have on Muslim participations in the political process. The paper established that divergence in scholars' jurisprudential opinions on democracy is within the limit of Islamic jurisprudence. Also, the divergent scriptural interpretations by Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State have more positive than negative influences on Muslims participation in politics. And lastly, the varied perception of Islamic Schools of Thought on participation in the electoral process influences political communication among Islamic scholars and Muslims. This study therefore would enable stakeholders to understand the underlying factors why Muslims either participate in the electoral process or remain apolitical. It also identified political misconceptions among Muslims and the dynamics of political communication among Islamic scholars and Muslims in Ogun State.

Recommendations

Resulting from the literature and data generated from this study, the following recommendations should be considered:

Non-fundamental religious issues such as politics should not be a source of major conflict among Muslims. Muslims in different countries, whether they are in minority or in majority, should participate in the democratic process of their countries irrespective of their theological differences.

Islamic scholars should make it a point of duty to engage their followers in political education. The curricula of Islamic schools and Islamic Studies in formal schools from primary to tertiary levels should include political education. The area of convergence between Islam and Western Democracy should be emphasized among Muslims rather than areas of divergence.

References

- Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1998). State in Islam. El-Falah Publishing. Egypt.
- Auda, J. (2012). Sharia and politics: Questions for post-revolution phase.
- Cavatorta, F. (2021). Understanding the Diversity of Political Islam. Retrieved from <https://merip.org/2021/09/understanding-the-diversity-of-political-islam/>
- GRID3. (n.d). Ogun State. Retrieved from <https://grid3.gov.ng/state/about/ogun>

- Hashemi Nader (2021). Political Islam: A 40 Year Retrospective. Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/2/130>
- INEC (2020). Report of the 2019 general election. Independent National Electoral Commission. Nigeria.
- Kayode-Adedeji, D. (2012). First Nigerian newspaper, Iwe Irohin, resuscitated 140 years after it died. Premium Times Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/112218-first-nigerian-newspaper-iwe-irohin-resuscitated-140-years-after-it-died.html#:~:text=Iwe%20Irohin%2C%20Nigeria's%20first%20newspaper,Abeokuta%2C%20the%20Ogun%20State%20Capital.>
- Mawdudi, S. (1986). The Islamic way of life, The Islamic Foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester LE212E, United Kingdom.
- Oladehinde, G. J. Olayiwola, M. L. & Kehinde, P. O. (2018). Land accessibility constraints of migrants in rural border settlements in Ogun State, Nigeria. Environmental & Socio-economic Studies 6(1): 46-56. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323997715_Land_accessibility_constraints_of_migrants_in_rural_border_settlements_of_Ogun_State_Nigeria
- Olawunmi, B. (2022). APC Presidential Primaries: The Tinubu ‘Thunder’ In Abeokuta. Daily Trust Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://dailytrust.com/apc-presidential-primaries-the-tinubu-thunder-in-abeokuta>
- Olivier, R. (1994). The failure of political Islam. I. B. Taurus & Co. Ltd. 45, Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A2HY.
- Onapajo, H. (2016). Politics and the Pulpit: The Rise and Decline of Religion in Nigeria’s 2015 Presidential Elections. Journal of African Elections 112 DOI: 10.20940/JAE/2016/v15i2a6. Retrieved from <https://www.eisa.org/pdf/JAE15.2Onapajo.pdf>
- Pandya, A. & Ellen, L. (Eds). (2009). Islam and politics: Renewal and resistance in the Muslim world, Stimson Pragmatic steps Global Security, The Henry I Stimson Centre. 111 9th Street NW 12th Floor Washington DC 20036 pp 105.
- Picthall, M. M (2005). The Quran translated: message for humanity. International Committee for the Impact of the Final Prophet. 1090 Nermont Avenue, nw, Washington DC 2005, USA
- Suberu, I., & Yusuf, S. (2020). Nigerian Politics and Politics in Nigeria: A Contemplation of Islamic Political Thought in Nigeria . *Al-Milal: Journal of Religion and Thought*, 2(2), 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.46600/almilal.v2i2.73>
- Zaglul, H. (2022). Islam, Democracy, and Development. European Journal of Political Sciences Studies. DOI: 10.46827/ejps.v5i2.1377 Volume 5, Issue 2, 2022 Retrieved from <https://oapub.org/soc/index.php/EJPSS/article/view/1377/1956>