

# **The Effect of Using Cooperative Learning and Multiple Intelligences Theory on Physical Concepts Acquisition**

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## **Abstract**

This study explored the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on acquiring physical concepts of ninth grade students in Oman. The sample consisted of (50) ninth grade male students from Khaled Ben Al Waleed school in Salalah city (Oman). The students were divided into (4) groups; each one contained both factors (type of intelligence and level of previous achievement). The researcher prepared a test to measure physical concepts while the intelligences profiles of the students were found by using multiple intelligences test of *Birmingham Grid for Learning (BGfL)*. Data analyses were carried out using means, standard deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (**ANCOVA**). The study showed that there was no a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in acquiring physical concepts due to the cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence , spatial intelligence) and previous achievement ( low achievement, high achievement) but there was a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in acquiring physical concepts due to the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement.

**Keywords:** Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences, Physical Concepts, Previous Achievement.

## **1. Introduction:**

Over the last 50 years science curriculum has shown a remarkable development. That was urgent and necessary requirement to meet the challenges that have emerged after the end of the Second World War. Khataibh (2005) reported that United State of America has spent more than (2) billion U.S. in support of science and mathematics education in primary and secondary schools. The main objective was preparing future scientists and engineers.

Science curriculum should focus mainly on building and developing scientific concepts structure of the learners. Much more attention should be paid to the proper practice of science process skills. Scientific concepts and science processes skills play a vital role in helping students to solve problems and explain phenomena through the interaction between facts and concepts. Educational process is no longer limited to providing the students with knowledge and facts but also to develop their scientific thinking rapidly day by day (Zaitoon, 2000).

The interest in scientific concepts stems from the fact that they make the learning meaningful. Concepts are often settled in long-term memory of the learner, which enables learners to earn long preservation of knowledge (Mohaisen, 1999).

Nashawati (2003) suggests that learning must be directed to the development of scientific concepts because they compose essential base of the more complex cognitive behavior. Learning scientific concepts is one of the educational goals that the school should try to achieve.

Zaitoon (2001) divided the scientific concept into two parts: the first part is the word (term), phrase or a specific process while the second part is the meaning or the understanding associated with the first part (mammals: animals with breasts and her body covered with hair).

Khtaibeh (2005) reported that the scientific concepts are one of the most important aspects of learning science because of their importance in organizing any scientific experience or memorizing knowledge. .

### **1.1 Study Questions**

1. What is the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence) on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?
2. What is the effect of cooperative learning group division based on previous achievement (low achievement, high achievement) on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?
3. What is the effect of the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it suggests a new standard for the division of cooperative learning groups based on the theory of multiple intelligences. In the proposed standard, the students in each group are strong and distinguished in a specific intelligence while the combination of intelligence for each learner may completely differs from the other learners in the same group. This offers a novel approach to an integrated homogeneous groups in terms of distinguished intelligence and non-homogeneous in terms of the overall

combination of the intelligence. It therefore suggests a new trend in cooperative learning can be called smart cooperative learning or intelligent cooperative learning.

The use of the theory of multiple intelligences in the cooperative learning offer a new insight into the tasks that are assigned to students, where each student has a task or multiple tasks fit with the profile of intelligence he has. The student will be better able to accomplish the task and therefore possessing a feeling of success and achievement. This is completely consistent with what Gardner said "It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. We are all so different largely because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world" (Armstrong, 2009:5).

#### **1.4 Study Hypotheses**

1. There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence , spatial intelligence).

2. There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on previous achievement (low achievement, high achievement).

3. There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement.

#### **1.5 Study Limitations**

The generalization of the findings of this study will be limited by:

- Sample of male students in the ninth grade in the province of Dhofar.
- Two chapters of science textbook of ninth-grade in Oman ( eclectic charge & energy transformation)
- Using cooperative learning strategy: "Think-Pair-Share", which means (think of your own and then share your answers with your partner and then share your answers with the class as a whole).
- The validity and reliability of instruments used in the study.
- Division of cooperative learning groups according to two kinds of intelligences (logical-mathematical intelligence, visual spatial intelligence) and on previous achievement (low achievement, high achievement).

#### **1.6 Operational Definitions of Study's Terminology**

This study involved a set of terms: theory of multiple intelligences (which included logical mathematical intelligence and visual spatial intelligence), academic achievement, and scientific thinking skills.

**Theory of Multiple Intelligences:** The theory developed was in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner. The theory challenged traditional beliefs in the fields of education and cognitive science. According to this theory, human beings have eight different kinds of intelligence that reflect different ways of interacting with the world. Each person has a unique combination, or profile. Although we have all eight intelligences, no two individuals have them in the same exact configuration.

**The Logical Mathematical Intelligence:** The capacity to understand the underlying principles of some kind of causal system, the way a scientist or a logician does; or to

manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations, the way a mathematician does. In this study, logical-mathematical intelligence is measured by the test of multiple intelligences.

**Spatial intelligence:** The ability to represent the spatial world internally in your mind, the way a sailor or airplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. Spatial intelligence can be used in the arts or in the sciences. In this study, spatial intelligence is measured by the test of multiple intelligences.

**Previous academic achievement:** Is the outcome that the student can access to while achieving the educational goal, and it is measured by student mark in science in the previous academic year preceding the study. Previous academic achievement has been divided into two categories:

High achievement category, which includes marks from 80% - 100%

Low achievement category, which includes marks from 50% - 70%.

### **Physical Concepts Acquisition:**

It is defined as an individual's ability to configure coherent format of the basic and secondary concepts and to give a clear perception of the physical concepts in terms of definition, characteristics and distinguishing them from other concepts besides the relations between them. Also it reflects the degree to which the individual digest the new knowledge. Acquiring physical concepts will be measured by the physical concepts test prepared by the researcher.

## **2.1 Theoretical Literature**

**2.1.1 Cooperative Learning:** Vygotsky (1978) suggested that people do not learn in isolation from others, they naturally learn and work cooperatively throughout their lives. Cooperative learning is defined differently by different researchers and theorists. Vygotsky, for example views cooperative learning as a part of a process leading to the social construction of knowledge. Christison (1990) defined cooperative learning as a strategy used to increase the descriptive motivation and attention to help students develop a positive concept of themselves and the other students, while Oslen and Kagan (1992) saw cooperative learning as a learning activity in which learning is dependent on the social composition of the mutual information between learners in groups so that each learner is responsible for his learning.

Lee (1990) considers cooperative learning as a group working together to perform a task or skill to make any attempt to learn and to achieve educational goals in common, while Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec (1993) defined cooperative learning as the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning.

Johnson and Johnson Model (1999) includes five criteria that define true cooperative learning groups:

- **Positive interdependence:** members understand that they must learn together to accomplish the goal; they need each other for support, explanations, and guidance.
- **Individual accountability:** the performance of each group member is assessed against a standard, and members are held responsible for their contribution to achieving goals.
- **Face-to-face interaction:** students interact face-to-face and close together, not across the room.
- **Group processing:** groups reflect on their collaborative efforts and decide on ways to improve effectiveness.
- **Development of small- group interpersonal skills:** these skills, such as giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, and involving every member, are necessary for effective

group functioning. They must be taught and practiced before the groups tackle a learning task.

### **2.1.2. Multiple Intelligences: Gardner's Theory**

Howard Gardner (1983) proposed a new view of intelligence that is rapidly being incorporated in school curricula. In his Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Gardner expanded the concept of intelligence to also include areas such as music, spatial relations, and interpersonal knowledge in addition to mathematical and linguistic ability.

Gardner defines intelligence as “the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting” (Gardner & Hatch, 1989:4). Using biological as well as cultural research, he formulated a list of seven intelligences. This new outlook on intelligence differs greatly from the traditional view which usually recognizes only two intelligences, verbal and computational.

Gardner set up certain basic “tests” that each intelligence had to meet to be considered a full-fledged intelligence not simply a talent, skill, or aptitude. The criteria he used include the following factors:

- Potential isolation by brain damage.
- The existence of savants, prodigies and other exceptional individuals.
- An identifiable core operation or set of operations.
- A distinctive development history, along with a definable set of 'end-state' performances.
- An evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility.
- Support from experimental psychological tasks.
- Support from psychometric findings.
- Susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system. (Armstrong, 2009)

Howard Gardner initially formulated a list of seven intelligences. His listing was provisional. The first two have been typically valued in schools; the next three are usually associated with the arts; and the final two are what Howard Gardner called 'personal intelligences' (Gardner 1999: 41-43).

**Linguistic intelligence** involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

**Logical-mathematical intelligence** consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

**Musical intelligence** involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

**Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

**Spatial intelligence** involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

**Interpersonal intelligence** is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence.

**Intrapersonal intelligence** entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives.

### **2.1.3 Scientific concepts:**

Scientific concept as a term has multiple definitions. Abdul Salam (2001) defined it as an abstract formulation of common characteristics among a group of materials, facts or attitudes and is usually given a name, a word or a title, while Alani (1996) defined it as a logical relationship between relevant terms. Qutami (1988) said it is a mental idea trying to connect two scientific facts or more and this concept usually comes as a result of some categorizations or classifications based on many observations.

The scientific concepts are considered as one of the most important outcomes of learning process and by which the scientific knowledge can be organized to be meaningful. Concepts are the elements that direct and organize the new scientific knowledge presented in the classroom or the lab. The physical concept is the basic building block in teaching physics; it is the cognitive foundation of the learner. Brunner believed that learning concepts is very importance because it reduces the complexity of the environment as it summarizes and classifies what is in the environment of things or situations, besides; it reduces the need to re-learn when facing any new knowledge, and allows management and connectivity between groups of objects and events (Salama, 2004).

## **2.2 Previous related studies**

Obaidat (2000) held study aimed to investigate the effect of using cooperative learning and conceptual map in understanding concepts in science, compared to the traditional way. Study sample consisted of (92) students from the seventh grade in Jordan. The study sample was divided randomly into two experimental sections (male section and female section) examined the method of conceptual maps and cooperative learning and two sections (male section and female section) examined the traditional method. Conceptual understanding was measured by the scientific concepts test prepared by researcher. The study showed that there was statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in understanding the concepts in favor of the experimental group.

Saadi (2004) conducted a study aimed to investigate the effect of training students on cooperative learning skills, in their understanding of physical concepts and their ability to think scientifically, also aimed to determine whether the impact of training varies depending on the level of achievement. The study sample consisted of 56 female students from the tenth grade of Amman school. To measure the effectiveness of training on cooperative learning skills, compared to the learning traditional group working (without training in cooperative learning skills), the researcher prepared the test of scientific concepts. To answer the study questions the researcher used the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The study showed that the students who got training in cooperative learning skills were better than the students who

worked as group work without training on cooperative learning skills in understanding the scientific concepts. The study also showed that the students who got training in cooperative learning skills were better than the students who worked as group work without training on cooperative learning skills in, scientific thinking.

Swailmeen (2005) conducted a study aimed to investigate the effect of teaching physics using cooperative learning and problem-solving in alternating the physics concepts and acquiring science process skills of industrial education students. The study sample consisted of two experimental groups and one control group. The results showed a statistically significant difference between the percents of alternative concepts among students in the experimental groups (cooperative learning, problem solving) and the control group for the benefit of the two experimental groups. The results also showed a statistically significant difference between the performance of the two experimental groups (cooperative learning, problem solving) and the performance of the control group for the benefit of the two experimental groups, in the following areas: basic science process skills, integrated science process skills, and the total score in the test of science thinking.

### **2.2.2 Studies on multiple intelligences in Science and in other subjects**

Erb (1996) Conducted a study aimed to increase students' sense of responsibility for learning in biology by means of activities based on the theory of multiple intelligences and activities based on cooperative learning. The study was conducted in Illinois in the United States of America. The students answered the questionnaire in addition to analyzing the teacher's record and student's record. The study results showed an increase in students to take responsibility for their learning and reduce undesirable behaviors in the classroom as a result of the use of cooperative learning method and the theory of multiple intelligences.

Davis (2004) held a study aimed to investigate the effect of using the theory of multiple intelligences to increase the academic achievement of fourth grade students in the state of South Carolina in the United States of America. The researcher used the theory of multiple intelligences and learning based on the brain to develop (IMPACT) strategy. The study was conducted on one group which consisted of (20) students. A pre-test was given, then the treatment based on (IMPACT) strategy was applied and students were then given the post-test to determine the effectiveness of this strategy. The results showed that 3 of the learning outcomes out of 6 were achieved as the study showed significant improvement in morale behavior, student achievement, and self-esteem.

Al Meqbali (2007) conducted a study aimed to investigate the impact of teaching strategies based on the theory of multiple intelligences in student achievement and mathematical thinking. The study sample consisted of (60) students from the tenth grade in the Sultanate of Oman. The sample of the study was divided into two groups: the first one is the experimental group which consisted of (30) students taught according to the strategies of multiple intelligences while the control group consisted of (30) students taught by traditional way. To analyze the data, the researcher used averages, standard deviations and t-test. Study has shown the existence of statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) among the middle-grades students in the application of academic achievement post test due to the teaching strategies, and for the benefit of students who have studied by using of multiple intelligences strategies.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter describes the method and procedures that were followed in this study. It includes a description of study sample, instruments, and procedures for validity and reliability. Also it deals with a description of the design, and the statistical treatments used in data analysis.

### **3.1 The study sample:**

The sample of this study consisted of (169) ninth grade students of Khalid Bin Al Waleed school (Salalah, Oman) in the academic year 2009 – 2010. The students were divided into four groups. To identify students who represent the four groups, a test of multiple intelligences was applied first to all students. In the light of the results, students who had excellence and superiority in the logical-mathematical intelligence and visual spatial intelligence were selected. Then the students distributed according to the variable of previous academic achievement into two categories, the first one is the high achievement category which includes students who got a score "A" and "B" in science in the eighth grade, and the second category represents the low achievement students who got a score "D" in science in the eighth grade. Note that the key to the interpretation of scores given by the school was as follows

The following criteria were used to identify students who excelled in logical-mathematical intelligence :

- The students must score  $\geq 20$  in logical-mathematical intelligence.
- Logical-mathematical intelligence should be among the three strongest intelligences in student intelligences profile.
- The visual intelligence should not be among the three strongest intelligences in student intelligences profile.

And the following criteria were used to identify students who excelled in spatial intelligence:

- The students must score  $\geq 20$  in visual intelligence.
- Visual intelligence should be among the three strongest intelligences in student intelligences profile.
- The logical-mathematical intelligence should not be among the three strongest intelligences in student intelligences profile.

Thus, the study sample was divided into four groups as shown in Table (1)

All groups were taught by using cooperative learning and with the same strategy "Think-Pair-Share."

### 3.2 Study Instruments:

Multiple Intelligences Academic Achievement	Logical-mathematical intelligence	Spatial intelligence	Total
High Achievement	13	13	26
Low Achievement	11	13	24
Total	24	26	50

The following instruments were used in this study :

**3.2.1 Multiple Intelligences survey instrument.** A tool that has been obtained from Birmingham Education Network

[http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources\\_ftp/client\\_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple\\_int/questions/questions.cfm?lang=ar](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/questions/questions.cfm?lang=ar)

A site overseen by the Birmingham Education Network, a network describes itself as the largest source of online learning resources in the United Kingdom .This survey includes (40) paragraphs (5 paragraphs for each intelligence of the eight intelligences). Individuals assess their self in each paragraph according to a scale ranges from (0-5). The researcher added some modifications to the translation and then it was displayed in its initial stage on a panel of (5) specialties in educational psychology, linguistics, translation, assessment and evaluation and Arabic language.

### 3.2.2 Test of scientific concepts.

The researcher prepared the test of scientific concepts to measure the scientific concepts contained in the third unit of "electricity and technical applications." The unit consists of two chapters, the first is about electric charge and the second is about electrical energy and its transformations. The test in its initial form consisted of (50) paragraph of multiple-choices type. To achieve the credibility of the test it was displayed in its initial stage on a panel of 10 experts from university professors in the disciplines of educational science curricula, teaching methods, besides middle school science teachers and Arabic language teachers. After handing the test back, their notes were studied and the alterations were made for some paragraphs. Using Cooper equation, the degree of agreement was found (81%). Darwaza (1997) indicated that the degree of agreement is acceptable if the coefficients exceeded (75%).

Reliability coefficient was calculated for the test using the Corder - Richardson (K, R - 20) equation and found (0.86). The test consisted of 45 paragraphs in its final form after it was 50. It was given one mark for correct answer and zero mark for the wrong answer, so that the maximum score for the test (45), while the minimum is 0.

### 3.3 Study Design and Variables:

Independent variables:

- Types of intelligences and includes two levels (logical-mathematical intelligence and visual spatial intelligence).
- Previous achievement and includes two levels (the previous low achievement and the previous high achievement).

Dependent variable :

- Acquiring of scientific concepts.

A factorial design with two treatments (  $CRF_{2 \times 2}$ ) has been used. The following table illustrates this design:

Multiple Intelligences Previous Achievement	Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	Spatial Intelligence
Previous Low Achievement	G <sub>1</sub>	G <sub>2</sub>
Previous High Achievement	G <sub>3</sub>	G <sub>4</sub>

G<sub>1</sub> : Cooperative learning group which was divided according to the logical-mathematical intelligence and the previous high achievement

G<sub>2</sub> : Cooperative learning group which was divided according to the visual spatial intelligence and the previous high achievement

G<sub>3</sub> : Cooperative learning group which was divided according to the logical-mathematical intelligence and previous low achievement

G<sub>4</sub> : Cooperative learning group which was divided according to the visual spatial intelligence and previous low achievement

### Study Design

G<sub>1</sub> X<sub>1</sub> O<sub>1</sub>

G<sub>2</sub> X<sub>2</sub> O<sub>1</sub>

G<sub>3</sub> X<sub>3</sub> O<sub>1</sub>

G<sub>4</sub> X<sub>4</sub> O<sub>1</sub>

**O<sub>1</sub>**: Performance on the post test of scientific concepts.

**X<sub>1</sub>**: Experimental treatment for the 1st group (logical-mathematical intelligence and the previous high achievement)

**X<sub>2</sub>**: Experimental treatment for the 2nd group (visual spatial intelligence and the previous high achievement)

**X<sub>3</sub>**: Experimental treatment for the 3rd group (logical-mathematical intelligence and previous low achievement)

**X<sub>4</sub>**: Experimental treatment for the 4th group (visual spatial intelligence and previous low achievement),

**3.4 Statistical Treatment:** Data analyses were carried out using means, standard deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

#### 4. Results

This study aimed to investigate the effect of cooperative learning groups divided according to the theory of multiple intelligences and previous achievement in the acquiring of scientific concepts of ninth grade students in Oman. This part displays the results of the study and the answers for each question of the study.

**4.1. First Question:** What is the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?

The following hypothesis emerged from this question:

There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence).

To answer this question the means and standard deviations was obtained and explained in table (3).

Achievement Multiple Intelligences	Achievement in the previous requirements				physical concepts				All	
	H. Achievement		L. Achievement		H. Achievement		L. Achievement		Means	S. D
	Means	S. D	Means	S. D	Means	S. D	Means	S. D		
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	29.3	2.04	28.6	1.49	24.8	7.06	20.8	8.07	22.9	7.69
Spatial Intelligence	29.4	2.22	26.1	1.96	30.9	7.35	16.1	3.43	23.5	9.43
All	29.4	2.21	26.8	2.10	27.8	7.73	18.2	6.40	23.2	8.55

Maximum score for post-test is (45).

According to the post test of physical concepts, there is a convergence in the mean of the group of logical-mathematical intelligence (22.9) and visual spatial intelligence (23.5). But there is a considerable variation in the mean of the group of logical-mathematical intelligence and high achievement (24.8) and visual spatial intelligence and high achievement (30.9).

To find out whether these differences of physical concepts test is statistically significance, an analysis of covariance has been associated (ANCOVA). Table (4) shows the results of this analysis.

Table (4) analysis of covariance (**Two Way ANCOVA**)

Achievement Multiple Intelligences	Achievement in the previous requirements				physical concepts				All	
	H. Achievement		L. Achievement		H. Achievement		L. Achievement		Means	S. D
	Means	S. D	Means	S. D	Means	S. D	Means	S. D		
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	29.3	2.04	28.6	1.49	24.8	7.06	20.8	8.07	22.9	7.69
Spatial Intelligence	29.4	2.22	26.1	1.96	30.9	7.35	16.1	3.43	23.5	9.43
All	29.4	2.21	26.8	2.10	27.8	7.73	18.2	6.40	23.2	8.55

Table (4) explains that there is no statistically significant difference at a level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), where the value concerning the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence is (0.329). The result means that the first null hypothesis is accepted, which states that :there is no

statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence , spatial intelligence).

**4.2 Second Question:** What is the effect of cooperative learning group division based on previous achievement (low achievement, high achievement) on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?

The following hypothesis emerged from this question:

There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on previous achievement ( low achievement, high achievement).

Table (4) explains that there is no statistically significant difference at a level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), where the value concerning the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory (logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence is (0.168). The result means that the second null hypothesis is accepted.

**4.3. Third Question:** What is the effect of the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman?

The following hypothesis emerged from this question:

There is no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement.

Table (4) shows that there is a statistical significance at a level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), where the value concerning the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on physical concepts acquisition is (0.017).

The result means that the third null hypothesis is rejected and accepting the alternative hypothesis, which states that There is a statistical significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement.

To find out the nature of this interaction we refer to table (5).

Table (5): Adjusted averages for the members of the study in the acquiring of scientific concepts

Multiple Intelligences Previous Achievement	Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	Spatial Intelligence
low achievement	21.3	17.0
high achievement	23.6	30.6

From Table (5), the results indicate that there is an interaction between low achievement and both logical-mathematical intelligence and spatial intelligence in the acquiring of scientific concepts, where the average of the low achievement and logical-mathematical intelligence group is (21.3) and average of the low achievement and spatial Intelligence group is (17.0). Also there is an interaction between high achievement and

both logical-mathematical intelligence and spatial intelligence in the acquiring of scientific concepts, where the average of the high achievement and logical-mathematical intelligence group is (23.6) and the average of the high achievement and spatial Intelligence group is (30.6).

Table (5) also shows that the high achievement group through the interaction with logical-mathematical intelligence and spatial intelligence has benefited more than the low achievement in the acquiring of scientific concepts, where the difference between the averages of the two groups of previous achievement is (7.0) for the benefit of high achievement and spatial Intelligence group.

## **5. Discussion and Recommendations**

The main question of this study was: What is the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement on physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students in Oman. Three sub-questions were derived from the main question and three null hypotheses were examined. The results of the study are discussed as follows:

### **5.1 Discussion the results of the first study hypothesis:**

The results in Table (4) showed that there is no statistical significance difference at a level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) on scientific concepts acquisition of ninth grade students due to the division of cooperative learning groups according to the theory of multiple intelligences (logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence), and this result might be attributed to the following:

The treatment did not include a program to teach science by using strategies of multiple intelligences in such a way that each group is taught by strategies appropriate to their multiple intelligences profiles. For example the category of visual spatial intelligence should be provided by some strategies such as (visual imagination, hints color, a graphic idea or graphic signs) in order to acquire better the physical concepts.

Also the group of mathematical intelligences haven't been provided by some strategies proper to their profiles, so this is may be the reason why there is no statistical significance difference at a level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) on scientific concepts acquisition of ninth grade students. And because the researcher does not find a similar study, so this result remains alone in its field.

### **5.2 Discussion the result of the second hypothesis:**

Table (4) showed that there is no statistical significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the cooperative learning group division based on previous achievement ( low achievement, high achievement), and this result might be attributed to the following:

Homogeneity of the groups (in terms of achievement) may have a negative impact on social interaction within the single group especially for low achievement groups, who got low score in the test of physical concepts. This negative impact was clear on the motivation of low achievement groups' students especially when the teachers were supervising the students of low achievement groups in solving problems and worksheets. Teachers also noted that the commitment of members of low achievement groups in practicing the social skills (speaking in a quiet voice, Conversational call by name, summarizing skill) was very weak compared to high achievement groups members who showed a great commitment to these skills, which could be the reason to reduce the effectiveness of cooperative learning for members of low achievement. However, the researcher does not find a similar study to support or deny this result so this result remains alone in its field.

### **5.3 Discussion the result of the third hypothesis:**

Table (4) showed that There is a statistical significant difference at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in physical concepts acquisition of ninth grade students attributed to the interaction between cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory and previous achievement.

The results showed that logical-mathematical intelligences group interacts with the low and with high previous achievement, where the difference between the averages of the two groups in the post test of physical concepts is (4.0) for the benefit of high achievement group. The results also showed that the visual spatial intelligence interacts with low and high previous achievement, where the difference between the averages of the two groups in the post test of physical concepts is (14.8) for the benefit of high achievement group. The result shows that the high achievement group has benefited more than low achievement group, and this result confirms that the interaction within the high achievement group was higher and more effective than the interaction within the low achievement group. This may be attributed to the positive interdependence which was strong and clear in the high achievement group students who were enthusiastic and serious in solving worksheets and completing all the tasks. This result emphasizes the importance of social skills to build an effective level of cooperation which may led to exploratory interactive patterns (especially, the students within each group have similar intelligences profiles and thus they look consistent in the way they think and the way they assess things). However, the researcher does not find a similar study to support or deny this result, so this result remains alone in its field.

### **5.4 Recommendation**

In the light of the findings, the study recommended the educators to use multiple intelligences theory in cooperative learning as new method in dividing the groups. The study also recommended the researchers to explore the effect of cooperative learning group division based on multiple intelligences theory on many variables in science and other fields.

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# **Effects of Climate Change on Cassava Productivity in Ilesha – East Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

This paper reviews the effects of climate change on cassava productivity in Ilesha – East Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 117 cassava farmers. The data were obtained from the primary source with the aid of both structured questionnaires and interview schedule and analysed using the descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentage and mean and the regression model. The study identified that there is no significant relationship between the recent effects of climatic variability and the cassava yield in the study area, this was shown by the result of regression analysis and it indicates that the quantity of cassava harvested by the farmers does not vary with the current effects of climate change though there are may be other factors that show negative impacts on cassava productivity like cassava varieties, soil nutrients, credit facilities, pests and diseases and some other socio- economic characteristics. But, many studies conducted on effects of climate change in some states in Nigeria and other countries revealed that in the long run climatic variability will show serious effects on the agricultural sector. The advice is that, with the present little effects coping measures should be developed as a matter of urgency for adaptability and sustainability of the agricultural sector, the mainstay of Nigerian economy.

**Keywords:** Climate change, Cassava, production

## Introduction

Basically, climatic condition as predetermined by the weather pattern and its elements over a long period of between 30 to 40 years is known as *climate*. This is different from weather which is the atmospheric condition within a very short period of time of at most two weeks. The classical period as determined by the World Meteorological Organization is 30 years during which a number of changes in the variables that determine the predominant climatic pattern in the regions are known. The climatic elements include rainfall, temperature, sunshine intensity, relative humidity, atmospheric pressure, cloud cover, snow, dew, frost and wind.

Generally, climate change refers to a long term alterations in global weather patterns like rises in temperature over time, rainfall fluctuation and storm activity evolved from the potential consequences of the greenhouse effects and continuous deforestation(). In recent usage, in the context of environmental policy the term *climate change* often refers only to changes in modern climate including the rise in average surface temperature known as global warming. Of course, climate is constantly changing and the signal which indicates that the alterations are occurring can be evaluated over a range of temporal and spatial scales. We can consider climate to be an integration of complex weather conditions averaged over a significant area of the earth expressed in terms of both the mean of weather and properties such as temperature, radiation, atmospheric pressure, wind, humidity, rainfall and cloudiness amongst others and the distribution or range of variation of these properties usually calculated over a period of 30 years. As the frequency and magnitude of seemingly unremarkable events change, such as rainstorms, the mean and distribution that characterize a particular climate will start to change. Therefore, climate as defined is influenced by events occurring over periods of time through global processes taking centuries. The consequences of changes may be as important as those that arise due to variations in mean climatic variables (Hulme, et al 1999, Carnell and Senior, 1998).

The amount of rainfall, intensity and distribution are characteristics affected by climate change and the certainties surrounding the global warming arguments have reflected in diverse studies on climate change in Nigeria (Rao, 2006 and Adefolalu, 2006). Climate change has been a topic of recent interest by the scientists and the researchers on this field. The two major factors affecting crop yield and productivity are weather condition and soil nutrient Wright, (1993), thus to improve the production of any crop it is rationale to understand the average weather conditions of such area that is the climatic parameters such as rainfall, temperature, relative humidity, sunlight etc that affect the agricultural sector (Fasola, 1986). The objectives of the study are to examine the effects of climate change on cassava productivity and identify ways by which farmers can increase their productivity when there is ambient change in climate in the study area.

Climate change is one of the most serious threats to Nigeria agricultural sector and food security because of its sensitivity and vulnerability to high ambient temperature and rainfall fluctuations. For instance, higher temperatures lower the yield of desirable crops while encouraging weeds and pests' proliferation and changes in precipitation patterns increase the likelihood of short-run crop failure and long run production declines, thus its variability creates a huge challenge for food production (Deutsche Bank Research, 2009). Climate change drive extreme weather events such as hurricanes and floods and the increased risks of droughts and floods due to rising temperature, crops yield losses are imminent (Deutsche Bank Research, 2009). Global and regional climate changes are affecting all economic sectors to some degrees but the agricultural sector is perhaps the most sensitive and vulnerable, because agricultural production remains very dependent on climatic resources. However, according to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007) report the earth is likely to warm by 0.2°C per decade for the next two decades and to rise between

0.6°C and 4.0°C by the end of the century depending on future emissions, as a result, climate variability will impact food production in several ways.

Cassava as a crop originated from South America and it's extensively propagated as an annual crop in the tropical and sub tropical regions for its edible starchy tuber as root. It is an annual crop that may often be left longer than 12 months and usually planted as a sole crop or in combination with other crops. Production is all year round activity and it does well in a warm, moist climate. Cassava is very tolerant and has the ability to grow on marginal land where other food crops cannot grow well, but for its highly yield and productivity moderate climatic condition and best soil properties like a light, sandy loam soil of medium fertility and good aerations or drainage are all crucial Akanbi and Olabode, (2004) . Hence, extreme weather conditions such as prolonged drought and excessive amount of rainfall that leads into flood may be detrimental to cassava outputs.

### **Methodology**

The study was undertaken in Ilesha East Local Government Area of Osun State. The Local Government Area consists of four (4) major communities where cassava farmers are being dominated. From the four villages 117 cassava farmers were selected using simple random sampling procedure and structure questionnaires was employed for the collection of the primary data used for the analysis. Also descriptive statistics such frequency table, mean, and percentages were used to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents while regression analysis was run to determine the effect of climate change on cassava productivity of the farmers in the study area. The regression model was implicitly specified as

$$AC_1 = \beta + \alpha \sum x + e$$

where,

AC= Revenue

X<sub>1</sub>= Age

X<sub>2</sub>= Sex

X<sub>3</sub>= Education

X<sub>4</sub>= Family Size

X<sub>5</sub>= Main Occupation

X<sub>6</sub>= Member of social organisation

X<sub>7</sub>= Source of Loan

X<sub>8</sub> = Amount of loan quantity of cassava (kg)

X<sub>10</sub> = Price of cassava (N)

X<sub>11</sub> = Income realization

U<sub>e</sub> = Error term

## Result and Discussion

### Result of Socio Economic Characteristics

The result of social- economic analysis represented on Table 1 shows the age, sex, marital status, education level, family size, farming experience, occupation distribution of the respondents. The age distribution revealed that the mean age is 44.83 years and it implies that majority farmers are young and still within their useful ages. It also shows that 75.2% of the farmers were male while the rest percentage (24.8%) was female; it means that males are involved in cassava farming than their female counterparts. A large percentage (64.1%) of the cassava farmers were married, this may reduce the cost of hired labour if the farmers engage their families in the activities on the farm. Most (96.5%) of the respondents have family size ranges between 0- 10, it implies that many of them have responsibility to discharge.

The result of the farming experience shows that 52.3% of the farmers had more than 10years experience and only 35% of farmers are practising cassava farming as their major occupations and almost half (46.2%) of the farmers rely mainly on their personal savings for cassava production. Also very few of them belong to one or the other association.

**Table 1: Distribution by Socio Economic Characteristics**

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<u>Socio economic variables</u>	<u>Frequency (No = 117)</u>	<u>Percentage(%)</u>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	88	75.2
Female	29	24.8
<b>Age</b>		
<20	5	4
21-40	43	37
41-60	43	37
>60	26	22
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	75	64.1
Single	10	19.9
Widowed	23	10.3
Divorce	3	2.6
Separated	4	3.4
<b>Major Occupation</b>		

Yes	41	35.0
No	76	65.0
<b>Level of education</b>		
Primary	70	6.0
SSCE	13	11.0
Tertiary	18	15.4
Others	79	<b>67.6</b>
<b>Year of Experience</b>		
1-10	61	52.3
11-20	43	36.4
>20	13	11.3
<b>Association</b>		
Yes	35	29.9
No	82	70.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100</b>

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Source: Field survey, 2010

### **Result of Cassava Production and Climate Change Effects**

Table 2 indicates the features of cassava production and climate change effects in the study area. It shows that 30.2% of the farmers produce less than 1000kg/ha of cassava, 22.3% of farmers produce between 1000- 2000kg/ha while 26.1% of the farmers produce greater than 4000kg/ha of cassava tuber. The result also revealed that 25.9% of the farmers earned greater than ₦60,000: 00 per production period which means that ¼ of the cassava producers in the study area gained higher profit and also 26.7% of the farmers earned ₦10, 000:00 as revenue. Based on the effects of climate changes on cassava yield and productivity in the study area, about half (50) % of the respondents agreed that low sunlight can cause reduction in productivity, some 38.5% believed that it can lead to cassava leaves discolouration while little (11.1%) of them said that low sunlight amount can cause low output. Again, majority of the farmers (96.5%) agreed that rainfall distribution has effect which can be negative or positive on the cassava output while very few (3.5%) do not agree that climate change can lead to pest infestation while the rest (57.8%) do not agree that it can lead to pest infestation.

**Table 2: Distribution by cassava production and climate change effects**

<b>Cassava production and climate change effects</b>	<b>Frequency (No = 117 )</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
<b>Farm accessibility</b>		
Near	50	42.7
Far	67	57.3
<b>Source of water</b>		
Rainfall	108	92.3
Irrigation	9	7.7
<b>Sunlight Effect</b>		
Reduction in productivity	59	50.1
Reduction in size	13	11.1
Leaves Discolouration	45	38.5
<b>Rainfall effect</b>		
Yes	105	96.5
No	12	3.5
<b>Pest infestation due to Climate Change</b>		
Yes	49	50.4
No	68	57.8
<b>Source of loan</b>		
Personal saving	54	46.2
Relative	6	5.1
Cooperative	10	8.5
NACB	1	0.9
Commercial bank	1	0.9
Money lender	2	1.8

Others	43	36.8
<b>Quantity of Cassava</b>		
<1000	35	30.2
1000-2000	26	22.3
2000-3000	17	14.6
3000-4000	10	8.54
>4000	31	26.1
<b>Revenue Earned</b>		
10,000	31	26.7
10,000-20,000	13	11.2
20,000-40,000	29	25.0
40,000-60,000	13	11.2
>60,000	31	25.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100</b>

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Source: Field survey, 2010

### **Result of Logit Regression Analysis**

Based on the result the coefficients of age, sex, family size, member of social association, quantity of cassava, price of cassava and income realization were not statistically significant at all levels of significance meaning that the present of each of the variables has on impact on the cassava production level and the climate change which further implies that most of these variables are not relevant in the model. But, the coefficients of educational status and that of the amount of loan obtained were significant at 10% respectively while the main occupation and source of loan were also significant at 1% and 5% levels and it shows that their inclusion in the model is of importance which means that they served as the influence variables in the analysis. Again, the result revealed that the Chi-square value was 45.023 with the log-likelihood value of -94.618.

**Table 3: Result of Logit Regression Analysis**

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Ratio	Significance Level	Mean
Constant	0.868	0.204	18.05	0.000	2.38
Age	0.017	0.017	0.983	0.309	44.83
Sex	-0.046	0.641	0.955	0.943	0.24
Education	1.462	0.408	4.314	0.000***	11.76
Family size	-0.053	0.039	0.943	0.138	2.73
Main occupation	1.774	0.574	0.680	0.002*	0.060
Association	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.994	0.070
Source of loan	0.100	0.520	0.905	0.055**	1.000
Loan obtained	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.009*	1.871
Quantity of cassava	-0.000	0.000	1.000	0.165	19031.9
Price of cassava	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.422	52387.1
Income realization	0.34	0.000	1.000	0.881	0.500

Source: Field survey, 2010

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was basically focused on the effects of climate change on cassava productivity in Ilesha- East L.G.A, Osun state, Nigeria. 117 respondents were randomly selected and interviewed with the aid of well structured questionnaires to gather all the necessary information for this research. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square and logit regression model and at the end of the analysis, it was found that quantity of cassava produced has negative relationship with the effect of climate change. It means that currently, the effects of climatic variability show no or little impact on cassava yield and productivity and it can also be concluded that as years pass by the effects of climate change and global warming can be obviously seen on the most agricultural products especially in the developing countries due to their vulnerability. In spite of this, the following recommendations were suggested in order to cope with future effects of climate change and to meet the demand of cassava with ever increasingly population in Nigeria: the farmers should go back to the cultural farming practices to conserve the soil water and cool down the ambient temperature that affects the growth of crops on the farm, improved varieties of cassava that very tolerant and resistant to the effects drought and flood as the case may be should be available for the farmers and lastly irrigation scheme for artificial water supply must be constructed by the federal government for the farmers to use during the dry season.

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# **Election Crisis, Liberal Democracy and National Security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

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## **Abstract**

The paper analysed the recurring election crisis under liberal democratic system and the threat it poses to national security in Nigeria. One of the major instruments for selecting political officeholders is election. It serves as means of ensuring accountability and mobilization of the citizenry for political participation. Yet, elections in Nigeria have always been characterized by mal-practices such as: election rigging, snatching and stuffing of ballot boxes, political intimidation and assassination prior to, during and after elections. This has often brought unpopular governments to power with the resultant legitimacy crisis, breakdown of law and order and general threat to security. The paper with the use of structure agency theory, argued that elections in which "the winner takes all" is unsuitable for a plural society like Nigeria. Adaptation of the liberal democratic system to suit the country's cultural values and peculiarities should lay the basis for people centered development strategies that will empower them to be active participants in policy making and implementation, under a political climate characterized by the rule of law and constitutionalism. Unless these categorical steps are taken, the country may experience another democratic breakdown that will spell doom for the nation-state.

**Keywords:** Election, Democracy, Development and Security.

## **Introduction**

Elections are critical aspects of the democratic framework for governing modern political societies. They serve as instrument of political choice, mobilization and accountability. In the context of liberal democracy that has become the most popular form of democracy in a unipolar world, elections are to facilitate the smooth transition from one civilian administration to the other and help in legitimizing sitting governments.

In a democratic system where elections are devoid of crisis, long term disputes or political violence, are amicably resolved. Such system enhances the prospect for political stability, peace, development and continuity in governance. But where elections are characterized by violence, thuggery, intimidation, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and other forms of electoral malpractices, they bring to question the very essence of democracy and compromise the nation's security.

One of the principal functions of the modern state is that of protecting the territorial integrity of the state, lives and property of its citizenry and upliftment of the human condition. The promotion of human security has become the central focus of the new development paradigm because building of arms and ammunitions do not bring peace, security and political stability. Eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases through sustainable development programmes, hold the key to an enduring national security. Thus, a country that invests heavily on human security may not have to spend much money and efforts in fighting crimes like: kidnapping, human trafficking, bombing, student unrest, political assassination, etc.

The Nigerian experience with general elections has shown that the political elite has not fully come to terms with the referents of elections for democratic sustenance and national security. More often than not, the elite has failed to play by the rules of competitive electoral politics which prioritizes politics of tolerance, conflict and consensus, bargaining and compromise. They see elections as warfare, characterized by gangsterism and political disorder. Political parties which organize for elections are also, like armband of men and women going to war, where there must be victors and the vanquished. Elections have become warfare, where it is a sin to lose. This dominant pattern of elections and electioneering threatens to tear the nation apart and put its tenuous peace at great risks.

The 2011 general elections in Nigeria has come and gone but its aftermath threatens the very existence of the Nigerian state. The Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) has come out openly to reject the results of the presidential elections which it alleged its candidate, retired General Buhari won. While, the case was in court, political jobbers and miscreants seized the opportunity to create a state of insecurity in the country through the spate of bombing and communal violence in several parts of the north. The political uncertainties in the country creates avenues for aggrieved groups to revive their hitherto latent agitations for all manner of things. The most violent of them being the spate of bombing by the Boko Haram sect!

In the light of the above, the paper analyzed the role of election crisis in the Nigeria's democratic experience since the return to civil rule in 1999 and the insecurity it spawns in the country. To address how these issues are played out in the democratization processes in the country, the paper is structured into five sections. The first section undertook conceptual and theoretical discourses. The second analysed elections and democracy in Nigeria and how elections have hampered the realization of democratic consolidation. The third examined elections and the new development paradigm. The fourth discussed the interface between democratic elections and national insecurity. The fifth analyzed election crisis, liberal

democracy and national security: challenges they elicit and the way forward for the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, then conclusion.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Discourses**

Elections are means of selecting those to represent the people in different public positions within the polity. Election “provides citizens with influence over policy making” (Powell Jr. 2000). Elections could be ratificatory in the sense that they aim at giving a sitting government some appearances of popularity and mobilize the people for popular participation in development. But under liberal democracy, elections play wider roles such as: instruments of accountability, mobilization of the people, promotion of legitimacy, among other functions. Competitive political elections are vital to the survival of the liberal variant of democracy. This democratic method of arriving at acceptable political leaders is well expanded in Schumpeter (1942) articulation of this arrangement as the:

*Institutional arrangement for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decisions. It is a method by which the individual acquires the power to participate in decisions by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples vote.*

It is instructive to note that under liberal democracy words like “competitive struggle” tend to be emphasized more than consensual approach to politics. Thus, Central to the survival of this democratic method is the imperative of playing by the rule of the game. It is the conformity with this stated imperative that allows for uninterrupted transfer of power from one administration to the other. Once a sitting government knows that it can be voted out of power within the framework of periodic elections, it strive to pursue the socio-economic and political interests of the electorates who may switch allegiance to opposition parties if such government fails to meet their expectations. Thus, legitimacy is seen as "the capacity of the political system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society” (Lipset, 1963) is central to the survival of liberal democracy. A people develop attachment to and belief in the prevailing political system because they trust in its ability to meet their short and long term needs.

Political stability that this system spawns helps to promote development in the body polity. However, for many years, African States operated a misguided development paradigm which emphasized esoteric and aesthetic needs. This created stagnation, or stunted growth and brought poverty to many Africa countries. Following the failure of the pursuit of modernization as development, a new paradigm of development that prioritizes the people as its center piece, is being propagated, particularly in the global south. This model aims at promoting the welfare and well being of the citizenry. In this perspective to development, public policies are directed at solving challenges of hunger, disease, education, unemployment, environmental safety, medical care, etc.

In countries where appropriate development paradigm is in place and practiced, the citizenry enjoys high standard of living demonstrated by the willingness of government to provide the basic necessities of life in terms of jobs, portable water, electricity, affordable housing, foods, roads among others. Under these conditions, there could be national human security. Thus, security could mean different things at different times to different people. Generally, security could be referred to as “a measure that ensures peaceful co-existence and development at large (Adebayo 2011). Where there is security, there is likely to be absence of fear, threat, anxiety, tension and apprehension over lose of life, liberty, property, goals and values, among others (Ibid). From the foregoing, it is clear that security is vital for development in any human collectivity. However, as part of the colonial legacies in Africa, security tends to assume the militarists approach either because the political system is

inherently unstable or those in control of state powers want to be there “*ad infinitum*”. In either case, emphasis is on the building of arms and ammunitions to the detriment of the basic necessities of life for the citizenry.

Consequently, some of the World’s poorest people live in the continent of Africa. Even in peace time, much of public annual budgets still go to the purchase of State arms while education is poorly funded. Thus, in recent times, the concept of security has shifted from the military angle to prioritize the provision of goods and services which make life more meaningful to the people and empower them to participate in the developmental processes. This is a more enduring aspect of national security where people go about their daily activities unhindered. The fragility of the state in Africa is partly due to this deficit in human security (Albert 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that approaching the question of security from a political/state or militaristic angle is defective. The more fundamental basis for security lies in freedom from poverty, disease, ignorance, joblessness, arbitrary power e.t.c (see Ibeanu 1999).

While there are several theories which might prove appropriate for a discourse of this nature, the structure-agency theory present us with a heuristic tool for interrogating the central issues of this paper. The theory contends that agents such as politicians and state managers engage in politicking to get their interests promoted. But they have to operate within structure(s) that constraint or support their actions. For example, "actions of ministers and governments officers produce the structure that constrain junior civil servants and state functionaries, the effect of whose actions similarly constrain the rest of us" (Hay, 1988). This theory does indicate a unilinear determinism as the argument seems to suggest. While structure determines the actions of agents, agents also condition the structure in the process of carrying out their roles or simply to realize their parochial interests.

### **Election and Democracy**

Election is central to the effective functioning of modern representative democracy. Since direct democracy has become almost impossible to practice on account of the large population in every modern political society, electing or selecting political leaders through periodic elections has become the norm. This is particularly so under liberal democracy. As Schumpeter (1942) puts it “democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them”. Since everybody cannot make such decisions at any given point in time, they have to select those to represent them.

An extended version of this argument on liberal democracy and election is put forward by Sandbrook in (Adejumobi, 2000) “political system characterized by regular and free election in which politicians organize into parties, compete to form the government by right of virtually all adult citizens to vote and by guarantee of a range of familiar political and civil rights”. It means that there is an organic link between democracy and elections. For this linkage to be productive, it has to meet certain essential conditions. These include: the people have to be empowered to make political choice without hindrance, and the political atmosphere under which this choice is made should be free from threat, intimidation and manipulation. Also, the practice of choosing political leaders should coher with the cultural values of the people which should safeguard the exercise. In other words, elections must be compatible with democracy that is being practiced in a given country. For election to make meaning to a democratic system, it must go beyond a ritualistic exercise carried out periodically. As Okoye notes:

*elections are a complex set of activities with different variables that act and feed the other ... it involves the participation of the people in the act of electing their leaders and their own participation in governance. Elections are not necessarily about Election Day activities although it forms an*

*important component. It encompasses activities before, during and after elections... it includes the liberation or otherwise of the political process in the country and the independence of adjudicating bodies of elections (in Iyayi, 2005).*

From the foregoing, it is clear that there are constitutive and regulative mechanisms and percepts of elections which should be taken in its entirety for there to be credible elections and democracy in a given political milieu. For Adejumobi (2000), these constitutive and regulatory aspects include: “the establishment of a competent, relatively autonomous and non-partisan electoral body to administer the conduct of elections, the existence of an impartial press and a non-partisan police force”. Also, the process of elections should “involve the rules, procedures and activities relating to the conduct of elections” (ibid). These are constitutive and regulatory rules which should limit the struggle for power and facilitate healthy electoral competition. How these whole gamuts of electoral arrangements can be put into practice to produce security, socio-political and economic development, is the subject of analysis in the next section.

### **Democracy and the New Development Paradigm**

Election is part of the democratic framework in the society that if properly put to use, will produce socio-economic and political development. Credible elections put the right people in government, manage conflict effectively and allocate resources efficiently. But the nature and type of democracy necessary for development has been an issue in Africa. As part of the colonial project in Africa, liberal democracy was foisted on African political systems and societies in an ineffective manner that till date, is difficult for African States to adapt it to suit their pluralistic cultural and political values. These institution and structure together with their processes were uncritically integrated into the African political economy. For example, while western liberal democracy prioritizes individual rights, private property, liberty and so on, African cultural values emphasize communalism and collective security (Osaghae, 1999).

Also, the mal-integration of African states into the international capitalist order, has seen African states playing subservient roles to the advanced capitalist countries. Within this contraption, African states have lost any autochthonous means of addressing challenges of development that was forced down the throat of Africans in form of modernization and in contemporary times, globalization. The aesthetic values in western development paradigm, see development as mere transition from “traditional” African ways of interaction to “modernity” conceived of as westernization. These development models are mainly concerned with stimulating economic growth in form of increase per capital income, import substitution industrialization, etc. While human or social security is given scant attention by African leaders.

The political correlate of these economic measures is liberal democracy, that is regarded as the inevitable outcome of modernization. Like its economic correlate-capitalism, liberal democracy has helped to create political violence, religious strives and ethno-communal cleavages in most countries in Africa. Yet, more than three decades of experimenting with liberal democracy in Nigeria, the expected gains of multiparty elections have failed to be registered in the lives of average Nigerians. Instead, crisis of underdevelopment still persists nay in greater dimensions. Multiparty elections which are suppose to be the cure for development and insecurity in the continent have actually exacerbated them.

In Nigeria, elections have always been hotly contested under party politics that is intemperate and violence rite-large. The 2011 general elections were no different as the two presidential candidates- Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and

General Mohammadu Buhari Rtd of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) sloughed it out to the apex court in Nigeria, the Supreme Court. The court in its ruling in the petition filed by the CPC on the presidential elections, declared that President Goodluck Jonathan and Vice president Namadi Sambo were validly elected. It noted that the petitioners were unable to prove their allegation of violation of the electoral law. As the lead judgment put it “it is trite law that he who asserts must prove. A person must not only assert but also prove allegations of non-compliance. It is only then that the burden will shift to the person whom allegations of non-compliance are made against...” (The Sun 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2011). In his reaction, the plaintiff retorted that the judgment was “politically motivated and has little legal content”, (The sun 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2011).

The political unrest and spate of insecurity which have invaded parts of the Northern geo- political zone have their links to the disputed presidential elections in 2011. For the umpteenth time, it has shown that politics of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise are yet to be enthroned in the Fourth Republic politics. The aftermath of the general elections of 2011 continue to pose major threat to the socio-economic and political development of the country. The Boko Haram insurgency has led to the lose of thousands of lives and properties. Also, the economy is threatened due to the insecurity in major flash points of the country. As the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria has rightly noted, “The current spate of bombings across the country by terrorist groups alludes to the fact that our business environment is becoming more and more threatened and therefore the need to urgently develop a framework that will enable us to effectively respond to any crisis and thus safeguarding lives and properties and ensuring stability and growth in our economic system” (The Punch 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2012).

All over the world, liberal democracy is prioritized because it is assumed to have the magic wand to effectively deal with inter and intra group conflicts arising from the democratic method. But the Nigerian experience with liberal democracy is not very pleasant. The people’s votes in most cases have refused to count. While ethno-religious conflict is rife in the polity, the economy remain on its knees with abject poverty as a recurring decimal among the people. The popular expectations, that democracy will resolve all these challenges have largely been unattained.

It would seem the behavioral pattern among the political and economic elites is not in consonance with the core democratic values which conduce for stability and development in the polity. Politics of give and take and respect for the unwritten rules of the game of politics are what makes for sustainable democracy. In sofaras these ingredients of the liberal democratic method are lacking, in so much the country would continue to have the orgy of violence and crises in the polity. Tied to these issues is the distributive framework in the political structure of the country. The state managers continues to dish handout in form of funds to groups and nationalities making it too attractive for there to be consensual politics. In this context politics invariably becomes a zero-sum game or winner takes all. Politicians are apt to ignore constitutive rules in the political processes because emphasis is on the sharing of the national cake rather than how it is baked. Devolution of resources to state and local governments would appear to be a more productive way of bringing about development and efficient use of resources. But unless other forms of constitutional sanctions are evolved against abuse of power and resources of the state, the same behavioral pattern that has rendered national politics corrupt and unproductive will find expression at other levels.

Also, it would seem, the state is involved in too many things with little of them being done effectively. Over the years statist approach to development has led to the state chewing more than it can swallow. Thus, leading to inefficiency and mal-development. Civil society has not been able to effectively take its pride of place in the scheme of things in the country. Perhaps, due to the totalizing effects of state that intervenes everywhere. Civil society should

take its place in the affairs of governance by creating alternative avenues for wealth creation and power in order to de-emphasize the salience of the state in the life of the people that partly accounts for mis-management and corruption in the public domain.

### **Democratic Elections and National (In) security**

Credible elections are necessary to stem the tide of political decay and renewal in the country. This is because in the view of apologists of liberal democracy, once elections are gotten right, democracy is on its way to being consolidated and in consequence enduring peace and security will be instituted in the country. In essence, credible elections produce security, development and political stability.

Security could take different forms. There is human security, national security, and so on. National security implies the appropriation and deployment of state apparatus of coercive force to deal with situation of crisis, nationally or internationally. Human security involves protecting the citizenry from hunger, disease, poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, etc. However, all these can only take place where there is peace and stability in the polity. Experience has shown that it is human security that presents the most effective instrument for national security and not the building of arms and weapons of warfare.

In Africa, years of economic exploitation, mal-development and bad governance have continued to fan the ember of conflicts and crises in the continent. From Togo to Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria to Kenya and Zimbabwe to Ivory Coast, general elections have been widely disputed. The violence they spawn come from man made barriers on the part of smooth electoral processes. Beyond constraints of funds, manpower and other logistics, obstacles to health electoral processes emanate from the inordinate ambition of the political elite to win elections at all cost. To achieve their goal, they manipulate the constitutive and regulative instruments for credible electoral contest. All institutions and agencies of government are used by those in possession of state power and authority to remain in government. Because of the premium on power everything is mobilized to remain in power against the will of the electorates. Where the ballot box containing the preference of the governed, cannot bring about the transfer of political power from one party to another in a peaceful manner, then democracy (liberal or not) is in grave danger.

Empirical evidence has shown that in elections conducted to public offices, all contesting parties are involved in one form of electoral malpractices or other (Joseph, 1987; Osaghae, 1999, Iwu, 2008). Where the opposing parties fail to win elections, they create one form of electoral crisis or the other. This includes: long litigation in court, political propaganda, use of militant groups, mobilization of religious sentiments, among others. In more extreme cases, violent politics ensues such as: bombing, kidnapping, political assassination and youth restiveness.

More than ever before, the country's security has come under threat. Indeed, the climate of fear pervades the country as politics of impunity pervade the polity. Never before has the country's security being so stretched in peace time. Yet, this threat to national security is not unconnected with injustices which dominate the body polity. Faulty development policies pursued since independence, have left the people pauperized and decimated. Also, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics brings the country close to the state of nature.

These are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Onimode, 2007; Ake 2000; Ayeni 2010).

Interestingly, all these are taking place in the context of democratization. Has liberal democracy lost its potency in resolving or managing conflicts as has been well articulated by liberal democracy scholars? Or is it a case of failing democracy in the country? These and other related questions will be addressed in the section that follows.

### **Election Crisis, Liberal Democracy and National Security: Challenges and the Way Forward**

In the proceeding section, we examined the nature of election crisis and the danger it poses for national and human security. Why election crisis? What challenges do they pose for security and how can it be managed for the sustenance of democracy and security in the country? These are some of the questions we seek to provide answers to in this section.

First and foremost, we need to interrogate the type of democracy that should be at stake in Africa. It is accepted that democracy has some universal values such as, freedom, liberty, civil and political rights, free press, respect for the rule of law and constitutionalism (Osaghae, 1999). Yet, processually, the social conditions in Africa demands that, socio-economic, environmental and cultural rights should be given the attention they deserve at this stage of the continent's development. Democracy may mean little to a people that are hungry: poverty stricken, unemployed and illiterate. Votes can only be meaningful in the hands of those who know their meanings and relevance. Environmental and other abuses are going on in the midst of poverty, thereby depriving the people of access to life sustaining resources (Ayeni, 2010).

Yet, the state in Africa remains salient inspite of, efforts to roll it back. It controls greater part of the people's life, appropriating to all intent and purposes much power and resources to itself. Given its attractiveness to the elite as a source of wealth accumulation, they are apt do everything to acquire, expand and retain political power since capturing it will mean, owing everything. The over-swollen state makes the premium on power very high. Therefore, elections to capture this power cannot but be zero-sum and violent. In the struggle for state power, constitutive and regulative laws remain mute. It must be so because of the intense attraction state power and resources command.

Winner-takes all politics that defines the liberal democratic model, carries with it electoral crisis. It is a system where the winner at election takes all and the loser is vanquished. Since everybody want to be in the mainstream of the subsisting politics, elections become a "do or die" affair. In this context, managers of the electoral processes cannot be above board because the pressure, from the system is too enormous for any one to play by the rules. The 2011 general elections have shown however that with the right political will and tolerance, the learning process can yield much dividends. This has huge implication for civil society that should drive the economy. In the developed world, civil society dominates the economy and dictates its processes. They also, to a large extent, dictate who get voted to power based on the policies and programmes canvassed by contestants. In Africa, however, the private sector remains inchoate leaving the public sector to substantially dominate the civil society realm. Experiences from other developing areas of the world have demonstrated that the inefficient state cannot drive economic growth and development.

Political leadership has been one of the main obstacles to democracy and development in Africa. Post-independence political leadership has been everything but productive. They have been distributive rather than productive in orientation, wasteful, and corrupt in political and economic management. The problem with Nigeria has been described simply as that of leadership (Achebe, 1984). Given the character of the country's leaders, it is not surprising that there are threats to human security. This is not unrelated to the schism in the ranks of the political elite who lack the hegemony and discipline to engender socio-economic and political stability.

Poverty is a principal cause of political, social and economic conflict in the country. Poverty is antithetical to the principles and core values of democracy. Poverty in the midst of plenty; creates disaffection among the populace and leads them toward violent behaviour. It constraints the ability of the people to make independent choices and participate actively in decision making. It reduces their self-esteem and ability to extract accountability from those they elect.

Yet, corruption is the cause and consequence of poverty in the society. It has stunted the delivery of the dividends of democracy and makes civilian rule fragile. Corruption is a pernicious phenomenon that plagues all sectors of public and private life in Africa. Under the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, it has continued unabated. At the federal, state and local government levels there have been avalanche of accusations, allegations and claims of financial misappropriation running to billions of Naira. These are monies meant for all round development at these levels of government which have found their way into private bank accounts and homes of public officeholders. Local government councils are supposed to fast-track the process of development at the grassroot. However, Local government administration has been characterized by stealing, looting and misappropriation of funds. As a recent survey puts it “the system of Local government administration has been plagued by a lack of transparency and accountability”. (Newswatch Magazine (Lagos) April 2, 2012). Such acts of criminality by public officers, create enough social insecurity in the land that can be capitalized on by other tendencies to destabilize the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria.

Since independence, the country has been in search of democracy that works. What this entail should be the concern of all peace loving Nigerians. Democracy is a contested concept. It is not a given. Countries should find ways of making it meaningful to their peculiar circumstances. The way forward is to find out ways of adapting liberal democracy to the country's pluralism. This may require the pursuit of some kind of consociational arrangement that will allow for the sharing of power among competing groups and political interests in the country. The winner takes all majoritarian system is not healthy for a deeply divided country like Nigeria (Joseph, 1987).

Also, such system will demand enthroning a new political culture of tolerance. Politicians should learn to play by the rule of the game of politics rather than make it a “do or die” affair. A new political culture of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise, conflict and consensus should be embraced by stakeholders in the political system. The practice of destroying the system every time politicians fail to achieve their goals is not healthy for the future of democracy and the corporate existence of the country. Once the country is able to get its politics right, the economy will certainly be on its way to recovery and growth. The much needed peace for development will evolve as investor (both foreign and indigenous) will begin to develop faith in the system.

The state in Africa is too salient to engender peaceful contest for power by the political elite. The state should be deemphasized as a means of resource accumulation. One way of achieving this goal is for politicians to seek for alternative means of survival particularly in civil society. This will make civil society organizations truly autonomous of the state and able to serve as agencies of accountability and engine of economic growth and development. Also, where there is distributive justice in the sharing of power and resources in the society, social security, peace and stability are more likely to be enthroned.

Furthermore, there should be institutionalization of electoral reforms. It is refreshing to note that the government is moving along this line. It is a step in the right direction. The electoral body should be made up of men of integrity and high moral standing. Where these standards are compromised, those found culpable should be removed from office and

persecuted. Funding of and autonomy for the electoral commission are critical issues which should be addressed with the seriousness they deserve. An organisation like the electoral commission cannot be tied to the apron-string of the executive arm of government. It must be liberated from its strangle-hold through better funding and institutional autonomy to enable it run its affairs effectively and efficiently. Yet, this is not to suggest that there should not be checks on the electoral umpire. Such over-sight functions or checks should be as provided in the constitution.

The political space should continually be expanded to give the people more opportunities to participate in the democratization processes going on in the country. Different interest groups should be brought into the political equation in the country, to enable them contribute their own quota to the Nigerian project. Policy making for many years was done with little or no input from critical segments of the society. This has made it difficult for some policies and programmes of government to achieve their goal and target.

The judiciary is a critical organ in the sustenance of democracy and maintenance of law and order in the society. As custodian of the constitution, the judiciary should dispense justice without fear or favour. While the judiciary has performed creditably well since the return to civil rule in 1999, they should leave no one in doubt that they are impartial through the speedy dispensation of justice. To use three and a half years to settle some electoral dispute arising from a general elections, is justice delayed and denied. The judiciary should be consistent and transparent in the discharge of its constitutional roles. It should be shielded from the rampaging scourge of corruption eating deep into the entire polity. In this regard, government must continue to emphasize merit in the appointment of judges.

## **Conclusion**

Elections are important part of representative democracy. Individuals and groups have to compete in an open contest for the people's votes. Where this is done fairly and creditably, the wishes of the people would easily prevail. But the country's practice of liberal democracy with its emphasis on multi-party elections, has produced socio-economic decay and a recurring political cauldron in the country. Mere reform of the country's political economy will not resolve the crises which have often threatened the very existence of the Nigerian state. The first major step toward resolving endemic problem of electoral conflicts and crises within the Nigerian state, we have argued, is to enthrone genuine democracy based on the people cultural values which contain what has been described as the universal ideals of democracy. Once this is realized, it will empower the people to bring to bear on the polity their innate potentials for development in various spheres of life and the frustration they presently experienced will be a thing of the past. Development can only take place where there is peace and the greatest guarantee of security is when the people are at peace with themselves and the government of the day.

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# **Achebe, Freud, Durkheim and the Encounter of Sacred Traditions: A Religious Exploration of Things Fall Apart**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the magnum opus of Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, through the lenses of religion by looking at the encounter of Christianity with Traditional African religion as recanted by the author in the novel. However, in going about this, the paper, using the critical and textual analysis methods, tries to put the question of the religiosity of some of the characters in the play to the scrutiny of the concept of the origin of religion as proposed by Sigmund Freud and Emile Durkheim in their works. The idea is to see if religion in the Ibo Africa community and as recanted by Achebe have their origins in the propositions of these two western scholars. The result, based on the narration of Achebe shows that in terms of Freud, this is far from the truth and it is hard to fully grand his theory in the African religions as posited by Achebe – although one finds some semblance of his submissions in this epic encounter of religions in Achebe’s novel and in the society and character of some of the actors, but nonetheless, it does not support his proposition fully as expected. As for Durkheim, to large extent, his propositions conform to the narration of Achebe in the novel and support his theory but it cannot fully explain the religious rigidity of the main character in the novel Okonkwo. On the encounter of the two religions, the paper posits that it was an encounter which destabilizes an otherwise stable and progressive society.

**Keywords:** Religion, Christianity, African Religion, Ibo, Tradition, Encounter

## Introduction

There is a particular thing that is common to all the novels of Chinua Achebe and that is the fact that they are all based on the happenings or events in his society and that includes the religion or religions of his society. *Things Fall Apart* tells the story of Nigeria shortly before and after the arrival of the colonial masters and the conflict that their arrival generated in the society as well as in the religious sphere. In *No Longer at Ease*, which is a follow up of *Things Fall Apart*, he depicts the crisis that young educated Nigerians were facing at that time, as they tried to balance their new world view with what they already had before. He shows that the education that was presented to them as a gold mine did not after all make them a better person morally and likewise the new society that evolved as a result of the coming of the colonial masters cannot be said to be better than their former community, as it is full of hitherto, unheard moral bankruptcy, materialism and extreme individualism. His third novel, *Arrow of God*, shows that despite the many years of colonial rule and the missionary work of Christianity, the people still believe and hold on dearly to their religion and culture. Although they are aware of the presence of the colonial master and his religion and of the fact that they have to reckon with him in all that they do, yet they remain firm in their believe and only letting some of their children, whom they believe will only be their representative in the white man's way, to go to school to learn. The fourth novel of Achebe, *A Man of the People*, focuses on the corrupt ruling educated elites and whose fall he prophesized in this novel, which eventually happened that same year the novel was published. His last major novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, is a description of the military dictatorship that was prevalent in Nigeria then – nay the whole of Africa – and the problems and betrayals it espouses.

Thus looking at the whole spectrum of his works, one will see that the primary concern of Achebe is his society, its people and of course their religion. He is convinced that, though the colonial masters have brought some very important changes to his society, yet they cannot claim that their culture and religion is superior to that of his people – even if it has its own flaws, so also does their religion and culture have their own flaws too and it cannot, therefore, be a judge of another culture, another religion and another people.

In the light of the above, this article intends to look at his magnum opus, *Things Fall Apart*, from a religious point of view by using the tools of religion especially as posited by Freud and Durkheim to see how well this novel fits into the discourse on sacred tradition and if the postulations of Freud and Durkheim can actually explain the concept of religion in the Ibo community. The paper also intends to briefly highlight the encounter of the two sacred traditions discussed by him in the novel – that is Christianity and Traditional African Ibo Religion.

In order to do the above, this paper will analyze the novel and try to affirm or dispel some of the submissions of Freud on the psychological concept of religion and likewise the submission of Durkheim on the sociological concept of religion. Likewise, it will briefly state the encounter between Christianity and Ibo religion as seen in the character of the protagonists in the novel. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn from this analysis at the end of the discussion.

## A Religious Exploration of *Things Fall Apart*

The novel, *Things Fall Apart*, takes its title from a poem named *The Second Coming* written by W.B. Yeast, an Irish poet. The relevant lines of this poem to the novel are:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, as Achebe reads this poem, a clearer picture of what happened to his people when the colonial masters invaded their, hitherto, peaceful and tranquil community came to his mind. This must have informed his own conclusion too when he points out, through Obierika, one of the characters in the novel, saying: “Now he has won our brothers and our clans can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.”<sup>2</sup>

The novel tells the story of the people of Eastern Nigeria, their social setup and religious life before and immediately after the coming of the colonial masters, as missionaries, traders and administrators. The white man came and his coming destroyed the unity of the clan which, hitherto, acted like one and in the process, many things changed, as new applications, new words and new usages entered into men’s heads and hearts and the old community gradually gave way to a new society. Thus, many heads rolled, heroes died and families split up.

The author weaves the story around the life of a man, Okonkwo – who represents his community – and the religious crisis that the Ibo community experiences as a result of its meeting and contact with another religion – Christianity. Okonkwo is painted as a person who one can refer to as a conservative traditionalist in the modern sense. He is devoted to his religion and culture. He so much believes in the truth of his religion that he is not ready to forego it for any strange religion which he believes has nothing to offer him. He is so rigid that he does not even give the new religion a pint of thought or consideration. He does not see anything good in the new religion as he believes that a man, no matter the circumstances, should follow the religion and custom of his people. He sees those who abandoned their religion for the new religion as betrayers<sup>3</sup> and he believes so much in the use of violence to settle scores that he is ready to use it on the new religion.<sup>4</sup> He does not think it worthwhile that a stranger should come and make other people practice his religion. Added to this is his ambition to retain the status quo in his community so that he can aspire to the highest level possible in this community. He is intransigent and rigid to the extent that he fails to see the changes going on in his community and how it is being gradually transformed into a society.<sup>5</sup> In the process, he is consumed by the power of this change.

At the beginning of the novel, one comes across Okonkwo as a hard working man, who started from scratch to become one of the leaders of his clan, through personal efforts.

*...Okonkwo did not have the start in life which many young men had. He neither inherited a barn nor a title, nor even a young wife. But in spite of these disadvantages, he had begun even in his father’s lifetime to lay the*

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<sup>1</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, with Introduction and Notes by Alboje Higo, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 2002, p i.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 124 - 125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 113, & 124.

<sup>5</sup> I have used the term community to refer to Umuofia before the coming of the white man because, the other term society, is a more loose kind of word which refers to a social setup with many races and different kind of people with many differences. While community, on the other hand, is a much more close term which refers to a people who have a lot in common and whose life is that of a greater co-operation and closer affinity to one another. In other words, they share a lot in common than those of the people in a society, where everyone is concerned with his own affairs and which may have different racial groups. Thus, community is more appropriate to the people before the white man’s coming, which turned that community into a society is different group of races came with the white man as his messengers, police, traders, etc. thereby shattering the communal life of the people.

*foundations of a prosperous future. It was slow and painful. But he threw himself into it like one possessed. And indeed he was possessed by the fear of his father's contemptible life and shameful death.*<sup>6</sup>

However, since he lives in a community which recognizes individual worth and not the worth of one's father or family, he rises quickly to the position of prominence.

*Age was respected among his people, but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washes his hands he could eat with kings. Okonkwo had clearly washed his hands and so he ate with kings and elders.*

*He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars.*<sup>7</sup>

Although Okonkwo has achieved a lot in a short time, yet he is ruled by fear and anger and this is where the psychological part of him comes to be known. But this psychological fear cannot explain his religiousness in the Freudian sense of the cause for religious belief and origin of religion.<sup>8</sup> If anything, it is the exact opposite of Freud's psychological fear for religiousness. Okonkwo is not afraid of the gods. This is apparent when he breaks the rule of the week of peace by beating his wife. He is aware of the sacredness and importance of that week and of the wrath of the goddess of the earth (*Ani*), if such a thing is done, yet he defies the rule. The importance of the peace week is made clear when the Priest of *Ani* says:

*Your wife was at fault, but even if you came into your obi and found her lover on top of her, you would still have committed a great evil to beat her. .... The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish.*<sup>9</sup>

Even though he is repentant, after committing this offense and paying the fine, as specified by the priest, he still almost commits another grievous crime when he shoots at his second wife, knowing very well too that that will draw the wrath of the goddess of the earth on him and may lead to his total banishment from the clan. Also in the case of the killing of Ikemefuna, who belongs to the whole clan as he was given as a ransom for the killing of the wife of Ogbuefi Udo by his father in Mbaino, although he was warned by Ezeudu not to be part of the expedition that will kill the boy because it could draw the wrath of the gods on him, since he is like a father to the boy – his friend, Obierika, also draws his attention to why he should not have been part of the expedition, giving the same reason. Yet he still goes ahead

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<sup>6</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>8</sup> According to Freud, when a child is young, he/she sees the father as his/her protector from all forms of evil and all forms of harm that may want to come his/her way. The father is loving to him/her and he readily provide for the child showing him/her and warding off any harm from him/her. However, as he child grows up, and becomes an adult, he/she finds out that he/she cannot do without this protecting figure of the father, especially in facing some of the difficulties of life, so the child imagines a figure even more powerful than the father in the form of a god "whom he dreads, whom he seeks to propitiate and whom he nevertheless entrusts with his own protection."(S.Freud, p. 30). This way, he says, the idea of religion, nay God, is formed in the human mind. See S. Freud, *The future of an Illusion*, James Strahey (trans. & ed), W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1961, pp. 26, 30, 38 & 54.

<sup>9</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p.22.

to kill the boy, as the god of the Hills and the Caves has commanded. But one thing is clear, and that is the fact that he does it, not because the god commanded it, but because of the fear of being thought of as weakling. Achebe says concerning this: "Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machet and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak."<sup>10</sup>

Thus the fear of Okonkwo does not make him a religious person; rather, it makes him go against the rules of religion and against the very thing that should have struck fear in him. Achebe readily captures this fact and the factor responsible for his fear, which turns out to be his driving force.

*Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw. Okonkwo's fear was greater than these. It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness...*<sup>11</sup>

But having said the above, looking at the life of Okonkwo, it is clear that he does not have a godly figure in his father. He loathes his father right from his young age and his father is never a source of protection for him, which according to Freud, would have helped him to form the notion of a guardian god in his later life.<sup>12</sup> Thus he does not have that opportunity which Freud asserts breeds the notion of god and religion in man. But Okonkwo is religious to some extent and it is his devotion to his religion and culture that eventually leads to his death. So also he has a notion of god and hold dearly to it. The question then is what creates this notion of god in him, since he lacks the background, in his father, which could have helped him to form this notion according to the Freudian postulation?

Talking about human instincts, which according to Freud, are always suppressed by the prohibitions brought about in the name of religion and on which religious beliefs based its survival,<sup>13</sup> one can see from the life of Okonkwo that his instincts are never suppressed, as he constantly finds an outlet for them. All his wishes are done, even if it is against the rule of his community and he constantly pays for it dearly. This non suppression of his instincts however confirms Freud's assertion that it will lead to destruction,<sup>14</sup> as Okonkwo is eventually destroyed by his instinct when it is being suppressed by the white man and his community, which refuses to fight on his side and behaving in a way that he loathes most – weaklings. He says to Obierika, his friend, after his return from exile and was briefed about the activities of the white man:

*"Perhaps I have been away too long" Okonkwo said, almost to himself. "But I cannot understand these things you tell me. What is it that has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight?"*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> S. Freud, *The future of an Illusion*, James Strachey (trans. & ed), W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1961, pp. 26, 30, 38, & 54.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 12 - 17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>15</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 124.

When he and other clan elders were imprisoned by the white man and later released, he plans to take his revenge even if his people refused to fight.

*As he lay on his bamboo bed he thought about the treatment he had received in the white man's court, and he swore vengeance. If Umuofia decided on war, all would be well. But [if] they chose to be cowards he would go out and avenge himself.<sup>16</sup>*

However, that is not to say that Freud's psychological submission about the oppression of human instincts does not apply in this novel. It readily applies to Okonkwo's community and the new converts to Christianity. The instincts of these people are being oppressed by their community and the cruelty of their gods. They, thus, readily find an outlet in the new religion. The law of their community is not just to them and like Freud says, they form the rebellious part of that community, which has for long suppressed their instincts.<sup>17</sup> This is seen in the case of Nwoye, the son of Okonkwo, whose life is the exact replica of what Okonkwo experienced when he was young, but this time, in a different direction;<sup>18</sup> the Osu people (out casts), who are denied all rights in the community because they have been dedicated to the gods; the down trodden (*efulefu*) who cannot measure up to the demands of their community and Nneka, who had delivered twin children on four different occasions and all were thrown into the evil forest, because they are thought of as being evil. Thus all these people find an outlet and a relief for their personal instincts in the new faith.

However, even this outlet itself, that the people found, still turns out to be a religion, which also has its own do's and don'ts and which, as is shown in chapter eighteen of the novel, leads to the reversion of one of the converts to his old religion, when he protested the presence and admittance of the outcasts (*osu*) into the new faith. Thus the same thing is being repeated, perhaps one can say, in a more sophisticated and more tolerant culture or perhaps, because it is the only alternative available to the people.

Going back to the question raised above, on what is responsible for the religiosity in Okonkwo? In answering this question, one definitely has to look elsewhere, and that brings us to the sociological aspect of the novel.

Looking at the novel, it will be observed that the community that Okonkwo lives in is one which does not make a dichotomy between what is religious and what is not. Everything is interwoven and one can hardly make a difference between what is secular and religious as we have it nowadays. The action, both private and public, and daily lives of the people are all tied around what pleases and displeases the gods. There is nothing like a private affair, as everyone lives a communal life in a system where values and modes of behavior are dictated by the community. The notion of right and wrong is decided by the community and every individual in the community is expected to follow and obey it, without questioning. Whatever the gods decide are carried out without questioning their judgment for their wishes must be done to avoid their wraths. Thus to uphold and adhere to the values and ideals of the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>17</sup> S. Freud, p. 15.; this fact was also pointed out by E. Palmer, when he says, "The secret of the new faith's success is precisely that it offers a refuge to all those whom the clan, for variety of reasons, regard as outcasts. If the clan had not been so callous towards its underdogs, the white man's religion would not have taken hold. As it is the Osus, the parents of twins, and all those held in contempt because they have, taken no titles who flock to the missionaries banner." (p. 58)

<sup>18</sup> The ironical part of Okonkwo's life and that of his son, Nwoye, is that while Okonkwo resents his father for his weakness and his lack of manly valour, his own son resents him for his excessive manliness and valour, which causes the estrangement between both of them and finally leads to the conversion of his son to Christianity.

community is to uphold and practice the religion, culture and tradition of the community and to be part of the community. This seems to echo the sociological definition given to religion by Emile Durkheim when he says:

*A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.*<sup>19</sup>

In other words, as it is apparent from the novel, Umuofia has its own sacred things which it expects all its community members to keep sacred, its own beliefs and practices which all must obey and respect and a breach of which could draw and attract some punishments so that the wrath of the gods will not be melted out to them all. On the bases of all these things, the community gains its strength and based its organization as a social setup. The harder a person tries to keep the sacred things sacred, uphold these beliefs and carry out these practices and do the bidding of this community, the more respect and honor the community gives to him and the more success comes to his way. Okonkwo is a person determined to succeed in this society and he knows very well that for him to succeed, he has to do all that his community expects of a person and one of which is the worship of what they worship and the doing of all the rites which constitutes religion to them. Thus, his religiosity can be said to be a product of the social system of his community and a demand of his community as one of their members. This is apparent in the way he builds his house, where he sets aside a place of worship, as is the accepted practice among his people.

*Near the barn was a small house, the 'medicine house' or shrine where Okonkwo kept the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits. He worshipped them with sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm-wine, and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself, his three wives and eight children.*<sup>20</sup>

The fear that this tradition may not be continued after him is one of the things that grieve his mind when his eldest son, Nwoye, converted to Christianity.

*Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye's steps and abandon their ancestors? Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation. He saw himself and his father crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days.....*<sup>21</sup>

What is very clear from the novel is that, to a very great extent, Okonkwo is a product of his community, his manly valour, his temper and his obsession with status, prestige and power are all what his community have created in him. His community values and reckons with all these things and sees it as the hall mark of a man, which is why he despises his father for being a failure, because he (his father) failed to measure up to the standard of the community. This explains his anxiety over the nature and future of his eldest son, Nwoye,

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<sup>19</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Joseph Ward Swain (trans.), The Free Press, New York, 1965, p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

when he says: “I will not have a son who cannot hold his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus, it is apparent that – to a very large extent – everything that Okonkwo is, is what his community expects from him even though, in his bid to express these things he overdo it and this eventually leads to his destruction.

*Age was respected among his people, but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings. Okonkwo had clearly washed his hands and so he ate with kings and elders.*<sup>23</sup>

One other observation about the social setup of Okonkwo’s community is the fact that every individual is expected to have a personal god, which they refer to as *Chi*. This confirms Durkheim’s observation that even in a ‘church’ the community may, in addition to the general worship that is done together, expect an individual to have his own personal form of worship which he performs on his own and which does not necessarily mean a separation from the rest of the community.<sup>24</sup> In the Umuofia community, one sees the whole community coming together to perform certain rites of worships and observing festivities together. But in addition to that, individual has his own personal god, *Chi*, which he pays homage to, and an ancestral shrine where he worships his dead fathers and makes sacrifices to them, which is what the community expects from all its members.

However, with the coming of the white man, the social setup of the community was upset and two religions were pitched against one another with the natives abandoning their ancestral religion to join the new religion – Christianity, which offers some of them a relief from the tedious and cruel demands of their ancestral religion. This situation is readily captured by one of the elders speaking on the eve of Okonkwo’s departure from his mother land, where he had been in exile, to his father land – Umuofia.

*An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter’s dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you; I fear for the clan.*<sup>25</sup>

Having said the above, however, to assert that the totality of the religiosity of Okonkwo is the product of his society is to reduce the Ibo religion to a social phenomenon and it is to be guilty of reductionism. Although his community and social setup has a lot of influence on his religious attitude, it does not explain his rigid attitude and his refusal to change as his community was changing – for that is supposed to be the parameter of measuring his religiosity and since that parameter has changed or is changing, he ought to follow it too and change in accordance to the changes going on. So also is the case of others like him, who refused to change their religious beliefs as changes are going on in the community – which is responsible for instilling in them the ideas of religion.<sup>26</sup> Thus, one can

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> E. Durkheim, pp.61-62.: This is apparent in Chinua Achebe’s description of Okonkwo’s personal god in page 10.

<sup>25</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 118.

<sup>26</sup> This is exactly what Opoku meant when he said: ‘There were also those Africans, who rejected the message of Christianity altogether and stuck to the religious and cultural traditions of their forefathers, seeing in them more meaning and significance than what the missionaries preached,’ (K. Asare Opoku, “Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era”, in A. Adu Boahen, (ed), *General History of Africa, Volume vii, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880 – 1935*, Heinemann, California, UNESCO, 1985, p. 527.)

say that beneath the social factors are a strong and an unshaken belief that religion is a very important aspect of life and that it has and plays a significant role in the life of man. This very much is apparent in the fact that though the people accepted the changes going on in their society,<sup>27</sup> they nonetheless refused to change their religious beliefs even though some of these beliefs have been proven to be false.<sup>28</sup> Added to this is the fact that they do not quarrel with the white man in practicing his religion, since they recognized the fact that it is natural for every human being to have his own religious practice or to follow the religion of his people.<sup>29</sup> Their quarrel is in the abandonment of their religion by their own people for the white man's religion, the forceful usurpation of their rights, the disruption of their community, and the condemnation of their religion, customs and beliefs by the white man.<sup>30</sup>

With the introduction of the white man to the scene, the rigidity in Okonkwo comes to the fore and the great battle for survival between the two religions begins. Okonkwo is vehemently against their intrusion into his community and one sees him calling for action to drive them out by force. He sees no reason why they should be allowed to stay and he sees those who abandoned their traditional religion to join the white man as betrayers of their ancestors – this also lend credence to the fact that beneath the social aspect of his religiosity, there is a strong inner conviction to it, otherwise, he would have simply moved along with the tide of change and try to adjust to it and the new religion. Quoting him, Achebe says:

*Okonkwo...said that until the abominable gang was chased out of the village with whips there would be no peace.*<sup>31</sup>

*"Let us not reason like cowards," said Okonkwo. "If a man comes into my hut and defecates on the floor, what do I do? Do I shut my eyes? No! I take a stick and break his head. That is what a man does.*

*These people are daily pouring filth over us, and Okeke says we should pretend not to see.*"<sup>32</sup>

*To abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination.*<sup>33</sup>

Okonkwo is so vehement in his opposition to the new religion that when his eldest son, Nwoye, accepted the new faith, he flares up in anger ready to break his head, without asking for his son's reason for doing so. But for the intervention of his maternal uncle, he could have done worse things to him.<sup>34</sup> However, immediately he returns home from exile, he calls his remaining five sons together – even the smallest among them, who is just four years old and could hardly comprehend him – and warns them sternly against joining the new religion and at the same time informing them that he has rejected their brother and that he is no longer his son or their brother.

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<sup>27</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 126.

<sup>28</sup> In the case of the Christians living in the evil forest without dying and their taking care of twins without any evil thing happening to them.

<sup>29</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 134.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 124 & 134.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

*You have all seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If any one of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye now while I am alive so that I can curse him. If you turn against me when I am dead I will visit you and break your neck.*<sup>35</sup>

Thus, it is clear from the above statement of Okonkwo that he has an inner conviction that his children's religiosity and worthiness as a person lies in their espousing his religion and values. Likewise, he wants his sons to be an epitome of the values of his community. He sees those who abandoned their ancestral religion for the new religion, as worthless people whom he compares to women, who are seen as a symbol of weakness in his community.

One may add, in passing, that the Ibo community, like many others, is a male dominated one in which females are relegated to the background. This is apparent throughout the novel itself where the females are only seen but not heard and they have little or no say at all in all the affairs of the community – even on the issue of religion.<sup>36</sup> The female are generally seen as a weak sex and part of the property of the husband, who has absolute control over them and can take as many of them as he wishes to marry without limit.<sup>37</sup>

The way Okonkwo runs his house and deals with his wives points to this fact. This also explains why he compares his eldest son to a woman in the quotation above.<sup>38</sup> In other words, Nwoye has become a person who has no worth or say in the affairs of his community and he is now merely a property, which can be kicked about anyhow by all.

However, Okonkwo seems to be alone in his rigidity about the new religion and the new dispensation, as some of his kinsmen and women have adjusted to the new reality. They see the new religion as a necessary evil, which at least its head missionary, Mr. Brown is in firm control of because of his subtle approach and restraint. Moreover, the community itself is undergoing a process of change, which his kinsmen are happy about as it has brought more wealth to them.

*There were many men and women in Umuofia who did not feel as strongly as Okonkwo about the new dispensation. The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store, and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia.*

*And even in the matter of religion there was a growing feeling that there might be something in it after all, something vaguely akin to method in the overwhelming madness.*

*This growing feeling was due to Mr. Brown, the white missionary, who was very firm in restraining his flock from provoking the wrath of the clan.*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 121 – 122.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; Chapters 8 and 10.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 13 - 15.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 9 – 11, 21 -22 & 27 - 28.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

With the departure of Mr. Brown, however, comes Reverend James Smith, and according to Achebe, 'he was a different kind of man'. In other words, Rev. Smith is a rigid conservative, in the mould of Okonkwo, who lacks the subtle approach and diplomacy of Mr. Brown. Describing him, Achebe says:

*He condemned openly Mr. Brown's policy of compromise and accommodation. He saw things as black and white. And black was evil. He saw the world as a battle field in which the children of light were locked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness. He spoke in his sermons about sheep and goats and about wheat and tares. He believed in slaying the prophets of Baal.*<sup>40</sup>

With a person like Rev. Smith, on the other side of the divide, Okonkwo meets his match and the series of events that followed the meeting of these two rigid extremists on the opposite divide, leads to the final battle of supremacy between these two religions, which comes to a frenzy climax with the death of one of them – Okonkwo – who lacks the superior power and state machinery that the other side employs in their encounter with each other. With his death follows the demise of his religion and the final demolition of his community, which was turned into a society by force. Echoing this, Obierika says 'ferociously' to the white man, the District Commissioner: "That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog..."<sup>41</sup>

In other words, Okonkwo and everything that he stands for, his religion, customs, tradition and indeed his community as a whole, is no longer worth more than a 'dog' all because of the encounter brought about by 'a lunatic religion'. Furthermore, what is clear from Obierika's words is that, though Okonkwo is a no nonsense hot temper person, before the coming of the white men, the presence and activities of the white man, especially in converting his son to their religion and destroying his community, greatly affects him psychologically and dictates what he later becomes, as his community and culture alone could not have produced this kind of rigidity and adamant attitude that he exhibits towards the end of his life and how he ends his life which is a taboo in his community. That is, the white man's presence and religious activities produce a different personality in the person of Okonkwo.

Thus, it is apparent that the story of this novel also revolves around the encounter of two religions, the Traditional Ibo Religion and Christianity, in a fight for supremacy and converts, even though the latter religion – Christianity – was accompanied by the motive of colonialism using religion as a cover up for this motive.

## Conclusion

The exploration of Achebe's book, *Things Fall Apart*, above shows that the novel has many parts to it and it is indeed worthy of its worldwide acclaim even after more than fifty years of its appearance. It is clear that the novel is relevant to the field of religion as explained above and it is worth the attention given to it in this article.

While there have been many writings about the theories of Freud and Durkheim, their applications to this novel aptly help to see the relevance or otherwise of their theories to the Ibo African Religion.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 130

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 147

The theory of Sigmund Freud fails to apply to the origin of the religiosity of Okonkwo, Nwoye and by extension their community. Likewise the concept of instinct for religiousness does not apply to Okonkwo, the main character in the novel, it nonetheless applies to the new converts to Christianity who are considered to be effeminate in their community and who are not able to measure up to the tough custom of their community; but were able to find an outlet for their natural instinct in the new faith. However, the problem here is that what they resorted to is itself a religion and this still remains problematic when view from the Freudian concept which will advocate a non-religious outlet for their instinct. This in itself shows the fact that man is by nature religious and religion is a very important component of his life even if theorist like Freud tries to explain it away.

As for the Durkheim theory, while it readily applies to Okonkwo because he was partly religious because of the demands of his community, it nevertheless does not explain all of his religiousness as we see him going time and again against his community social norms and changes which ordinarily he ought to follow if he were religious only because of his community. But, what is apparent is that apart from the demands of his community, he has an inner conviction about religion and its importance in the life of a human, hence his tenacity to his religion and refusal to change along with the community. However, Durkheim concept of a personal god, within the larger concept of a general god – is a permanent feature of the Ibo African religion and it is well practiced in the community of Okonkwo as seen in the novel.

Finally, it is apparent that this work of Achebe is a rich fountain of religious encounter and it is relevant in the field of religion just as it is in its proper field of literature. It gives one a glimpse of what the people experienced as a result of the encounter of Christianity with their traditional religion and the events that unfolds in one of the African communities as a result of the coming of the white man with his religion to the African continent.

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# **The Nigerian State, Poverty and the Commodification of Women: Insights from Benin City**

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## **Abstract**

With the attainment of independence in 1960, the Nigerian State was faced with serious challenges including the task of nation building, the development of infrastructure, eradication of poverty and the general welfare of the people. However, these rising expectations soon gave way to rising frustrations. The attendant bickerings and internecine altercations among other contending issues within the ruling elites led to the collapse of the First Republic. Ever since, the Nigerian State has been grappling with the problem of delivering essential services to the people. In the wake of these crises the military regime of General Ibrahim Babaginda embarked on the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986 to bring efficiency to the economy which was in a complete state of decay. However, the attendant adjustment which was a blue print from the IMF and World Bank engendered numerous problems such as rationalization of workers, depreciation of the national currency and serious unemployment. This situation resulted in migratory movement both licit and illicit. While the educated and professionals migrated to Europe and America in search of greener pastures the uneducated and unskilled took advantage of opportunities offered by trafficking syndicates to engage in commercial sex work in Europe. The above factors in tandem with the structural marginalization of women in the context of Benin City are the genesis of the trafficking in women. Using an eclectic theoretical approach the paper takes a critical look at the Benin City scenario while proffering solutions to curb the menace of trafficking in young women.

**KEY WORDS:** The Nigerian State, Poverty, Commodification of women, Trafficking, Structural Adjustment Programme, Commercial Sex work.

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