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Islam, Christianity, Traditional Religions and Power Politics in Northern Nigeria Since Pre-Islamic Period

Emmanuel M. Abar
Andrews University, abar@andrews.edu

ABSTRACT

ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS, AND POWER POLITICS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA SINCE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

by

Emmanuel Abar

Adviser: Nicholas Miller

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

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Title: ISALM, CHRISTIANITY, TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS, AND POWER POLITICS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA SINCE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

Name of researcher: Emmanuel Abar

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Nicholas Miller, PhD

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Problem

Currently in Northern Nigeria, religious interaction among the three major religious traditions, Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion, is marred by violent religious conflicts. Also, competing concepts of religious legitimacy, which appeal to the historical heritage of Nigeria, are often used to validate and justify the violation of religious freedom. Does the current state of religious interaction among the various religious groups reflect the true heritage of religious interaction in Northern Nigeria? Or is it possible that the history of the interaction between African Traditional

Religions, Islam, and Christianity in the past might actually be a heritage that points toward a solution regarding religious freedom and tolerance today?

Method

This is a qualitative historical study based on published primary and secondary sources by historians whose works relate the history of Northern Nigeria as it impacts religious interaction among the various religious traditions (African Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity) and its relation to power politics. This study validates historical data by comparing and analyzing a variety of historical sources, particularly on the religious history of Northern Nigeria beginning from pre-Islamic to colonial times. Three Northern Nigeria states, Borno, Kano, and Sotoko, are chosen as representative of the region. Although there is a limitation of primary historical sources in Northern Nigeria before the arrival of Islamic scholars in the eleventh century AD, this limitation has been compensated for by the documentation of oral traditions of Northern Nigeria.

Findings

This study shows that prior to the introduction of Islam in Northern Nigeria in the eleventh century AD, religious interaction among the adherents of African Traditional Religions was relatively peaceful. This state of relatively peaceful coexistence among the various religious traditions continued during early Islam, and the relationship between religion and civil affairs remained casual. However, beginning in the early nineteenth century the region deviated from its religious heritage of relative tolerance, and a casual overlap of religious and civil affairs, to a more intentional fusion of religion and politics, which has led to violent religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. This change occurred,

mainly as a result of the growing desire to consolidate the establishment of Islam within Hausaland and beyond by Islamic reformists. An understanding of the true history of Northern Nigeria's religious heritage does not only correct the wrong impression that the region has always been involved in violent religious conflicts, but also, provides resources for those involved in dialogue towards religious freedom and tolerance in twenty-first century Nigeria.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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APPOVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Faculty Adviser, Nicholas Miller Professor of Church History	Director of PhD/ThD Program Thomas Shepherd
Trevor O' Reggio Professor of Church History	Dean, SDA Theological Seminary Jiří Moskala
Bruce L. Bauer Professor of Missions	
Boubakar Sanou Assistant Professor of Mission and Leadership	
John Nengel Professor of History, University of Jos Nigeria	Date Approved

To the two most important women in my life,

my late mom, Dinah, and my wife Bucky Abar,

for joyfully sharing in my travails in the pursuit of quality education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The thesis of this dissertation is quite simple. It is that there existed a state of relative tolerance among religious groups[1] during the pre-Islamic era of Northern Nigeria. Further, it is argued that early Islam, Christianity, and the African Traditional Religions were more tolerant in their interactions than their present practices in Northern Nigeria. This work examines the history of Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions (ATR) in relation to political structures and power in Northern Nigeria, with a focus on any patterns of religious tolerance that may have existed in the region from Pre-Islamic to Colonial times. Such a historical perspective might be able to provide historical resources for religious freedom and tolerance in the twenty-first century.

Present day Nigeria is a multi-religious state, with Islam and Christianity as the two major and most widespread religions, although ATR worldview is still at the core of the practices of many Nigerian Muslims and Christians. It would be mistaken to accept uncritically, based on protections of the constitution of Nigeria for religious practices, and the claim by most Northern Nigeria populace, who are also adherents of the Islamic

[1]This work argues that before the introduction of Islam in Northern Nigeria, there was in existence different variation of the practices of African Traditional Religions. This view would be further elaborated in the ensuing chapters of this work.

faith, that there is presently a culture of religious tolerance and freedom in the region. On the contrary, a close observation of the interaction among adherents of the various religions (Islam, Christianity, and ATR) in Northern Nigeria reveals that the degree of religious freedom a citizen enjoys varies according to the region in which he or she resides.

Religious freedom is one of the basic principles needed for the health and success of the Nigerian State.[2] This principle of religious freedom is well delineated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.[3] And yet, as recent events reveal, religious freedom is at risk in Northern Nigeria. It is jeopardized not only by the dramatic collisions of religious differences, but also by vested interests among Northern Nigeria political elite who often exploit the region's religious dichotomy for political gains. Thus it becomes expedient to revisit the concept of religious tolerance and freedom within the history of Northern Nigeria.

Religious conflict forms one of the most recurring phenomena in Northern Nigeria over the last century. This issue has become an integral part of the recent history of the region. Expert observers have identified several contemporary religious upheavals in Northern Nigeria as among the major factors threatening the unity and peaceful

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[2]Other principles needed for the health and success of the Nigerian State include, equal distribution of economic resources, and security.

[3]"Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance." Federal Government of Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.

co-existence of Nigerian ethnic groups.[4] Also, the *2012 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*[5] (USCIRF) reveals that Nigeria has been placed on the commission's watch list since 2002. The commission has recommended that Nigeria be designated as a "country of particular concern" since 2009. The genesis of these concerns is the incessant religious upheaval and the failure on the part of the government of Nigeria to prevent and contain acts of religiously related violence. In 2015, the USCIRF reported that "despite extensive interfaith nonviolence messaging in the run-up to the elections [in Nigeria], election-related hate speech and violence were sometimes expressed along religious lines."[6]

The Commission's most recent annual report in 2017 continues to designate Nigeria as a "country of particular concern" due to Nigeria's government failure to prevent or stop acts of religiously related violence and abuses. Similarly, The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, in a report submitted to the United Nations, identified among other factors incessant religiously inspired upheaval as a major threat to human rights in Nigeria.[7]

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[4]Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1998); Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration (U.S.A.: Xlibris LLC, 2013), 51-66.

[5]United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012." *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom,* accessed November 20, 2012, http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-and-briefs/annual-report.html.

[6]United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2015," accessed March 6, 2018, https://www.state.gov/documents/ organization/256269.pdf.

[7]The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, *United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review*: Nigeria (Washington, DC: 2008), accessed November 20, 2012, http://lib.ohchr.org /HRBodies/UPR/ Documents/Session4/NG/BF_NGA_UPR_S4_2009_BecketFund.pdf.

Statement of the Problem

There is currently in Northern Nigeria a three-way religious conflict among Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion. Also, competing concepts of religious legitimacy, which appeal to the historical heritage of Nigeria, are used to validate and justify the violation of religious freedom. But is it possible that the history of the interaction between African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity in the past might actually be a heritage that points toward a solution regarding religious tolerance today?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to survey the history of Northern Nigeria in regards to religious interactions among the various religious traditions: African Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity. An investigation of the history of the relationship between these three religious traditions in Northern Nigeria may help provide a fuller and more complete understanding of the region's religious and political heritage. Also the teachings or practices of religious tolerance in the history of this region may provide resources for those seeking to work for religious freedom and tolerance in the twenty-first century.

Review of Prior Research

John Nwafor attempts a response to this question of religious freedom and tolerance in Nigeria, but his work basically focuses on the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Nigerian state, with an emphasis on the period from

1960 to 2002.[8] Political and religious history before this period is only mentioned as a background to his work. Although he addresses the three religions considered in my study, he does not discuss the relationships among them. Thus, his work does not address the historical background to the issue of religious freedom and tolerance among and between the three religious traditions in Northern Nigeria.

Jude Aguwa's reference to the unrelenting effort to Islamize all of Northern Nigeria by the dominant Islamic group, and the resistance of the traditional religionists of various ethnic groups as well as Christians provides little information on the historical practices of these various religious groups as they relates to issues of religious freedom and tolerance in Northern Nigeria.[9] Although a reasonable amount of Nigerian historical literature discusses the relationship between religion and politics in Northern Nigeria, these authors limit their work to the period beginning from the early nineteenth century.[10] The nature of the relationship between religion and politics during the pre-Islamic and early-Islamic times remains unexplored.

Lamin Sanneh's recent work, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam*,[11] directly addresses the disproportionate attention given the militant jihad

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[8]John C. Nwafor, *Church and State: The Nigerian Experience, the Relationship between the Church and the State in Areas of Human Rights, Education, Religious Freedom, and Religious Tolerance* (Frankfurt am Main: IKO, Verlag Fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2002).

[9]Jude C. Aguwa, "Christianity and Nigerian Indigenous Culture," in *Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu*, ed. Chima J. Korieh and G. Ugo Nwokeji (New York: University Press of America, 2005), 13-26.

[10]Edmund P. T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* (London: G. Chapman, 1979); Muhammad S. Umar, Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule (Boston, MA: Brill, 2006).

[11]Lamin Sanneh, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

tradition in West Africa. He presents a position contrary to the popularly held view that the introduction of Islam into the Sahel was through the jihad. Sanneh argues that there was a long-standing tradition of Islamic peaceful co-existence with adherents of the indigenous African religions "before the alleged Almoravid invasion, which has little support in Arabic sources contemporary with the event."[12] Although Sanneh's work is evidential to the argument for a "pacifist tradition in West African Islam," his arguments notwithstanding are limited to the ancient kingdom of Ghana. Little is said regarding the existence of such tradition in Northern Nigeria. His work does not address the problem of religious and political interactions in Northern Nigeria.

Dean Gilliland's 1971 dissertation, "African Traditional Religion in Transition: The Influence of Islam on African Traditional Religions in Northern Nigeria,"[13] is one of the most relevant resources among literatures that have discussed the interaction of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria. Also, in my opinion, it is the most closely related to the issues discussed in my study. In his work, Gilliland demonstrated how the various religious traditions of Northern Nigeria (ATR, Islam, and Christianity) impacted one another, and the role of politics in the religious interactions of Northern Nigeria.

Gilliland discuses some of the important primary sources, such as the "Kano Chronicle," from which he shows the earliest overlap between religion and politics, and the subsequent separation of the dual role of the priest-king (whose role as the spiritual leader of his community naturally gave him the mandate to exercise judicial or political

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[12]John Azumah, "Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 41, no. 4 (October, 2017): 364, accessed March 6, 2018, https://journals .sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/ 2396939317720379#articleCitationDownloadContainer.

[13]Dean Stewart Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition: The Influence of Islam on African Traditional Religion in Northern Nigeria" (PhD diss., The Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1971).

power over his community). He failed, however, to show that despite the exercise of the dual authority of religion and politics by one man, indigenous Hausa kings did not seek to impose their religion on others as later Islamic rulers did. Also, Gilliland's discussion of the role of colonial government in the interaction of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria is very brief, and completely ignores the role of Christian missions in the region. Furthermore Gilliland does not discuss the impact of British Colonial administration policies on the various religions of Northern Nigeria.

In contrast, this work attempts to describe the early interactions among the various indigenous religious groups and political authorities before the introduction of Islam in the eleventh century AD, as well as and the interactions among early Islam, ATR, Christianity, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria up through the colonial period, and into the modern era.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative historical study based on published primary and secondary sources by historians whose works relate the history of Northern Nigeria as it impacts religious interaction among the various religious traditions (African Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity) and its relation to power politics. This study validates historical data by comparing and analyzing a variety of historical sources, particularly on the religious history of Northern Nigeria, beginning from pre-Islamic through colonial and to modern times. Three Northern Nigeria states, Borno, Kano, and Sotoko, are chosen as representative of the region. Although there is a limitation of primary historical sources in Northern Nigeria before the arrival of Islamic scholars in the eleventh century

AD, this limitation has been compensated by the use of oral traditions of Northern Nigeria.

Design of the Study

I attempt to present the results of this study in a chronological order, beginning from pre-Islamic to modern time. The first chapter of this study presents a general background to my research question and the structure of this dissertation; it also states the purpose of the study and provides a brief review of relevant literature. After presenting the general background and structure of this study in chapter one, the second chapter presents a general overview of the religious history of Northern Nigeria. Chapters three and four present the interactions between ATR, Islam, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria. Chapter three covers the period from pre-Islamic times to the entrance and spread of Islam from the eleventh to the early fifteenth century. It also, presents evidence of a state of laissez-faire tolerance in the religious interaction of Northern Nigeria before the entrance of Islam, and during the early Islamic penetration in the region. Before the coming of Islam to Northern Nigeria, the inhabitants of this region practiced various forms of ATR. However, despite the differences that might have existed in their religious practices, adherents of the various forms of ATR largely interacted peacefully. Similarly, early Islamic contact with Northern Nigeria and its expansion was mostly peaceful. Chapter four presents the interactions between Islam, ATR, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth century AD. This chapter presents the story of the major religious and political actors whose ambitions and actions brought about a dramatic change in the interactions between Islam and ATR in Northern Nigeria. This was indeed a period of paradigm-shift in the religious

interactions among the various religious groups in Northern Nigeria—a shift from peaceful co-existence to violent inter-religious crises.

Chapter five presents the interactions between Christianity, Islam, ATR, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria from the nineteenth to twentieth century. The political interest of British colonialists in Northern Nigeria introduced new dynamics in the religious milieu of the region. Colonial laws failed to create the needed atmosphere for the promotion of religious freedom and tolerance. Similarly, Islamic suspicions of Christian missionaries and their perspective on religion and the state created a further rift among the three religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, and ATR).

Chapter six presents the modern Nigerian Constitutional development in historic context, particular its provisions for tolerance and religious freedom.

Chapter seven presents the conclusions and implications of this study and makes suggestion on how the religious heritage of Northern Nigeria might provide insights and resources to address modern religious conflicts.

Scope and Delimitation

Although my study is primarily concerned with Northern Nigeria, in order to clearly delineate the background to this study I included those sources of historical information covering the wider history of West Africa (which is commonly referred to by early historians and geographers as Bilad as-Sudan). The Sudan was divided into three sections: the Western, the Central, and Eastern Sudan. What is now present-day Nigeria

was part of Central Sudan.[14]

Most primary sources on the early introduction and development of Islam in West Africa and Nigeria consist largely of historical records from Muslim historians and geographers who had travelled and recorded, in Arabic, their experiences of the different areas they visited. Some of these records are translated and discussed in *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*,[15] Thomas Hodgkin's *Nigerian Perspectives*,[16] Herbert Palmer's *The Kano Chronicle*,[17] and in Spencer Trimingham.[18] Many of these sources were originally written in Arabic, though I have relied solely on their available English and Hausa translations for the purpose of this research.

While most of the secondary and tertiary sources are found in libraries within the United States, only a few of the primary sources are available. Thus, my research included travelling to Nigeria where most of the primary sources are found in national museums and university libraries.

In doing this study, I am not writing the history of ATR, Islam, or Christianity in Northern Nigeria. Also, I do not claim to present a detailed religious history of the period (Pre-Islamic to Colonial Times) considered in this study. My study is limited by

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[14]Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigeria Perspectives: A Historical Anthology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 3.

[15]Mohammad Ibn Batuta et al., *The Travels of Ibn Batutu A. D. 1325-1354* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1958).

[16]Hodgkin, *Nigeria Perspective*.

[17]Hebert R. Palmer, "The Kano Chronicles," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1908): 38.

[18]Spencer J. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

providing only snap-shots of the relevant religious historical events to my study. And although my focus is on Northern Nigeria, I did not undertake the study of all the states within the region. Three representative Northern Nigeria states, Borno, Kano, and Sokoto, are chosen for the purpose of this work.

I have chosen Borno, Kano, and Sokoto as representative of Northern Nigeria states based on their relevance to the nature and scope of my study. Borno state, which is located in the northeastern part of Nigeria, is part of that region of the Kanem-Borno Empire, also famous for its adoption and promotion of Islam beginning in the eleventh century AD.[19] As a result, Borno state in present day Northern Nigeria provides the historical context in which the initial interactions occurred among Islam, ATR, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria.

Kano state, unlike Borno state, is situated northwest of present day Nigeria. Kano state is a major Northern Nigerian commercial center. Early in the fourteenth century AD, Kano became one of the famous Islamic centers (others were Katsina and Zaria) in the region during the spread of Islam among the Hausas.[20] Kano's early Islamic and commercial prominence makes the region pivotal to understanding the interactions between Islam and ATR within the pre-colonial Hausa states, as well as the interactions among the three religious traditions (Islam, ATR, and Christianity) beginning in the early nineteenth century AD.

Sokoko epitomizes the "unified theocracy, the Sokoto Caliphate," which was a

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[19]Toyin Falola, *The History of Nigeria* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 19, 28.

[20]Ibid., 28.

product of the collapsed Hausa states—a major achievement of the Sheikh or Shehu Uthman dan Fodio, who led a jihad in the early nineteenth century AD. Sokoto became the administrative headquarters of the Sultanate from where the sultan ratified the appointments of emirs, who in turn paid tributes to him as they administered the various emirates within the Hausa states.[21] Sokoto was the center of religious and political power within the Hausa states. As a result, it provides an early context for the understanding of the interactions between religions and political authorities in Northern Nigeria.

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[21] Falola, *The History of Nigeria*,35-37.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

Introduction

Religious conflict in Northern Nigeria has been ongoing for centuries; however, such practices have not always been the norm. As will be more fully described in this work, the ATR groups that existed in the region prior to the introduction of Islam existed and interacted in a state of relative tolerance. Further, the introduction of Islam to Northern Nigeria beginning in the eleventh century AD at Kanem-Borno was largely through the peaceful activities of Islamic traders, scholars, and clerics from North Africa.[1] This relative state of tolerance was challenged by the zeal with which some among the early converted ruling class of the Kanem-Borno Empire sought to spread Islam within their territories. These actions led to a certain level of conflict, but these

[1]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 28.

were relatively minor and short-lived.[2] Similarly, the introduction of Islam in Hausaland, such as Kanem-Borno, was peaceful, largely spread through trade. For most part, the Hausa rulers voluntarily accepted Islamic religion during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries AD. It was only later, beginning in the early nineteenth century, that the quest to consolidate the establishment of the Islamic religion within Hausaland by its adherents resulted in some violent conflicts that characterized the movement of the Muslim Fulani reformer and Jihadist, Shehu Uthman dan Fodio, and led to the founding of the Sokoto Caliphate.[3] It is noted that this kind of sustained religious violence only became a factor in Northern Nigeria after both Islam and Christianity became actively competitive in the region.

Although the religious conflicts cannot be attributed to a single factor, "the aggressive competition for dominance by Islam and Christianity" has been noted as a major source of the religious violence.[4] It was the fear of religious persecution, discrimination,[5] and eventual assimilation into the dominant Hausa-Fulani culture and

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[2]Robert O. Collins and James McDonalds Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 90, 91. The zeal with which the ruling class of Kanem-Borno sought to spread Islam is depicted in the activities of *mai* Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221–1259) who reputedly pressed his followers to abandon traditional religious practices in favor of Islam—most sensationally when he desecrated an indigenous religious artifact which was held as sacred by practitioners of ATR within the Kanem-Borno kingdom. *Mai* Dunama's behavior precipitated a rift between two local tribes within the Kanem-Borno kingdom (the Saifawa of which he belonged and the Bulala, a powerful clan of pastoralists). Sometimes in the late fourteenth century, incessant conflicts with the Bulala and other pastoralists eventually forced the Saifawas to retreat west, across Lake Chad where they established a new kingdom known as Borno.

[3]Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 4-12.

[4]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 1, 12.

[5]Great Britain, *Problems of Nigerian Minorities: Willink Recommendations* (Lagos, Nigeria: Pacific Publications, 1958), 30.

Islam[6] that led to the demand for a Middle Belt state by some Northern Nigerian Christians during the 1959 constitutional conference.

In recent times, the reintroduction of shari'ah law[7] and the emergence and activities of Islamic fundamentalist groups, such as "Boko Haram" (Hausa: Western education is forbidden), whose official name is "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad" (Arabic: People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), has generated much concern within and outside Nigeria.[8] Consequently, arguing self-defense, some Northern Nigerian Christians have begun to justify the use of violence, not only to protect their lives and defend their faith,[9] but also, in reprisal attacks on innocent Nigerian Muslims and their houses of worship.

Shari'ah is the summation of the Muslim way of life, the trodden path that leads to peace and submission; coming from both the Qur'an and tradition.[10] Thus, Muslim fundamentalists argue that, to deny Muslims the full application of shari'ah, which

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[6]James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 21-24.

[7]On October 1999, Zamfara, a state in the northern region of Nigeria decided to expand the penal aspects of Shari'ah law beyond its civil aspects to include the criminal aspects which were abrogated by the British-imposed penal code. Muslims responded positively to the Zamfara initiative and pressured northern states with a predominantly Muslim population to follow the Zamfara state example. Thus, by the end of the year 1999, twelve northern Nigerian states had expanded the jurisdiction of the Shari'ah law.

[8]On September 21, 2011, "The Punch," a national newspaper in Nigeria featured an interview by the Agency Reporter with Tishau, one of the group's leaders. In the interview, Tishau stated that the group's aim is to spread Islam all over Nigeria, with the demand that all the states who have independently declared to be part of the "shari'ah states" should implement or enforce its laws to the letter, that is, in both civil and criminal matters, a quest that has been considered by many non-Muslim Nigerians and international observers as a move to make Islam the official state religion.

[9]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 17.

[10]Dean S. Gilliland, *African Religion Meets Islam: Religious Change in Northern Nigeria* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 187.

includes its criminal aspects is to deny them the right to religious freedom. Many Muslims in Northern Nigeria joyfully embraced the introduction of shari'ah with the expectation that it would improve their security situation and living conditions.[11] Moreover, they argued that before the colonization of the region now known as Northern Nigeria by Britain in the early 19th century, shari'ah was practiced in its full sense within the region. As a result, they tend to view the full reintroduction of shari'ah as the restitution of the rights that they had lost during the colonial era.[12]

On the other hand, many Nigerian Christians and some international observers consider this act of the introduction of shari'ah as a preliminary stage to the proclamation of an Islamic state, and a threat to their fundamental human rights as stipulated in section 38 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.[13] As enshrined in the Constitution of Nigeria, "The Government of the Federation or a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion."

Emergence of a Culture of Intolerance

Although, beginning from 1903, Islam seems to have lost its momentum as the dominant religion in Northern Nigeria with the consolidation of British colonial rule over that region; however, colonial policies were such that the interests of the Islamic religion

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[11]Gunnar J. Weimann, "Divine Law and Local Customs in Northern Nigerian Zina Trials," *Die Welt des Islams* 49, no. 3-4 (2009): 430.

[12]Frieder Ludwig, "Christian-Muslims Relations in Northern Nigeria Since the Introduction of Shari'ah in 1999," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (2008): 603.

[13]Federal Government of Nigeria, *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999* (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Government Press, 1999).

were generally protected to a large extent. British colonial authorities restricted the activities of Christian missionaries to only those places that were approved by Muslim rulers within the region.[14] However, Muslim elites of Northern Nigeria tended to portray the period of British occupation of the region as an era that witnessed the decline of the Islamic religion.[15] This could be partially true only in relation to Islam's political dominance.

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[14]Duncan Black Macdonald Center., Hartford Seminary Foundation, *The Muslim World: A Quarterly Review of History, Culture, Religions and the Christian Mission in Islamdom* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1948), 2-7.

[15]Muhammad S. Umar, *Islam and Colonialism*, 18-63. In most recent times, in the wake of the popular demand for the restructuring of the Nigerian state, another pro-Islam Nigerian rights group, Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), has issued a statement demanding certain rights for Muslims in the country. They contend that Islam has been in Nigeria since the 11th century and the British met Islam on ground when they arrived in the 19th century (800 years later). However, the British did not deem it fit to observe the rules of natural justice when they colonized the country, and all Islamic landmarks were eliminated and supplanted with a wholly Christian system. Further, they suggest that this injustice may be the root cause of most religious crises in Nigeria as such they seek five reliefs for Muslims in Nigeria.

One: that restructuring should give Nigerian Muslims an additional holiday (Muharram, a sort of commemorative fast holiday) as a means of closing the disparity between the number of Christian-based holidays, and Muslim-based holidays in the country. Presently the Nigerian government observes eight public holidays in a year: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday,

Id al-Kabir, Id al-Fitr, and Maulud an-Nabiyy. Of the eight, MURIC argue that five are for Christians.

Two: that the Muslim marriage (nikah) be given official recognition just like the Christian marriages.

Three: that Friday, the Muslim day of worship should be declared a work-free day since Sunday, and Saturday are made work-free days to allow both Sunday observing and Seventh-day Adventist Christians the freedom to worship.

Four: that the Nigerian authorities must find a way to stop the current profiling and persecution of Muslims by the Nigerian immigration officials, who often subject Muslim clients to all sorts of un-Islamic practices, such as ordering Muslim males to remove their caps; Imams are coerced into removing their turbans; bearded Muslims are compelled to shave or trim their beards; hijab-wearing Muslim women are made to remove their hijabs or ordered to draw their hijab backwards to reveal their ears.

Five: that Muslims serving in the army, police, or working as nurses, or students, or serving in any capacity that requires the use of uniformed clothing be allowed to use Muslim appropriate uniforms as alternatives.

Six: that the Nigerian government should establish a Shari'ah court in South Western Nigeria where there is none currently. The group argue that Muslims constitute the majority in South Western Nigeria, and it was the British colonial authorities disbanded the Shari'ah court system and replaced them with the Christo-Western Court system. See Ishaq Akintola, "Restructuring: Islamic group, MURIC, seeks six reliefs for Nigerian Muslims," *Premium Times Nigeria*, October 9, 2017, accessed October 9, 2017, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/245569-restructuring-islamic-group-muric-seeks-six-reliefs-nigerian-muslims.html.

Islamic fundamentalists and their sympathizers tend to portray Islam as the indigenous religion of Northern Nigeria, overlooking the pre-Islamic existence of traditional religious practices within the region. Such a notion is based on the prejudices held by some early Muslim and Christian missionaries who depicted the Nigerian indigenous culture as primitive, and its religious practices as fetishism, heathenism, and animism.[16] Both Muslims and Christians generally refer to adherents of ATR as pagans or animists. Thus considering ancient Nigerian people as a people without religion.

According to Parrinder, "African religion has been more misunderstood, and has suffered more at the hands of the early writers, than any other part of African life. Unhappily old misconceptions linger with us still."[17] He further notes that it was not as if the old writers were all bad observers, some of them had the unique opportunity, and indeed witnessed first-hand, some of the ancient African traditional rites, some of which are no longer practiced by adherents of ATR. Moreover, the "depreciatory language which they often used, and the semi-humorous attitude many of them took up, has infected succeeding generations."[18] The terms or names ("paganism" and "animism") by

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[16]Aguwa, "Christianity and the Nigerian Indigenous Culture," in *Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu*, eds. Chama J. Korieh and G. Ugo Nwokeji (New York: University Press of America, 2005), 20.

[17]Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion* (London: Hutchison's University Library, 1954), 13.

[18]Ibid.

which some writers[19] describe African religions have often led to these misconceptions.

It is apparent from an African religion point of view that such terms—"paganism" and "animism" are inadequate in describing religious people in the Northern Nigerian context. Some general missiological and anthropological definitions, and thus an understanding of the term "paganism" tend to equate magic with religion, and the term "animism" is devoid of any notion of the Supreme Being.[20] Contrary to these misconceptions, several studies[21] have shown that the traditional African believed in the Supreme God. Notwithstanding the evidence, "some modern scholars, who seem to be taking their views as normative for religion in general, still persist in seeing the ontology of traditional Africans from the eyes of outside observers rather than the people themselves."[22] Such inherited prejudices may partly account for the intolerant attitude often demonstrated by Muslims and Christians in acts of intolerance toward the

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[19]During the early twentieth century with the exception of a few, most scholars of African Religion, especially those who are not of African origin, prefer to use the terms "paganism" and "animism." See for example, J. Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 43, 53; I. M. Lewis, ed., *Islam in Tropical Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Fifth International African Seminar, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, January 1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 58 ff. Recent scholarship greatly discredited the use of the term animism to describe African Traditional Religions. See for instance, Darryl Wilkinson, "Is There Such a Thing as Animism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 85, no. 2 (June, 2017): 289-311, accessed June 17, 2019, http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=b17bbbc4-83eb-485b-b4ca-a662062b4565%40pdc-v-sessmgr01.

[20]Some of these misconceptions about the African traditional religions are found in Hamilton A. R. Gibb, Stanford J. Shaw, and William R. Polk, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2010), and Edwin W. Smith, ed., *African Ideas of God* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1950). For an extensive discussion on the inadequacies of the terms "paganism" and "animism" in describing African indigenous religions, see Samuel Babs Mala, "The Origin and Development of the Mosque in Pre-Colonial West Africa" (MA thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1973).

[21]Among these studies are John Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London; S.P.C.K., 1969), 16-20; Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion,* 39-47; Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman Green, 1962), 30-56, 140-143; and *African Traditional Religion: A Definition* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 116-136.

[22]Mala, "The Origin and Development of the Mosque in Pre-Colonial West Africa," 30.

indigenous culture and religion of Northern Nigeria.

For instance, during the thirteenth century, Mai (a royal title) Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221-1259), the ruler of Kanem-Borno, who converted to Islam, generally pressured his followers to abandon traditional religious practices and embrace Islam. In demonstrating his objection toward the indigenous traditional religious practices of his kingdom, the Mai desecrated a sacred indigenous traditional religious artifact of high significance, called the *mune* (according to speculations, the *mune* was an ancient statue of the Nile Valley god, *Amun*).[23] If this speculation is valid and accepted, then *mune* was a foreign idol brought into traditional beliefs in Kanem-Borno. Could it be true, as argued by some scholars,[24] that ATR is more tolerant than both Islam and Christianity?

Also, Islamic fundamentalists in Northern Nigeria tend to regard the presence of Western civilization and Christianity in the region as an encroachment that has distorted the Islamic way of life and its system of law and education, resulting in gross acts of corruption and degeneration of Muslims in Nigeria. As such, their struggle is to return to the basis of Islam, through the reintroduction of the practices of shari'ah. The quest to

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[23]Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 90.

[24]Benezet Bujo, a Catholic theologian, asserts that there were no religious wars in Africa prior to the introduction of Christianity and Islam to the continent. See *African Theology in Its Social Context* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 55; Similarly, Ali Mazrui, an Islamic scholar, made his argument even more poignant by asserting that among the three major religious legacies in Africa (ATR, Islam, and Christianity), ATR is the most tolerant. He further posited that it might be safe to argue that before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to Africa, there were no religious wars on the continent because the indigenous religions did not engage in any sort of proselytization activities. See Ali Mazrui, "Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter Conquest," in *Religion and Society*, ed. Rose Ure Muzu (Baltimore, MD: Black Academy Press, 1998), 71-91; In support of these views, Matthew Kukah has suggested that the toleration displayed by adherents of traditional religion in part accounts for the spread of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria? But the zeal demonstrated by some among the propagators of Islam and Christianity hardly show reciprocity of tolerance toward those remaining in the traditional religion. See Matthew H. Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books, 1993), ix.

reintroduce shari'ah and the subsequent actions taken by fundamentalist groups have once again raised the question of the heritage, if any, of religious freedom and tolerance in Northern Nigeria.

The following maps (figures 1 and 2) show the various regions of modern day Nigeria and States where Shari'ah law is in force. The first map shows the 36 states, the federal capital city, and various regions of Nigeria, while the second map shows the 12 Northern Nigeria states where Shari'ah law has been introduced. In October 1999, Zamfara, a state in the northwest region of Nigeria expanded the penal aspects of Shari'ah law beyond its civil aspects to include the criminal aspects, which were abrogated by the British-imposed penal code. Muslims, especially in Northern Nigeria states where their population far exceeds adherents of other religions, responded positively to the Zamfara state initiative and pressured their various political leaders to follow the Zamfara state example. Thus, by the end of the year 1999, twelve Northern Nigeria states had expanded the jurisdiction of Shari'ah law.

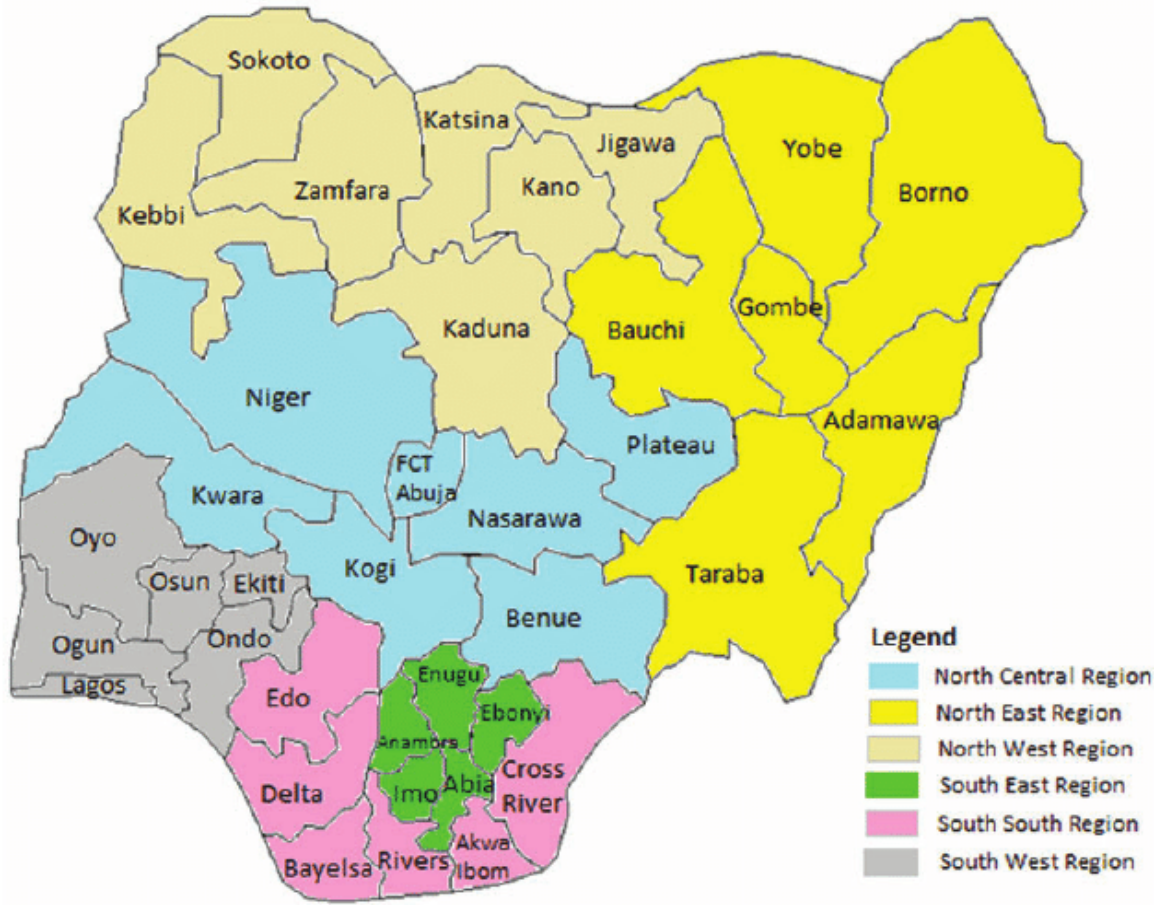

Figure 1. Map of Nigeria showing 36 states, the Federal Capital Territory, and the various regions of Nigeria. *Source:* "ResearchGate," uploaded by Ezra Gayawan, assessed February 3, 2019, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Nigeria-showing-the-36-states-and-Federal-Capital-Territory-FCT-Abuja_fig1_260023562.

Figure 2. Map of Nigeria showing 12 Northern Nigerian states where Shari'ah law is being practiced. *Source*: "Constitutionnet," accessed February 3, 2019, http://constitutionnet.org/news/sharia-and-nigerian-constitution-strange-bedfellows.

CHAPTER 3

A BACKGROUND OF RELATIVE TOLERANCE: BORNO, KANO, AND SOKOTO FROM PRE-ISLAMIC TIMES TO THE 15TH CENTURY AD

Introduction: Making a Case for Greater Tolerance, and Even Religious Freedom in Northern Nigeria

The present composition of what is generally referred to as Northern Nigeria comprises 19[1] of the 36 states that make-up twenty-first century Nigeria. The beginning of its development can be traced back to the seventh century. A number of the states and empires that flourished in the Western and Central Sudan, which had a trade link with North Africa, later developed into what is now known as Northern Nigeria.[2]

The most populous group of people in Northern Nigeria are the Hausas.[3] The term Hausa is sometimes used linguistically to mean the group of people whose language had become the most widespread within the region or the language spoken by this group.[4]

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[1]The Northern Region of Nigeria consists of the following states: Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Kebbi, Kano, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Niger, Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

[2]Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* (London: Faber, 1962), 24-28.

[3]According to C. K. Meek, the term tribe refers to a group of people who have a common name for their language and speak the same language, irrespective of their political circumstances. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeri,* xv.

[4]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 7.

Thus, despite the existence of a multiplicity of ethnic groups and languages in Northern Nigeria,[5] people from other regions of Nigeria, quite often, generally refer to the entire people of Northern Nigeria as Hausas. Therefore, it could be said that the "Hausas are not a tribal group, [but rather] they are a community of people of various ethnic origins who speak a common language—Hausa."[6]

Kanem-Borno and the Hausa states were the most significant empires due to their size, power, and economic activities. The opening up of regular trade relations by these states with Northern Africa after its invasion by the Arabs at the end of the seventh century was a major factor to their growth. It was this trans-Sahara trade relationship with North Africa that led to the introduction of Islam to the region.[7] By the eight century, Kanem-Borno Empire had become very powerful, and remained under the control of the Sefawa dynasty[8] up to the nineteenth century AD.

The Sefawa dynasty witnessed the rise of powerful kings, known as the *Mai*, who engaged in many wars of expansion and consolidation, and with their conversion to Islam at about the late eleventh century AD, they began to promote Islamic religion and

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[5]Meek also noted that there are, in addition to the principal tribes of Northern Nigeria, Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, Nupe, and Yoruba, the majority of whom adhere to the religion of Islam, and other tribes numbering up to two hundred and fifty (250), most of whom he refers to as Animists. See *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria,* vol. 1, 23. However, such a nomenclature used by Meek to describe the religious affiliation of these other tribes can be misleading, and it further reveals the bias with which most foreigners viewed the religious beliefs of the indigenous people of Nigeria.

[6]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 3.

[7]Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, 24-25.

[8]The Sefawa dynasty was the ruling dynasty of Kanem Kingdom and the Kanem-Bornu Empire between the 11th and the 19th centuries. According to oral tradition Sefa Ben Dhu Yasan founded the dynasty. The dynasty is famous for its longevity, having ruled Kanem-Bornu for many decades, it expanded its control across Northeastern Nigeria, covering much of present-day Borno and Yobe states. Toyin Falola and Ann Genova, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 324.

learning among the conquered.[9] Shari'ah law was introduced and many mosques were built, leading to productive diplomatic relations with Muslim rulers in North Africa.[10] Kanem-Borno "became famous for its adoption of Islam, its commercial networks, and its military technology."[11] Thus, the relationship between Kanem-Borno and North Africa did not only provide commercial and technological advantages to the region, but also created an avenue through which Islam was introduced to Kanem-Borno.

Although, the introduction of Islam into Kanem-Borno is often dated in the late eleventh century AD.[12] Evidence suggests an earlier Islamic influence in the region prior to the eleventh century. It appears that the earliest indication of Islamic contact with Kanem-Borno occurred in 666-7 AD, when 'Uqba b. Nafi' led a Muslim raid that reached the region of Kawar, located on the caravan route to Kanem.[13] Although this Arab military raid was short-lived and no further attempts were made by the Arabs to invade the region, it succeeded in establishing a connection between Kanem and the Tripolitanian coast, which provided an avenue through which Islamic influence could have entered the region during the rise of the Kanem-Borno Kings (or *mai,* as they called themselves).[14]

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[9]Prior to the 19th century there were no religious wars in Northern Nigeria; the wars fought were purely of a secular nature. The desires of kings to expand their territory and influence, and the trade in slavery among other economic gains was mainly the cause of those wars.

[10]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 19.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, 28.

[13]Abdullahi Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," in *History of West Africa*, eds. J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 171.

[14]Ibid.

Also Al-Bakri in 1067 AD, made reference to the assertion that there were present in Kanem some descendants of Ummayad refugees whose customs were similar to that of the Arab Muslims of North Africa.[15] Similarly, the Borno *Mahram* (1080 AD), which specifically mentioned Umme Jilmi as the first Borno Muslim ruler seems to suggest that Islamic contact with the region predates the reign of Umme Jilmi.[16] A portion of the *Mahram* of Umme Jilmi (1080 AD) reads thus, "Islam was spreading for two years before, through Muhammad Mani, it became general."[17] Since Muhammad Mani was a contemporary of *Mai* Umme Jilmi, whose *Mahram* is dated in the late eleventh century AD, and was written solely for the benefit of the former and his descendants, it suggests that there was a minimal Islamic presence two centuries prior to the propagation of Islam in the region by Muhammad Mani. Therefore, the dating of the introduction of Islam into Kanem-Borno in the late eleventh century AD, could be due to the fact that prior to this time, Islamic presence or influence in the region was very minimal and rarely recognized. Also, there is no record of any decisive or major Islamic activities in the region prior to the late eleventh century AD.

Subsequently, Islam found its way into Hausaland through the activities of Muslim merchants and clerics and it remained largely, however, a religion of the ruling elite until the fourteenth century AD when it began to spread among the Hausa populace

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[15]Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives*, 88.

[16]Herbert R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs: Being Mainly Translations of a Number of Arabic Manuscripts Relating to Central and Western Sudan* (London: Cass, 1967), 3.

[17]Ibid.

living in cities.[18] Islam remained a nominal religion with little influence outside the cities until after the Muslim conquest during the Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1808)[19] that led to the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate.[20] Thus, beginning in 1841 AD,[21] when Christianity began to seek inroads into Northern Nigeria, Islam had already been fully consolidated in the region, making Christian missions more challenging.

Laissez Faire Tolerance before the Introduction of Islam

The early settlers of Northern Nigeria had long practiced their traditional religions before the introduction of Islam to the region.[22] Although the designation ATR seems to suggest a monolithic religion, there is great variation in the religious practices of the African people; this difference in religious practices, to a large extent, is due to the fact that ATR is not a monolithic religion,[23] and the religious practices are not derived from a unified sacred scripture or holy book like the Christian Bible or the Muslim Qur'an.[24] Adherents can choose their beliefs and express them in practical terms without the danger

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[18]Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*. 92-132; S. A. Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oluseyi Press, 1980), 213-215.

[19]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 7.

[20]Ibid., 10-15. Also, Murray Last provides a detailed account of the formation of the Hausa states, the story of the jihad, and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. See Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), lxiv-lxx, 23-45.

[21]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 17-18.

[22]Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnolds, 1982), 66-69.

[23]Festus U. Ohaegbulam, *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience from Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Laham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 105.

[24]Ibid., 106.

of being accused of heresy or falsehood.[25] The lack of holy writings for ATR introduces another dimension to the already existing challenge posed by its dynamic nature.

In ATR, there are generally no attempts made by a particular group of people to propagate their beliefs and as a result, no systematic attempts are made to proselytize. The reason for this can partly be attributed to the consistent common features shared by all the different ATR communities.[26] Such as the belief in ancestors, acts of sacrifices, offerings, prayer, invocation, blessings, and salutations, which are often carried out in order to maintain good relationships between humanity and supernatural beings, and between the spirits and the physical world. Another factor is that religion in Africa is an expression of the people's culture and experiences with nature, thus no one group of people can transfer or infuse their experience upon another group.[27] In ATR, human beings are the pivotal point of God's creation, thus all religious beliefs, practices, rituals, and ceremonies are focused on enabling its adherents to find favor with God.[28] The Worship of God in ATR is eternalized in different acts and sayings, which vary from one society to another, all depending on the group's experiences with nature and the supernatural.[29]

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[25]John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (New York: Praeger, 1975), 15-16.

[26]Ohaegbulam, *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience*, 105-106. For more on the consistent common religious features among different ATR communities see John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Hiemnemann, 1969), 58-66.

[27]Ohaegbulam, *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience*, 106.

[28]William A. Dyrness, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Juan Francisco Martínez, and Simon Chan. *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academy, 2008), 21.

[29]Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 58.

Despite the differences that existed in their religious practices, adherents of ATR in Northern Nigeria were able to create and sustain a *relatively peaceful* religious milieu. It was in this *relatively peaceful* religious atmosphere that Islam was introduced in the region. The absence of any religious scriptures in ATR from which its teachings might be derived makes it difficult to present a systematic outline of the nature of religious tolerance that existed in Northern Nigeria before the introduction of Islam to the region. However, this lack of religious scriptures in ATR such as the Christian's Bible and the Muslim's Qur'an, from which both religions derive their teachings, doctrines and beliefs tend to provide another basis through which the nature of religious tolerance in pre-Islamic Northern Nigeria might be understood.

As Mbiti asserts, the lack of scriptures in ATR has enabled the religion to move with the times, without producing any religious controversies. No one is in danger of being accused of falsehood or heresy for holding different religious views.[30] Moreover, even though the indigenous religious practices of the African people as it is practiced by its adherents in Northern Nigeria is determined by their different societies,[31] as it is in ATR generally,[32] they share some common features in their conception of God and the supernatural. These common shared religious beliefs tend to discourage proselytization among and across the various Northern Nigerian communities, thus providing an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence.

It is commonly known that most acts of religious intolerance arise due to

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[30]Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 15.

[31]Galliland, *African Religion Meets Islam*, 11.

[32]Ohaegbulam, *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience*, 105-106.

differences in religious views, and sometimes due to the desire to make converts through aggressive proclamation of religious views or doctrines. With ATR this is generally not so. The religion "evolved slowly through many centuries, as people responded to the situations of their lives and reflected upon their experiences."[33] The religion does not have an individual founder who can be referred to like Jesus Christ in Christianity and Mohammed in Islam. The reference point in ATR is its traditional or cultural legacies, which have been handed down from one generation to another.

Ali Mazrui, an Islamic scholar, asserts that among the three major religious legacies in Africa (ATR, Islam, and Christianity), ATR is the most tolerant. He also suggested that before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to Africa, there were no religious wars on the continent because the indigenous religions did not engage in any sort of proselytization activities. The absence of proselytization almost automatically leads to a lack of bitter rivalry against other creeds.[34] Similarly, Joseph Ki-Zerbo asserts that there were practically no wars of religion in the history of traditional Africa.[35] Ki-Zerbo's view is based on the notion that in the African tradition there exist a tolerance towards others, which perhaps, could "be explained by the fact that African religion did not develop through a structural elaboration of dogma but through the elaboration of

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[33]Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 14.

[34]Ricardo R. Laremont, Fouad Kalouche, and Toyin Falola, eds. *Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter Conquest; Collected Essays of Ali A. Mazrui, v*ol. 2 (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002), 235-237.

[35]Joseph Ki-Zerbo, "African Personality and the New African Society," in *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered*, ed. American Society of African Culture (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962), 271.

special social cadre of priests consecrated to the cult, the celebration of ritual, and liaison with the supernatural world."[36]

Matthew Kukah also suggests that the tolerance displayed by adherents of traditional religion in part accounts for the spread of Islam and Christianity in Northern Nigeria.[37] Mazrui's argument provides an additional framework upon which the nature of religious tolerance in pre-Islamic Northern Nigeria might be understood. He "attributes the lack of religious war in pre-Islamic, pre-Christian Africa to the non-proselytizing nature of indigenous religions and traditions."[38] Also, the absence of an individual founder of the African religion creates an atmosphere devoid of aggressive competition or proselytization. The evangelistic nature of Christianity and Islam is not an issue to be argued. The founders of these religions, Jesus Christ and Mohammed, admonished their followers to go make disciples. However, in ATR there is no such mandate given by an individual founder. Thus adherents of ATR are under no obligation to make converts, and by implication, there is no interference with other people's religious lives.

Furthermore, moral values in ATR also contribute to the shaping of its religious tolerance in pre-Islamic Northern Nigeria. Morals addresses the question of what is wrong and evil in human conduct. Such morals in African communities developed over the course of time and produced customs, rules, laws, traditions, and taboos, which are

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[36]Ki-Zerbo, "African Personality and the New African Society," 271.

[37]Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria*, 9.

[38]Makau Wa Mutua, "Limitations on Religious Rights," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspectives: Legal Perspectives,* ed. Johan David van der Vyver and John Witte Jr. (The Hague, Netherlands: Kluwar Law International, 1996), 429.

observed in each society.[39] In ATR moral ethics relates to belief in God, human origin, and religion in general. Because the African does not separate his or her culture from religion, it is expected that everyone living within a community knows what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable.

The knowledge of such acceptable norms is not based on a written code or book, which defines the moral values of the community, but rather the communal life, lived by the people and their familiarity with the environment leads to an understanding of how situations are dealt with from past experiences.[40] Such past experiences are often related to the people's religious practices.

Also, the African does not believe in individualism. One does not live apart from the community; therefore, it is an ethical principle to behave in accordance with the community, and to promote and strive to maintain it. Thus, inhabitants of a community are expected to show reverence or respect for one another, especially to their rulers—reverence for humanity is a fundamental form of conduct, which renders communal life pleasant and harmonious.[41] As further demonstrated in the Yoruba traditional religion in Nigeria, the myth of creation holds that all humans have a universal common descent from the same Creator God. From this arises the African belief for the need to respect all human religious orientations as a condition for peaceful co-existence among peoples and

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[39]Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 175.

[40]Theo Sundermeier, *The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religions* (Hamburg, Germany: LIT, 1998), 175.

[41]Ibid., 180.

nations.[42]

Thus, in the African traditional context, no community crosses its boundaries to another with the aim to introduce its cultural practices based on the assumption that its religious beliefs and practices are superior to that of other communities or people. People are basically more or less concerned with their immediate communities. The attitude demonstrated among adherents of ATR in Northern Nigeria was that of respecting individual religious preferences. Primarily, tolerance in ATR is not the result of written religious doctrines or creeds and this lack of written religious codes seems to allow for an accommodation of a variety of religious practices.[43] Such could have been the nature of religious tolerance in Northern Nigeria before the introduction of Islam to the region.

Religious rivalry that often culminates in violent crisis as witnessed in the history of Northern Nigeria beginning in the nineteenth-century, was absent in the indigenous Northern Nigeria society prior to the introduction and consolidation of Islam and Christianity in the region. Also, religious related crises in twenty-first century Northern Nigeria has mainly always been between adherents of Islam and Christianity. The fact that both Muslims and Christians alike have been involved in violent religious related crises in Northern Nigeria is undisputable. There is no history of religious triggered violent crises within an exclusive Northern Nigeria African Religious society. Also, unlike adherents of Islam and Christianity, adherents of ATR have not been the cause of

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[42]Wande Abimbola, "The Attitude of Yoruba Religion Toward Non-Yoruba," in *Attitudes of Religions and Ideologies toward the Outsider*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 138.

[43]Emmanuel Abar, "Tolerance in African Traditional Religion," *Journal of Adventist Missions Studies* 9, no. 2 (2013): 116-25.

any religious crises in Northern Nigeria.

Religious Tolerance During Early Islam (11th to 14th Century AD)

The period designated as early Islam in both Kanem-Borno and Hausaland (Kano in particular) for the purpose of this work is from the eleventh to the thirteenth century AD. It is generally accepted among scholars[44] that Islam was peacefully introduced into the region now known as Northern Nigeria via the activities of Islamic traders, scholars, and clerics. This view of the peaceful introduction of Islam into Northern Nigeria is further underscored by the relative peaceful religious interactions that existed in the region prior to the arrival and spread of Islam beginning in the 11th century AD.

Also, there are no records in the history of Borno that indicate hostility towards the forerunners of the foreign religion (Muslim merchants and clerics) who first propagated Islam in the region. There seems to exist a practice of non-interference with other's religious ideologies and practices among adherents of ATR, which in turn created a relatively tolerable environment, allowing for a new home for Islam. From this tolerant base, Islam subsequently spread within the region and beyond.

The various *mahrams*[45] (grants of privilege) issued by ancient Borno rulers provide additional insight to understanding the nature of relationship between adherents

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[44]Islam reached other parts of Africa (mostly West Africa) at different periods, not through Arab conquests but mainly through the peaceful work of missionaries and traders. Holy men and scholars traveled to various places to preach and teach. The migration of Muslim groups spread Islam to new areas. Muslim traders served as self-appointed missionaries, taking Islam to areas where they had established contacts. The process was slow and it continued well into the twentieth century. Toyin Falola, *Key Events in African History: A Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 85-86.

[45]For a detailed account of these *mahrams* (grants of privilege) see Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and the Sudan* (London: John Murray, 1936), 14-52.

of ATR and Islam in the Kanem-Borno Empire during early Islam. The Borno *mahrams* are letters or documents, stipulating certain privileges granted to individuals and their descendants for their distinctive services to the state.[46]

> The Mahrams were meant for the first beneficiary and his descendants, remaining valid till the end of time (end of the world). They were, therefore, preserved by the recipient family, which periodically sought their renewal on the accession of a new ruler. A new ruler had the power to add new privileges and exemptions as he saw fit. . . . Mahram is derived from the Arabic word HARAM (forbidden) but literally it means something which is sacred. Once conferred, a mahram insulated its grantees from civic duties such as payment of taxes, military service, hospitality charges, etc., and state officials were strictly forbidden from touching their belongings or harming their persons in any form.
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> The practice of giving out mahrams by Kanem/Borno rulers had been integrated into the political system since the eleventh century. Mai (king) Hume Jilmi generally believed to be the first of the Sefawa dynasty to embrace Islam was also the first ruler to grant a mahram, and the first recipient was his teacher, Muhammad ibn Mani, a scholar who had been responsible for the conversion of the ruling dynasty to Islam.[47]

Some of the privileges granted in these *mahrams* (rights of privilege) appear to ensure certain religious rights, suggestive of an attempt to preclude acts of religious intolerance; this makes the Borno *mahrams* (rights of privilege) worthy of closer consideration. For the purpose of this work, we shall consider a few of these Borno *mahrams* (rights of privilege)—the *mahrams* of Mai (king), Umme Jilmi (1086-1097 AD), and that of Mai Tsilim Bikurmi (1194-1221 AD).

A portion of Umme Jilmi's *mahram* reads thus:

> Hear and understand that five ethnic groups are *haram* (forbidden or sacred; in this context it means sacred) to me; firstly, Mu'allim Muhammad ibn Mani, from whom I learnt the Kura'an and Risala; . . . Mai Umme and Muhammad ibn Mani spread Islam to last till the day of judgment. The goods of Mohammad ibn Mani the First are *haram* till the day of judgment, to the Beni Umme or any besides. He who disobeys

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[46]Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa,* 110.

[47]Muhammadu Aminu, "The Place of the Mahrams in the History of Kanem- Borno," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, no. 4 (1981): 32-34, accessed March 7, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857094.

> the command of the king, and transgresses, and sins, may God not give him heaven, but may he fill
> his belly with the fire of hell. He who follows my command, may God order his well-being in this life and the next.
>
> Says the Sultan Umme, the noble—Their goods and blood from the time of Muhammad ibn Mani are in the keeping of the Beni Umme, and all others; I consider them as the flesh of swine, or the flesh the dog, or the flesh of a monkey or ass. He who eats their goods, may God fill his belly with the fires of hell; there is no hurt in leaving their property to them. He among them who does a wrong let the matter be left to their chief; there is no other way than this. This is the command of the Sultan;
>
> change it not nor alter it, and oppress not the children of Muhammad ibn Mani, forever.
>
> I make their land *habus* (sacred); let them be ennobled in their faith.[48]

A portion of a second *mahram* granted by Umme Jilmi in 1086 AD, to the Masbarma family reads as follows:

> I have made your goods and the goods of your descendants haram to the service of God, and His Prophet, by reason of the merit of knowledge. . . . The chief shall not enter their houses, and their portion is far other than that of mere worldings; of that which is the custom they are free, their only duty is to pray, and marry the Sultan's daughter, and settle disputes relating to women, and pray for the Sultan.[49]

The *mahram* (rights of privilege) of Tsilim Bikurmi[50] to the N'galma Duku[51] family includes the following privileges, "There shall be for them no military service, or obligation to entertain chiefs, nor shall they be liable to go on jihad or to be fined, or

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[48]Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and the Sudan*, 14-15.

[49]Ibid., 16.

[50]Ibid., 13.

[51]The N'galma Duku are one of the chief Kanembu (an ethnic group of Chad, generally considered to be the modern descendants of the Kanem-borno Empire) tribes of the present day. For more reading on the Kanembu, see Stuart J. Olson, *The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 271.

perform any other customary task; Their work is to pray only. Their affairs are in God's keeping."[52]

Although the descriptive privileges in the above *mahrams* (grants of privileges) do not explicitly address issues of religious tolerance and freedom, it is evident that the language employed in these *mahrams* addresses certain religious concerns of its beneficiaries, who in this particular case were mostly Muslim clerics. This in turn raises the question as to whether the issuance of these *mahrams* (grants of privileges) by Borno kings or rulers was an attempt to promote religious freedom and tolerance.

The practice of issuing *mahrams* (grants of privilege), once began by Mai Umme Jilmi (1086-1097 AD), continued to the reign of Sheikh Ul Amin (1806 AD), and benefited mostly the *ulemas* (religious scholars) class, who constituted a literate and knowledgeable group in the society.[53] Most of these *mahrams* (grants of privilege) exempted Islamic clerics and their families from certain requirements of traditional customs or customary duties such as "military service, or the obligation to entertain chiefs," going on a jihad, and certain fines or taxes.[54] It is apparent that Islamic clerics enjoyed various privileges, which could have helped to protect their religious rights and promote their religious interest. It must be noted that Islam was still at its infant stage in Northern Nigeria during the period (eleventh to the twelfth centuries AD) the above *mahrams* were granted, and thus should not be assumed to serve as an affront by Islam against the indigenous religion, but instead it could and should be seen as an attempt by

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[52]Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and the Sudan*, 19.

[53]Aminu, "The Place of the Mahrams in the History of Kanem- Borno," 33.

[54]Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and the Sudan*, 19.

early Islam, a minority religion at this period to preclude any form of religious misunderstanding that might arise between its adherents and those of the indigenous religions.

The fact that the issuance of *mahrams* (right of privileges) began with Mai (king) Hume Jilmi (1086-1097 AD), the first of the Sefawa dynasty to embrace Islam, and the first recipient was his teacher, Muhammad ibn Mani, a scholar who had been responsible for the conversion of the ruling dynasty to Islam, suggests that Mai Umme might have been educated into the tradition of issuing *mahrams* (right of privileges) by the Islamic scholar, Muhammad ibn Mani. If this assumption holds credence, then it could be inferred that the *mahrams* (grants of privileges) even though were granted as rewards for services rendered to the state, portray an early Islamic attempt to preserve a tradition of tolerance in its newly found home—the Kanem-Borno Empire. This suggestion is further strengthened by the following analysis.

The Borno *mahrams* (grants of privilege) as exemplified by the *mahrams* (grants of privilege) cited in this study have some similarities to acts of religious tolerance demonstrated by Muslims toward adherents of other religious traditions elsewhere. Islam has not only claimed to be a religion of peace, a religion that does not believe in compulsion in matters of faith,[55] but has also in its relationship with other religions, demonstrated acts of religious tolerance on different occasions in its history.

Hence it is vital to consider few examples of religious tolerance in Islamic history.

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[55]The Qur'an states that "there should be no compulsion in the matter of faith." See *Qur'an* 2:256.

Also, these examples might further show how the current treatments[56] of other religions, particularly, Christianity, and ATR by Islam in Northern Nigeria have greatly diverged from Islam's historical roots.

The most revered Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad, in 628 AD, wrote a letter granting a "Charter of Privileges" to the monks of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. This letter is an early example of religious freedom and tolerance toward Christians. It ensured several human rights, such as the freedom of worship, and movement, freedom for Christians to appoint their judges and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right of protection in war.[57] The full text of the letter follows:

> This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them.
>
> No compulsion is to be upon them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslim's houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them.
>
> If a Christian female is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the

[56]In Northern Nigeria, Islam, the most populous religion has often used its numerical strength to determine the direction of the political, economic, and religious compass of the region, mostly to its advantage, and often at the detriment of adherents of other religious traditions. These acts of religious intolerance on several occasions have led to religious related conflicts.

[57]Kelly J. Clark, ed., *Abrahams' Children: Liberty and Tolerance in an Age of Religious Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 228.

covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).[58]

Similarly, Caliph Omar offered the people of Jerusalem a covenant of peace that provided both Jews and Christians the freedom of religion.[59] Omar, in a letter written to governor Adi ibn Artat instructed that Muslims should endeavor to treat non-Muslims tenderly, and care and provide for the elderly non-Muslims.[60] Also, Islam has shown a culture of inclusion in its system of government. For instance, during Muhammad bin Qasim's Islamic rule in the Indian sub-continent, in the early eighth century, both Buddhists and Hindus were appointed to serve in the administration as trusted advisors and governors.[61] Also, Muslim Sufis, of the Chistiya order, demonstrated a very liberal attitude toward other faiths, and even assimilated certain aspects of the local customs and traditions of the Indian sub-continent and gave them Islamic form.[62] Another stark example of Islamic tolerance is the peaceful co-existence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Islamic Spain in the ninth century AD. Here, adherents of these three religious traditions used to pray in the same house of worship, the Great Mosque of Cordoba (today, the Cordoba Cathedral).[63]

Such acts tend to portray Islam as more liberal, and willing to assimilate in order

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[58]Akram Zahoor, *Muslim History, 570-1950 C.E.: Chronology* (Gaithersburg, MD: AZP, 2000), 167.

[59]Clark, *Abrahams's Children*, 228.

[60]Muhammad Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* (Beirut, Lebanon: Holy Koran Publishing House, 1997).

[61]Clark, *Abraham's Children*, 226, 229.

[62]Ali Asghar Engineer, *Islam in Contemporary World* (New Delhi, India: New Dawn Press, 2007), 54, 56-58.

[63]Clark, *Abraham's Children*, 230

to maintain a tradition of religious freedom and tolerance where it exists. Thus correlating with the activities of early Islam in the Kanem-Borno Empire, whereby proselytized indigenous rulers granted *mahrams* (rights of privilege) that protected not only the social lives of the grantees, but also, their religious interest.

Another point, which lays further credence to the assertion that during early Islam, there was relative tolerance within the Kanem-Borno Empire, is the fact that long after the Islamization of the region, certain practical aspects of 'divine kingship' were still being practiced. For instance, "the ritual seclusion of the monarch (which is of course very un-Islamic) continued to be practiced long after the introduction of Islam."[64] Only a tolerant Islam could allow such practices to continue in a society where its influence was becoming dominant. The activities of Muslim Sufis of the Chistiya order in India, whereby, they assimilated local customs and traditions, had shown that the Islamic attitude of allowing a leeway in its interactions with other faiths was not peculiar to Kanem-Borno.[65]

The presence of such indigenous religious practice (which was essentially un-Islamic in nature) in an Islamized society suggests that the laissez faire tolerance that existed in Kanem-Borno before the introduction of Islam was sustained in the region during early Islam. More so, it also shows that both adherents of the traditional religion and Islam were, at least for the time being, committed to the preservation of a peaceful co-existence within the region.

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[64]Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 168-169, 171. For more reading on the 'divine kingship' see A. J. Arkell, "The Medieval History of Darfur II," *Sudan Notes and Records* xxxii (Khartoum, Sudan: The Middle East Press, 1951), 225-238.

[65] Engineer, *Islam in Contemporary World*, 54, 56-58.

Prior to the arrival of Islam in Kano, the *Maguzawa*,[66] who were the pre-jihadic rulers of Kano, practiced their indigenous Hausa religion known as *maguzci* or *maguzanci*.[67] "The Sarki (king) himself seems also to have been a leader of public religious ritual."[68] The pre-Islamic religious practices in Kano was similar to that of other Nigerian ethnic groups, the indigenous inhabitants of Kano had their own traditional religion rooted and manifested in their belief system. They believed in the existence of supernatural forces that are thought to be directly in touch with mankind and controlling its affairs and destiny. "These supernatural forces were accorded their rightful place in the scheme of things through constant worship and sacrifices to them."[69]

Unlike the history of Islam in Kanem-Borno Empire, the account on the introduction of Islam in Hausaland (particularly in Kano) portrays certain acts, suggestive

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[66]Danfulani, in his work, "Factors Contributing to the Survival of the Bori Cult in Northern Nigeria," provides a succinct explanation of the term Maguzawa, as follows: The term Maguzawa supposedly emanated from the Arabic *majus*, meaning "pagans." Another version states that it emerged from the name of the pagan ancestor of the Hausa, known as Bama. According to a myth, Bama refused the Muslim prayer (sallah). Whenever he was invited to pray, he would reply *sai gobe*, meaning until tomorrow. Thus he was called Bama gujen sallah, that is, 'Bama-runner-away from prayer' because he always ran away from prayer. Therefore, Bamaguje, the Hausa singular for Maguzawa, reflects the possible rejection of Islam on their part since term could easily have been derived from *maguji* (sing.) and *maguda* (pl.), which both mean 'runner (s)-away-from', fugitive (s), or deserter (s). Though this myth provides some information on how the name probably came into existence, it may, however, still portray the disdain and apathy with which Hausa Muslim regard the Maguzawa adherents of the Hausa traditional religion. The Maguzawa are still regarded by their kinsmen, Hausa Muslims of Kano, Kastina, and Zaria, and other cities of Northern Nigeria as *arna*, which is "infidels."

[67]Umar Habila Dedam Danfulani, "Factors Contributing to the Survival of the Bori Cult in Northern Nigeria," *Numen* 46, no. 4 (1999): 416-417, accessed April 20, 2016, http://www.jstore.org/stable/3270434.

[68]Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 196.

[69] Olayemi Akinwumi and Adesina Y. Raji, "The Wangarawa Factor in the History of Nigerian Islam: The Example of Kano and Borgu," *Islamic Studies* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 376, accessed February 23, 2017, http://jstor/stable/20840012.

of religious conflicts between Islam and ATR. *The Kano Chronicle*[70] associates the coming of the *Wangarawa*—a group of Mande Dyula Muslim merchants, scholars and clerics from Melle (Mali) with the introduction of Islam into Hausaland (Kasar Hausa as called in the Hausa language)[71] during the reign of Yaji, Sarkin Kano (1349-1385 AD).[72] According to *The Kano Chronicle*, Abdurahaman Zaite led a contingent of 40 Muslim immigrants to Kano. They proselytized the Sarki (king or ruler), who in turn built a mosque, and appointed some of the Muslim immigrants to several offices associated with the practice of Islam—he appointed a Muezzin and Liman to lead the prayers, a slaughter-man responsible for the slaughtering of whatever animal was to be eaten, and another as Alkali (judge) to judge cases according to Islamic traditions and law.[73]

In addition, it is mentioned that Yaji ordered all within his sphere of influence to accept Islam, but a certain chief (Sarkin Gazarzawa) who was inclined to the practices of ATR opposed Islam and began to defile the mosque. As a result, the Muslims provided a

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[70]"The Kano Chronicle" is a native history of Kano written in Arabic, which seems to provide much of the history of Kano. Despite the question on the reliability of this source document, it still remains one of the main sources greatly relied on by historians who have studied and written about ancient Kano. See Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 60.

[71]Ibid. Kasar Hausa (Hausaland) is the land of those who speak the Hausa language as their mother tongue. It covers a large area of northern Nigeria and part of the present-day Republic of Niger. There is an ongoing debate regarding the origin of the Hausas. Some scholars lean toward the view that suggests a northern, perhaps Sahara origin for Hausa, while others suggest that Hausa spreads from east to west across the savanna belt of northern Nigeria. For more reading on the development of the Hausa culture, language, and extent of governmental changes that occurred in parts of Hausaland during the introduction of Islam especially in the fifteenth century, see J. E. G. Sutton, "Towards a Less Orthodox Chronology of Hausaland," *Journal of African History* 20, no. 2 (1997): 129-201; A. Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 183-199; Finn Fuglestad, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad," *Journal of African History* 19, no. 3 (1978): 319-339.

[72]Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs,* 92-132. The title, Sarkin Kano, is the Hausa for chief of Kano.

[73]Muslim advocates of Sharia in northern Nigeria generally argue that Sharia is indigenous to the region and was only destructed by the colonialists beginning in the nineteenth centuries. However, before the arrival of Islam in northern Nigeria, the people of this region had their traditional system of government and laws.

security of armed guardsmen in order to forestall the defilement. However, the security measure failed to deter Sarkin Gazarzawa, who continued to defile the mosque until through the prayers of the Muslims, both Sarkin Gazarzawa and his accomplices were rendered blind.[74]

It appears, according to the narrative that Yaji was further impressed by this supernatural phenomenon, thus he requested the *Wangarawa* to pray for the success of his ambition to conquer the men of Santolo (a neighboring region or town to Kano), which he claimed was key to conquering every town in the country. Following Yaji's request, the *Wangarawa* Muslims did not stop at merely praying for Yaji and his men, but also joined forces with Yaji, defeated the men of Santolo, and destroyed their sacred place and artifacts of worship.[75] It must be noted however, that Yaji's military endeavor against Santolo was not a Jihad[76] (religious war) even though he employed the assistance of religious men (immigrant Wangarawa Muslims), and his victory against the men of Santolo overtly depended on the Wangarawa Muslims. It is more evident that Yaji's war against Santolo was more or less political—the desire to expand his secular authority.

It must also be noted that Islam had not become fully consolidated in Kano during the reign of Yaji (1349-1385), otherwise, how could one explain the latter reverting to the

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[74]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 70-71.

[75]Ibid., 71-72.

[76]The circumstances leading to the war lacked the characteristics and underlying principles upon which a Jihad could be waged. "It is not the religious identity of a people which justifies the use of force against them, but their aggression and crimes against the Muslim community." See "The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought," (2009, Jordan): *Jihad and the Islamic Law of War*, accessed May 2, 2017, file:///Users/emmanuelabar/Downloads/jihad_final%20(2).pdf; Ahmed Al-Dawoody, *Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

practices of ATR by his son and second successor—Sarkin Kano, Kanajeji (1390-1410).[77] Kanajeji would not have easily reverted to the practices of ATR if Islam had become fully consolidated in Kano during the reign of his father, Yaji. This is because the presence of a strong Islamic tradition would have made it impossible for a non-Muslim to ascend the throne or for a reigning king to revert or reconvert to ATR. Moreover, additional information suggests that Islam was introduced into Hausaland at different phases. Such information helps in our understanding of the development of Islam in the region.

According to the *Kano Chronicle*, another group of Muslim immigrants came to Kano during the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 AD) with the mission to establish Islam. The story asserts that their leader, Abdu Rahaman, was commanded in a dream by the Prophet of Islam (Mohammed)[78] to, "get up and go west to establish Islam."[79]

> Abdu Rahaman got up and took a handful of the soil of Medina, and put it in a cloth and brought it to Hausaland. Whenever he came to a town, he took a handful of the soil of the country and put it beside that of Medina. If they did not correspond he passed that town. So he journeyed until he came to Kano. And when he compared the soil of Kano with Medina soil they resembled one another and became as one soil. So he said, "This is the country I saw in my dream." And he took up his abode at Panisau. Then he sent in to the Sarkin Kano. The Sarkin Kano Rimfa went out together with his men, and escorted Abdu Rahaman back to the city together with his

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[77]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 73-74. In *The Kano Chronicle*, Kanajeji (1390-1410) is said to be a practitioner of the traditional religion, even though his father Yaji had converted to Islam.

[78]"Muslims and Bahá'ís belief that Muhammad is the messenger and prophet of God. With the exception of Ahmadi Muslims, he is almost universally considered by Muslims as the last prophet sent by God to mankind. While non-Muslims regard him as the founder of Islam, Muslims considers him as the restorer of the unaltered original monotheistic faith of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets." For more reading about Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, see Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: Prophet for Our Time* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), and Elton E. H. Hayes, *Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam* (General Books, 2010) among others.

[79]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 77.

men, . . . ten in all. Abdu Rahaman lived in Kano and established Islam. He brought with him many books. He ordered Rimfa to build a mosque for Friday (worship), and to cut down the sacred tree and build a minaret on the site. And when he had established the faith of Islam, and learned men had grown numerous in Kano, and all the country round had accepted the faith, Abdu Karimi returned to Massar, leaving Sidi Fari as his deputy to carry on his work.[80]

The above story correlates with another version of the story in a seventeenth century document, *Asl al-Wangariyin*, whereby the coming of the *Wangarawa* with the religion of Islam to Kano is situated in the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 AD).[81] Also, as Balogun[82] suggests, there might have been some sort of Islamic contact with Kano, possibly through Borno prior to the arrival of the *Wangarawa* Muslims who came during the reign of Yaji (1349-1385 AD), in the second half of the fourteenth century AD.[83] This group of *Wangarawa* Muslims who came during the reign of Yaji were basically traders from the west, whose interest was primarily commerce and not to spread Islam, thus the influence of the religion remained largely within the city,and among the ruling elite, while the masses largely held unto their traditional religion during the fourteenth century.

It was during the reigns of Yakubu (1452-1463 AD), and his successor, Rumfa

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[80] Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 77.

[81]Muhammad Al-Hajj, "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle on the Origin and Missionary Activities of the Wangarawa," *Kano Studies* 1, no. 4 (1968): 7-42.

[82]S. A. Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," 213-214.

[83]Balogun suggests that there is a possible Islamic contact with Kano through Borno prior to the arrival of the *Wangarawa* Muslims who came during the reign of Yaji (1349-1385). "The Kano Chronicle" also supports this view; in one version of the native tradition of the Hausa-land, Bayajida and his people who arrived at Daura (part of Hausa-land) and conquered the indigenous inhabitants of the Hausa States are linked to Borno. These people by implication were adherents of the Islamic religion who sought to suppress traditional religious practices (a story, which is hard to believe), but instead, lapsed into the religious practices of the indigenous people. Thus the Wangarawa are later on credited with introducing Islam to Hausaland. See Palmer, *The Kano Chronicle*, 61-62. For a more detailed discussion of this view, read Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," 12-16.

(1463-1499 AD), in the second half of the fifteenth century that the religion of Islam began to expand and strengthened its influence in Kano and other parts of Hausaland.[84] This phase witnessed a mass migration of Muslim Fulani[85] to Hausaland, who came from Mele (Mali) bringing books of law and theology. While some of them settled in Hausaland, others journeyed and settled in Borno.[86]

> This Fulani invasion marks a second turning-point in the contact of the Hausa with Mohammedanism. For while the Wangarawa of Mali came in small numbers and were never reinforced, the arrival of the Fulani was but the spear-head of a great ethnic movement which continued in increasing strength until, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, these people eventually gained political control of the country.[87]

It was also during this era that Muhammad al-Maghilli,[88] the celebrated Muslim scholar and theologian, visited Kano. Mohammad al-Maghili had instituted the massacre of the Jews of Touat, but when another attack on the ruling Bami Wattas failed, he was compelled to flee to a place where his security would be guaranteed and his desire to

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[84]Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 197-198.

[85]The Fulani or Filani as known generally in Nigeria, are found scattered all over North Africa, from the Upper Nile to the Senegal, either as inoffensive nomad herdsmen or settled among alien peoples as the ruling caste. They are the dominant political power in Northern Nigeria today, and the present Nigerian president, Muhammadu Buhari, is of the Fulani heritage. In recent times, there have been reports of violent crises between the nomadic Fulani and rural settlers in different parts of Nigeria. For additional reading about the Fulani, see Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria,* 1:94-102.

[86]Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, 111.

[87]Joseph Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1946), 7. By the year 1920, the Fulani, 1,112,004 in number, made up 32.3% of the population of Kano province. See Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria,* 181.

[88]Muhammad Abdulkarim al-Maghili is usually identified with Abdu Rahaman, who is described in the "Kano Chronicle" as leading a group of Muslim immigrants to Kano during the reign of Rumfa (1463-1499).

spread the religion of Islam unhindered.[89] As Balogun[90] observes, Mohammad al-Maghili must have enquired, and received assurance of a more congenial Muslim atmosphere before he decided to go to Kano in Hausaland (about 1492-4 AD). While at Kano, Mohammad al-Maghili was privileged to write, at the request of the Sarki (king) Muhammad Rumfa, the "*The Crown of Religion Concerning Obligations of Princes*"—a document that apparently served as a guide to the Sarki (king) who was now a Muslim ruler.[91]

It is strongly suggestive that this document, "*The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes,*" has had a tremendous impact on the religious and political history of Northern Nigeria; Clarke espoused this view when he wrote that "this document has a considerable impact on the political and religious history of West Africa."[92] For this reason it is important to briefly consider some aspects of the document relevant to this work, especially as presented in Clarke's *West Africa and Islam*. The document speaks against the ambition of the ruler to dominate and rule others—"for God did not appoint you over them to be their Lord and Master. Rather you were appointed to improve their faith and their welfare." The document also justified war not only on the basis of self-defense, but also as a means of "ridding the country of corruption." Thus the document admonishes the Muslim ruler to "deliver the country from the bareness of

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[89]'Abd-al-Aziz 'Abd-Allah Batran, "A Contribution to the Biography of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd-al-Karim Ibn Muhammad (Umar-A 'Mar) al-Maghili," *Journal of African History* XIV, no. 3 (1973).

[90]Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," 214.

[91]Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 198.

[92]Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 61, 62.

corruption with winds of battle and the lightning flashes of swords and the thunderous noise of sabres and the endless waves of soldiers. For indeed sovereignty is won by the sword and not by procrastination"[93] (procrastination here may mean patience and dialogue).

According to Clarke, "Al-Maghili had in mind the corruption brought about by such things as taking bribes, immorality, and in addition false religious beliefs and practices, and the adulteration and contamination of Islam by Muslims who mixed together Islamic faith and practice with the beliefs and practices of indigenous religion."[94] Also, the document recommends that all public officials must be "people of high moral standing and thorough going Muslims, and justice in general was to be dispensed according to Islamic law."[95]

It is highly suggestive that the teachings espoused in Al-Maghili's *Obligation of Princes* played a key role in shaping the views that led to the Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (Muslim holy war 1804-1808 AD), and as well might have some influence on the present activities of Muslim extremist or purists groups such as *Boko Haram* (western education is forbidden) who had cited the gross level of corruption in government as part of the reason for their war, "for they are ridding the Northern region and Nigeria at large of corruption."[96] As Adeleke observed, "Al-Maghili's influence would subsequently serve

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[93] Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 61-63.

[94]Clarke, *Islam in West Africa*, 63.

[95]Ibid.

[96]See Andrew Walker, '*Eat the Heart of the Infidel*': *The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram* (London: Hurst, 2015). In this work, Walker, from a historical perspective shows the factors that could have contributed to the rise of Boko Haram.

as a powerful inspiration for Uthman dan Fodio and his fellow jihadist three centuries later."[97] The circumstances that led to the Uthman dan Fodio jihad would be further discussed in the next chapter of this work.

The above accounts, from *The Kano Chronicle*, and *Asl al-Wangariyin*[98] on the introduction and spread of Islam in Kano seems to suggest an early divergence from a tradition of relative tolerance that had characterized the interaction between Islam and ATR in Northern Nigeria, and further demonstrate how the growing influence of Islam in Hausaland began to tinker with the indigenous religious traditions and practices of the region. Therefore, it is important to closely examine the accounts on the introduction of Islam in Hausaland (Kano).

The suggestion for an earlier Islamic contact with Kano, prior to the fourteenth century AD, possibly from Borno,[99] is vital at this point due to its support for the argument for a peaceful introduction of Islam in Kano. Also, Clarke suggests a cautious use of *The Kano Chronicle*,[100] because "the historical accounts it provides of the period prior to 1450 AD," "are almost wholly legendry, reflecting as much contemporary (that

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[97]Ademola Adeleke, "Islam and Hausa Culture," *Lagos Historical Review* 5, no. 10 (2005), accessed June 28, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265186663.

[98]Al-Hajj, "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle,"

[99]This view of an earlier Islamic contact with Kano through Borno is supported by other scholars. According to Greenberg, the ability to communicate in the Kanuri language (Kanuri is the predominantly spoken language of Borno indigenes) by some of the Hausas of Kano is further evidence that the Muslim Kanuri speakers might have played a very important role in the introduction of Islamic culture in Kano. See Joseph H. Greenberg, "Linguistic Evidence for the Influence of the Kanuri on the Hausa," *The Journal of African History* 1, no. 2 (1960): 205-212, accessed June 28, 2017, http://www.jstore.org/stable/180240. Also, see A. H. M. Kerk-Green, "Neologisms in Hausa: A Sociological Approach," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 33, no. 1 (January, 1963): 25-44, accessed June 28, 2017, http://www.jstore.org/stable/1157795; John E. Philips, "A History of the Hausa language," in *Kano and Some of Her Neighbors,* ed. B. M. Barkindo (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1989), 49.

[100]Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 60-61.

is, seventeenth–century) interests and reality as any historical hearsay; it is the product of seventeenth-century Kano rationalism working on folklore collected both in various quarters of the city and from country people."[101] Therefore, any aspects of the accounts from *The Kano Chronicles* that seems incongruous with the rest of the religious history of the region most not be accepted uncritically.

First and foremost, both *The Kano Chronicle*[102] and *Asl al-Wangariyin*[103] tend to support the view of a non-coercive proselytization of the Kano kings, Yaji (1349-1385 AD) and Rumfa (1463-1499 AD) by the Muslim *Wangarawa* immigrants, thus supporting the view that the introduction of Islam in Kano was peaceful. However, it appears that, almost immediately, following their conversion to Islam, both Yaji and Rumfa embarked on certain religious reforms[104] incongruent with the relative religious tolerance that had existed in Kano prior to the arrival of Islam. The attitude demonstrated by these Kano Kings, Yaji and Rumfa tend to correlate with the activities of a thirteenth

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[101]Murray D. Last, "Historical Metaphors in the Kano Chronicle," *History in Africa* 7 (1980): 163, accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3171660.

[102]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 70.

[103]Al-Hajj, "A Seventeenth Century Chronicle."

[104]Yaji (1349-1385 AD) commanded every town in Kano country to observe the Islamic times of prayer, and built a mosque beneath the sacred tree (this sacred tree must have had religious significance to adherents of the traditional religion). Such an act was a direct affront to the religious beliefs of adherents of ATR. See Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 70.

century Kanem-Borno ruler, Mai (King) Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221-1259).[105] As these stories further suggest, the religious reforms carried out by these rulers met a considerable amount of opposition from adherents of the traditional religion.[106] This episode in the religious history of Northern Nigeria further shows the implication of any forms of religious establishment—the merging of religious and secular or political authority.

Back to the view suggesting an earlier Islamic presence in Kano prior to the second half of the fourteenth century AD. If this view bears any credence, then the interactions between Islam and ATR during this period could have been, to a large extent characterized by a laissez-faire kind of religious tolerance. It was not until the second half of the fourteenth century AD, according to *The Kano Chronicle*, when Sarki (king) Yaji converted to Islam that Kano began to witness acts of religious intolerance. Moreover, if this example of religious intolerance (as shown in the activities of Yaji, and Rumfa) is true, then it must have been short-lived. I also suggest that even the influence of the Kano rulers or kings was not sufficient to prevail against individual conscience in matters of

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[105]During the thirteenth century, Mai (a royal title) Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221-1259), the ruler of Kanem-Borno, converted to Islam, and generally pressured his followers to abandon traditional religious practices and embrace Islam. He further demonstrated his objection to the indigenous traditional religious practices of his kingdom by desecrating a sacred indigenous traditional religious artifact of high significance, called the *mune*. His actions eventually precipitated a rift between the Saifawa and the Bulala, a powerful clan of Pastoralists. See Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 90-91. During the reign of Dunama, the clash with the Bulala, a Muslim nomadic clan intensified, and he inflicted upon them a severe defeat. Generally, "Sudanese rulers such as the *mais* did not allow nomadic groups, even though derived from the same stuck, to disrupt the life of their cultivators and challenge their own authority." It is interesting to note that even in the twenty-first century, in different parts of Nigeria, there still exist violent conflicts between Muslim nomadic Fulanis and local farmers. In most cases, the farmers are on the losing side. Since such tension and crises had existed in the early centuries in Northern Nigeria, it may be profitable to further study how the *Mais* resolved the conflicts. See Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 117.

[106]According to "The Kano Chronicle" when the Muslims left the mosque after prayer, the Sarki (king) Gazarzawa who opposed the Islamic religion would come with his men and defile the whole mosque and cover it with filth. See Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 70-71.

faith or religion. If it were otherwise, Yaji's son and second successor, Kanajeji (1390-1410 AD), could not have so easily and early reverted to indigenous religious practices, and Umaru (1410-1421), Kanajeji's successor, could not have immediately given up being ruler in order to fully embrace Islam when he ascended the throne.[107]

Consequently, it may be appropriate to suggest that the freedom to revert to one's religion of choice amidst the growing influence of Islam as demonstrated by the aforementioned kings of Kano, Kanajeji (1390-1410 AD) and Umaru (1410-1421 AD) was not an exclusive privilege of the ruling class or the elite, but was also, that of the masses or populace who continued to enjoy the freedom to embrace their religious preferences amidst the gradual growing influence of Islam. It appears that both adherents of ATR and Islam were at least for the time being committed to preserving the relative religious tolerance that had existed in the region before the introduction of Islam. Such freedom in matters of religion is arguably a reflection of the nature of the relative religious tolerance that existed in Kano during the first half of the fifteenth century AD, and would of course account for the spread of Islam in Hausaland. The experience of Mohammad al-Maghilli, the celebrated north Muslim scholar and theologian, further support this view. As mentioned earlier on in this work, al-Maghilli's migration to Kano was precipitated by his quest for a more congenial environment for Islam.

It was therefore almost natural with the arrival of Islamic scholars and clerics like Mohammad al-Maghilli who took preaching, teaching, and writing as a full-time vocation that Islam began to take a more prominent place in Hausaland, especially among the elite.

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[107]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 73-74

The spread and influence of Islam in Kano towards the end of the fifteenth century is further illustrated by the activities of Sarkin Kano, Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 AD). During his reign, a sacred tree, a symbol of traditional religion was cut down in Kano and a mosque was built on the site; he also converted into a market *Kurmin Jakara*—a wooded shrine similarly associated with traditional religion in Kano.[108] Also, during this period, the rulers of Hausaland appointed most of the Islamic scholars and clerics to various religious and administrative positions at the king's court from where they earned their means of subsistence.[109]

Islam, without doubt, had received royal patronage in Kanem-Borno, Kano, and Hausaland in general. Through the generosity of proselytized rulers to Islamic teachers, scholars, and clerics, Islam further spread within the region. However, the political influence of Islam in Northern Nigeria during the period under consideration (11th to 15th century AD) seems to be determined by the degree of the individual ruler's commitment to Islam, and their differing circumstances,[110] as seen in the divergent preferences made by rulers to either embrace Islam or continue in their traditional religious practices.

During this period (11th to 15th century AD) the practice of Islam was mixed in various degrees with customs and practices associated with traditional religion.[111] Also, the process by which Islam spread in this region was gradual. The religion embraced and

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[108]Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," 215.

[109]Ibid.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid., 215-216.

modified certain old traditional religious practices.[112] Therefore, it might be argued that Islamic tolerance in Northern Nigeria during this period can be viewed in two possible different perspectives. The first, being syncretic in nature, and the second, as a contextualized[113] means of Islamization in the region.

Leithart asserts, "West African Islam was syncretic in nature because it retained and adapted preexisting animism."[114] Generally today, "religious syncretism is defined as the blending of different (sometimes contradictory) forms of religious beliefs and practices."[115] Also, from Gailyn Van Rheenen's point of view, religious syncretism may be defined as reshaping of a particular religious "beliefs and practices through cultural accommodation so that they consciously or unconsciously blend with those of the dominant culture."[116] Therefore, when early Islam in Northern Nigeria blended its beliefs and practices with those of ATR (the dominant culture at that time) such that Islam began to lose its distinctiveness, and act in harmony with the dominant culture, it fell into syncretism; for as Gilliland observes, "African Islam is so greatly adapted to tribal

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[112]For additional reading, see Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, 60-70.

[113]According to David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, contextualization is the "attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation especially, as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scriptures, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential context." See *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989).

[114]Peter J. Leithart, "Islamic Syncretism," *Patheos, Patheos Policies, and Principles 2016*, accessed June 28, 2017, http:// http://www.patheos.com/blogs/leithart/2016/03/islamic-syncretism/.

[115]Boubakar Sanou, "Responding Biblically and Missiologically to the Threat of Religious Syncretism," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 9, no. 2 (2013): 95.

[116]Gailyn Van Rheenen, "Modern and Postmodern Syncretism in Theology and Mission," in *The Holy Spirit and Missions Dynamics*, ed. C. Douglas McConnell (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1997), 164-207.

religions with which it interacts. . . ."[117] Also, Peter Lloyd noted that "the Muslim religion as taught and understood in West Africa is far more accommodating to traditional beliefs about witchcraft and magic."[118] It is thus obvious that Islam, and ATR, two conflicting systems were not only reacting to each other, but that each was being changed by the other.[119] While Adherents of ATR embraced Islam, Islam in turn embraced several aspects of African religious practices such as charms and divinations.[120]

On the other hand, in discussing the nature of Sub-Saharan African Islam, Timothy Insoll suggest that what others may perceive as syncretism in the practices of Islam in Africa might be viewed as a process of contextualization in the region. According to Insoll, "Islam in Africa is an African religion, obviously derived from outside but then adapted in many different ways to suit many *different contexts*. Though the core elements of belief may remain the same, . . . there exist diversity, represented by different ways of life."[121] Insoll's point is simple, the nature of African Islam is diverse, and this diversity does not necessary amount to syncretism.

There are good examples to further illustrate the above assertion. In the Hausa traditional religion, *maguzci*, there is a belief in the existence of *iskoki* (Hausa for spirits),

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[117]Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," 83.

[118]Peter C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change: Changing Traditional Societies in the Modern World* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1967), 77.

[119]Gilliland, African Religion Meets Islam, 18.

[120]Spencer J. Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam Upon Africa* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 49. For further reading on how Islam embraced some African religious practices, such as charms and divinations see Leithart, "Islamic Syncretism."

[121]Timothy Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 34-35.

whose cult holds central place in religious life and practice;[122] "the spirits, *iskoki*, and the spirits possession, *bori*, thus dominates their worship and religion. This, however, does not in any way obliterate belief in God, *Ubangiji*, the mystical forces, deities and ancestors in *maguzci*, the Hausa traditional religion."[123] Similarly, in Islam, there is a belief in the spirits world (the Islamic medan jinn, in Arabic). This Islamic religious belief corresponds to the *iskoki* or spirits-cult in *maguzci*, providing a point of synthesis for the two separate religious beliefs—the spirit-cult in *maguzanci*, and the *jinn* in Islam. As a result, Islam instead of rejecting the Hausa belief in *iskoki* and *bori* cult embraced it and gave it a different meaning. This further explains how and why the Maguzawa (the indigenous Hausa-speaking tribe of Kano) later began to freely use the Arabic word, *jinn* as a synonym for *iska* (Hausa singular for spirit),[124] and the continued practice among Hausa Muslims of the *bori* cult.

> There are, moreover, certain phases of the *iskoki* cult whose derivation can only be understood by reference to the borrowing of features characteristic of the Mohammedan belief in jinn. A significant example is the division made by the Maguzawa of the *iskoki* into Mohammedan or white, and pagan, or black. It is a Muslim dogma that some of the jinn are Muslim and others represents various types of infidels and pagans.[125]

According to Horace Miner, "The Africanization of the Arabic jinn conforms readily to the existing traditional concept."[126] And moreover, "the fusion of indigenous

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[122]Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, 27.

[123]Danfulani, "Factors Contributing to the Survival of the Bori Cult," 420.

[124]Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, 60.

[125]Ibid.

[126]See Horace Miner, *The Primitive City of Timbuktu* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 99-105.

spirits and Arabic jinn is a phenomenon which has been demonstrated in much older Songhai Islam."[127]

Another prominent feature of the traditional religious practice, which finds an Islamic correlate, is the traditional marriage system, especially the key institutions of polygamy and bride-price.[128] These institutions are part of the Islamic marriage system,[129] which rightly provided a context for the process of Islamization. While this African customary marriage system has been a serious obstacle for the process of Christianization in the region and most of Africa, the process of Islamization on the contrary have not experienced any difficultly based on these marriage institutions since polygamy and bride-price are part of the Islamic marriage system.[130]

The relative religious tolerance that existed in Northern Nigeria was seriously challenged at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Fulanis, a nomadic, pastoral people who had earlier migrated to the Hausaland in the thirteenth century were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the way Islam was being practiced in the region, and with their Hausa masters. This situation later led to the proclamation of a *jihad* or religious war, and the eventual conquer of the Hausaland by the Fulani jihadists or

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[127]Miner, *The Primitive City of Timbuktu*.

[128]Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, 30.

[129]Islam allows polygamy and permits men, under special circumstances, to at most marry up to four wives, and the payment of bride-price—Islamic dowry, is an essential component in the marriage contract. For additional reading on the Islamic marriage institutions of polygamy and bride-price, see Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips and Jameelah Jones, *Polygamy in Islam* (Riyah, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Publishing, 2005); Zaitun Mohamed Kasim, *Islam and Polygamy* (Kuala Lumpur: Sisters in Islam, 2002); Hashem G. Talhami, *Historical Dictionary of Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 85-86.

[130]Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, 30.

Muslim purists

CHAPTER 4

FROM TOLERANCE TO INTOLERANCE: RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AUTHORITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, FROM THE 15TH TO EARLY 19TH CENTURY AD

Introduction

This chapter examines the interactions between Islam, ATR, and political authorities in Northern Nigeria from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century AD. It will highlight the interactions between religion and politics in Northern Nigeria and demonstrate how the activities of major religious and political leaders within the region brought a new dynamic to the interaction between religion and politics. This period produced a paradigm-shift in the interactions between religion and politics and among the various religious traditions in the region now known as Northern Nigeria. It produced a major departure from what had been a casual interaction and overlap between religious and civil affairs, moving to a much more intentional fusing of religion and politics. It also was a time where there was a shift from relative religious tolerance that had existed in the region to a systematic intolerance, denial of religious freedom, and violent inter-religious crises.

The chapter is divided into three major themes: (1) an overview of the interaction between religion and politics in Northern Nigeria; (2) activities of zealous Islamic converts and skirmishes between kings and Muslim leaders in Borno and Hausaland; and (3) the ‘Uthman dan Fodio jihad (1804-1808), the Sokoto caliphate, and redefinition of religious tolerance and freedom in Northern Nigeria.

Most of the discussions on the topic of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria are usually limited to the period beginning in the nineteenth century. This approach tends to neglect an important earlier era in the historical development of the current relationship between religion and politics in the region. Regarding religion and politics in Nigeria, Harvard Divinity School professor, Jacob Olupona comments:

> That religion has entered into politics and governance is not new; it is as old as the history of the nation itself, what is new in the current dispensation is the extent to which religion dominates national life. The myth of the secular Nigerian state that purports to separate the institutions of religion from those of the government has failed to translate into reality.[1]

Also, it has been acknowledged by students of Nigeria's political history that "a key peculiarity of the Nigerian politics is rooted in the religious demography of the country."[2] Religion plays a crucial role in the politics of Northern Nigeria; therefore, in order to have a better understanding of the region's political history, it is important to evaluate the tension among the various religious traditions in the region (Islam, Christianity, and ATR). Thus, this work explores more broadly the history of religious and political interactions in Northern Nigeria by going back beyond the nineteenth century. It analyzes the interactions between religion and politics from the earliest sources available on the history of the region. Such an approach is relevant to understanding the history of the region's religious and political interactions. It will also

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[1]Jacob K. Olupona, "Nigeria's Time of Uncertainty," *The Huffington Post,* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacob-k-olupona/nigerias-time-of-uncertai_b_6573998.html ?utm_hp_ref=nigeria (accessed September 5, 2017).

[2]For more explanation on the effects of religious demography on Nigerian politics, read Muhammad Sani Umar, "The Politics of Ethno-Religious Balancing and the Struggle for Power in Nigeria," in *Religious Authority and the State in Africa: A Report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies*, ed. Jennifer G. Cooke and Richard Downie (New York: Bowman and Littlefield, 2015), 65-85, https://www.csis.org/analysis/religious-authority-and-state-africa.

enrich the current discussions on the relationship between religion and politics in Northern Nigeria.

An Overview of the Interaction between Religion and Politics in Northern Nigeria

Like most other societies, there has always existed a governing or political structure in those kingdoms or empires that existed in pre-Islamic Northern Nigeria. These political structures were not well organized compared to most modern societies. Nevertheless, they served the purposes of governance for those people who lived in these regions.[3] As Gilliland observes, "A simple reference to politics, however, hardly communicates an adequate concept, since what we have in mind are the institutions of administration and local styles of rule practiced by the smallest rural ethnic groups as well as the sophisticated machinery of divisional, state, and federal government."[4]

Further, those kings or rulers who were vested with the responsibility of civil governance were, in most cases, also the spiritual or religious leaders in their societies. This kind of leadership structure, which assigns both political and religious authority to one individual, leads naturally to an overlap and combination of religion and politics. As one scholar has noted, "fundamentally the notion of separation of 'church and state' is at cross-purposes with the African personality which accepts 'spiritual power' as a right to

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[3]For an example of some of these kingdoms or empires, see Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 78-94; and F. J. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa,* vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 15-20. There is an extensive discussion on the political or government structure that existed prior to the Islamization of Northern Nigeria in Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria,* 1:244-258. Some of these government or political structures were still in existence in some parts of the region at the time British took over the administration of the region in the beginning of the twentieth century.

[4]Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," 232.

rule."[5] As a result, "political ambition looks to religion as its ally, and . . . manipulation of religion has easily become a major factor in the scheme for political prestige."[6]

For example, in the Borno Empire the office of the *Mai* (king) developed certain divine attributes that were protected and mystified by the seclusion of the king, to whom access was granted only to those who were members of his inner-circle or intimates.[7] The people of Borno exalted and worshiped their king instead of God, believing that he possessed the power to cause sickness, to bring health, and to give and take life; their religion was rooted in king worship.[8] It is important to note, "such practices survived the introduction of Islam and continued in modified form(s) until the eclipse of the Saifawa dynasty. King worship provided a unifying focus for the loyalties of the subject people."[9]

Similarly, the great ruler Barbushe is depicted as both king and priest in "The Kano Chronicle".[10] According to the narrative, the very means by which Barbushe ascended the throne or gained political relevance and authority over his brethren are deeply rooted in the religious beliefs of the ancient people of Dalla (a town in Kano).

> Barbushe succeeded his forefathers in the knowledge of the lore of Dalla, for he was skilled in the various pagan rites [traditional religious practices]. By his wonders and sorceries and the power he gained over his brethren he became chief and lord over them. . . . All the people flocked to Barbushe on the two nights of Idi—for he was all-

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[5]Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," 232.

[6]Ibid.

[7]For additional reading, see Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 111; John E. Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oluseyi Press, 1980), 190.

[8]Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 111.

[9]Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808," 190.

[10]Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan," 196; Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 63-64.

powerful at the sacrificial rites.[11]

As Gilliland rightly observes, the roles of religion and politics as a means of service to the state dominates the narrative in *The Kano Chronicle*. He further noted "that Barbushe was a classical traditional priest-king who held both judicial and religious aspects in his single myth. He was a type of the primitive leader whose right to rule derived directly from his identity with the source of religious power."[12] Such an arrangement implies that these kings or rulers exercised both political and religious authority over their subjects. Evidence suggests that the merging of religious and political authority, which resided with the king, does not appear to have been an intended effort or an attempt by the ruling class to monopolize authority or power or even to establish a state religion in their kingdoms. Rather, it was more of a natural occurrence that emanated originally from the very structure of government adopted by the people as a means to create and live in an organized society.[13]

However, when Islam was introduced into Northern Nigeria, the Arabic literacy and Qur'anic education that was introduced alongside Islam became a major factor in the shaping of social and political life within the region.[14] As Falola observes, "Islam was the

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[11]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 64.

[12]Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," 232-234.

[13]Certain discussions in Gilliland's "African Traditional Religion in Transition," particularly on the dual role of the African traditional chief as both religious and civil leader seems to support the assumption that this dual role of the African traditional chief was a natural occurrence that emanated originally from the very structure of government adopted by the people as a means to create and live in an organized society. Ibid., 236-241.

[14]Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 98-101; A. D. H. Biver, and Mervyn Hiskett. "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 25, no. 1/3 (1962): 104-148, accessed August 29, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/610779.

first religion to profoundly change the majority of African societies, both incorporating new ideas into their lifestyle and blending indigenous practices with Islamic ones."[15] Muslim scholars and clerics gained access to the courts of kings and began to play significant role in policy making. Thus began a shift from what seems to be a natural phenomenon to a well-intended structured process to establish Islam as the state religion.

S. A. Balogun, provides additional insight on how Muslim scholars gained access to the courts of local rulers:

> The arrival of the Muslim scholar, especially one credited with mystic power, was usually significant. Because of his fame, the Muslim leader could not keep away from the local ruler indefinitely. In fact both the ruler and the Muslim scholar had good reasons to be friends. The ruler saw the Muslim scholar as a mystic who could use his special powers to solve some pressing problems—to cause rain to fall during a drought, to make him win his wars and thereby enhance his prestige, and to offer special prayers for protection against witchcraft or nullify the evil effect of witchcraft if its spell had already been cast. It is irrelevant whether or not the Muslim scholar actually possessed the mystic power attributed to him. What is important is the belief that he did possess the power. The power of literacy in Arabic, which the Muslim scholar possessed, was also required by the local ruler. Apart from serving as a charm maker, the Muslim scholar could also help as an advisor, an administrator or sometimes as a diplomat.[16]

Even before this phase, which began to witness an increase in the activities of Islamic *reformers* in the history of religion and politics in Northern Nigeria, it seems Kanem-Borno rulers early on became committed to Islam, creating a preference for Islam in the region. Kanem-Borno kings granted privileges (*mahrams*) to Muslim scholars and clerics; such privileges allowed Muslim scholars and clerics to fully devote to Islamic enterprise—studying, teaching, and preaching, which eventually led to the development

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[15]Falola, *Key Events in African History: A Reference*, 79, 81.

[16]Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," 221.

of a strong Islamic tradition in the region.[17] "This tradition became manifest in the growth of Borno as a major center of Islamic learning in West Africa and also in the application of Islamic principles to the conduct of government."[18] The preference for Islam by Borno rulers is further illustrated in the example of a Borno king, *mai* Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221–1259), who is said to have reputedly pressured his followers to abandon traditional religious practices in favor of Islam.[19]

Similarly, Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 AD) who ruled over Kano during the fifteenth century, requested a Muslim scholar, Al-Maghili, to write a "treatise on how a good Muslim ruler should govern." This document, *The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes*,[20] influenced both political and religious life beyond Northern Nigeria. The influence of Al-Maghili's religious ideology upon the ruling class was one of the factors that inspired the desire for a purer or reformed Islam, and subsequently precipitated the process towards the establishment of Islam as the state religion in the region. It appears Muhammad al-Maghilli, was an 'astute' Islamic scholar and theologian who utilized the opportunity presented to him by the rulers of Hausaland to further consolidate his 'vision' of Islam as reflected in his treatise, "*The Crown of Religion*."

Falola succinctly captures the state of affairs between religion and politics in Northern Nigeria prior to the heightened desire and agitation for a reformed and

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[17]Lavers, "Islam in Bornu Caliphate: A Survey," *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies*, New Series, no. 5 (1971): 29.

[18]Balogun, "History of Islam Up to 1800," 212.

[19]Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 90-91.

[20]Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 61.

dominant Islam.

> Indigenous religious practices were still very much alive in the Hausa states, . . . [and] other Hausa kings, not wishing to offend powerful cult priests, continued to practice the ancient [religious] rites. Many Muslim converts tolerated indigenous practices, and most of the rural areas were probably unaffected by Islam. The majority of political leaders did not seek full-scale application of *al-Shari'a,* and certainly no state could be described as a theocracy. Political leaders of the Muslim faith compromised with traditionalists and involved them in government. Conversion efforts existed, but usually on a small scale. The minority Muslim elite was generally tolerant of non-Islamic practices.[21]

By the eighteenth century, Muslim purists[22] were becoming highly dissatisfied with the kind of Islam practiced in the region—practices that combined both aspects of Islamic and traditional religion. Also, during this period an Islamic framework, informed by the teachings of Muslim purists was already in place; it was such teachings and influence that eventually led to the elevation and establishment of Islam as the state religion in the region now known as Northern Nigeria. It is in respect to this phase of the transition in the religious-political history of the region that Spencer Trimingham, a scholar of Northern Nigeria history asserts:

> The second half of the eighteenth century was marked by the appearance of [Muslim] clerical leaders manifesting a new Islamic spirit—exclusive, legalistic, intolerant, and militant. These leaders reacted against the Sudanese spirit of compromise and accommodation of Islam and African cults, proclaimed the jihad, and found in the theocratic or divine monocratic state, based on their reading of the Mukhtasar of Khalil ibn Ishaq, a unique means for the attainment of power and the subjection to the State of all the divers elements it embraced.[23]

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[21]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria,* 25.

[22]Muslim Purists in this context refers to those adherents of the Islamic religion whose Islamic ideals could not tolerate the perceived compromise between Islam and other religions. They are also, referred to as 'Purist Salafis', and are mostly engaged in studying, teaching, and particularly *da 'wa* (the propagation of Islam) to change society and make it more Islamic. See Joas Wagemakers, "A Purist Jihadi-Salafi: The Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (2009): 281-297, accessed September 20, 2017, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40593257.

[23]J. Spencer Trimingham, "The Expansion of Islam," in *Islam in Africa*, eds. James Kritzeck and William H. Lewis (New York: Van Nostrand, 1969), 24.

It was within this milieu that ‘Uthman dan Fodio led a jihad (Muslim holy war 1804-1808) that ousted the Hausa kings, who although Islamic converts, continued to a large extent, to sympathize with traditional African religious beliefs and practices. Such practices were considered syncretic by Muslim purists, and thus a threat to the religion of Islam. The jihad of dan Fodio culminated in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, which became the seat of power for the newly established system of government—a government that was based strictly on the principles of Islamic religion. As Falola further surmised, “until dan Fodio’s nineteenth-century jihad, peaceful coexistence was common and desirable to Muslims. The jihad attempted to reform Islam and succeeded in securing a large number of converts.”[24]

Thus, when the British colonialists arrived, they met a well-organized system of government in Northern Nigeria, whose operations were based on the tenets of Islam. For reasons of administrative convenience, and also in order to maintain stability in the region, the British colonialists embraced the structure of government they found in Northern Nigeria, which was purely Islamic in its nature, even though some of the inhabitants of the region were non-Muslims.

While British colonial authorities recognized and protected the interests of Islam, they tended to delegitimize traditional religions. According to Jibrin Ibrahim, “An essential aspect of the ‘civilizing mission’ of the colonial authorities was the concerted effort to eradicate the practices and symbols of traditional African religions.”[25] Unlike the

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[24]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 46.

[25]Jibrin Ibrahim, “Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (March 1991): 115-136, accessed September 5, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/160995.

traditional religions that were delegitimized, Christianity generally was favorably disposed to colonial authorities, and Christian missions was allowed, but only to the extent that it did not interfere with or compromise the interests of the British colonial authorities in the region. As a result, the colonialists proscribed Christian missionary enterprise in certain Northern Nigeria towns and cities.[26]

> Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria could be divided into three phases. The first phase, 1870-1888, witnessed relatively [minor] success. This minimal success is chiefly owed to their method of winning the affection of traditional rulers, and making sure they were not mistaken for vanguards of imperialism. During the second phase (1888-1900), Northern Nigerian rulers viewed missionary enterprise and colonial imperialism as one and the same thing. As a result, missionaries were grossly discredited, and their mission severely hampered. During the third and last phase (1900-1918), British administration disassociated itself from missionary enterprise, and restricted missionary activities in both Muslim dominated territories, as well as territories dominated by adherents of African religion.[27]

The attitude of the British government towards the three religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, and ATR) in Northern Nigeria possibly contributed to the development of the view held by most Northern Nigeria Muslims—that Islam was the indigenous and legitimate religion of the region. It is this view that has often driven some Muslims to agitate for an *al-Shari'a* state in the region, and if possible in the entire country. The reasons for the actions taken by British colonial authorities in governing Northern Nigeria were mostly imperialistic and political. The idea that some races possess an innate superiority to others might have led them to assume that the Fulani

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[26]See Emmanuel A. Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 3, no. 3 (1966): 503-522, accessed August 29, 2016, https://www.jstor.org/stable41856710.

[27]Ibid.

Muslims, who predominantly held positions of authority in the region's government, possessed an innate ability to rule, superior to that of the Hausas.[28]

According to Yusufu Turaki, "Pre-colonial inequality did exist between the Muslims and the non-Muslim groups, but this social inequality (based upon social and religious differences between these ethnic groups) was institutionalized by the colonial administration."[29] Turaki argues that colonial authorities placed the minority non-Muslim groups under the political control of the Hausa-Fulani (dominant Muslim group).[30] Despite overwhelming evidence validating the view that the colonial authorities favored Islam, Muslims in Northern Nigeria, generally, tend to argue that the activities of the colonial authorities were, to a larger extent, in favor of Christianity.

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[28]An example of this faulted assumption is discussed in Flora S. Lugard, "Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 52 (1904): 574, quoted in Marilyn Robinson Waldman, "A Note on the Ethnic Interpretation of the Fulani Jihad," *Journal of the International African Institute* 36, no. 3 (1966): 286, accessed August 9, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1157684.

[29]For more detailed discussion on this view, read Yusufu Turaki, "The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-Political Role of the Non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial Hierarchical Structure of the Northern Region of Nigeria: A Social-Ethical Analysis of the Colonial Legacy" (PhD diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1982).

[30]In present day Nigeria, one of the most discussed aspects of socio-economic and political matters is the "Hausa/Fulani domination." Nigerians, generally, especially no one has often complained of being politically and economically marginalized by the northern region—the hub of Hausa/Fulani tribes. The present incessant crises in Nigeria between the nomadic Fulanis, who are believed to be Muslims, and agriculturalists across Nigeria, have been perceived by many as an attempt to Islamize Nigeria. Trimingham asserts that "although Muslim nomads have had practically no direct influence upon the spread of Islam in Africa, they have occasionally been enlisted in the cause of the *jihad* by an inspired leader." He further provides some examples of the involvement of Muslim nomads in jihads:

We think of Abdallah ibn Yasin rallying berbers in the 11th century (the movement of the Murabitun); 'Afar of Dankali plains carried forward to the conquest of the Abyssinian highlands by Imam Ahmad Gran between 1529 and 1542; Fulbe [Fulanis] roped into the jihad of Uthman dan Fodio; Somali enlisted by Muhammad Abdallah Hasan at the beginning of this century. Nomads were little involved in the movement of the Mahdi of Nilotic Sudan, though his successor made use of his own Baqqara and Uthman. Diqna rallied a few Beja to the cause. See Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 64-65. Thus the question may be asked, is the present nomadic Fulani attacks on other tribes in Nigeria another subtle means towards the Islamization of the country by the Hausa/Fulani Muslims?

Activities of Zealous Islamic Converts and Skirmishes between Kings and Muslim Leaders in Borno and Hausaland

Borno

It was established in the previous chapter that, like other parts of Africa, Islam was introduced into the Kanem-Borno Empire not through Arab conquest, but through the peaceful activities of Muslim merchants and scholars whose itinerant activities of trading and preaching brought them into close contact (a sort of mutually beneficial relationship) with the ruling elite, particularly, merchants and rulers. This could partly account for the reasons Islam enjoyed early patronage from Kanem-Borno, and Borno kings and rulers.

Also, as noted in this chapter, there was an earlier attempt by certain rulers to elevate the religion of Islam as a superior and preferred religion compared with the traditional religions of the indigenous people of Northern Nigeria. Particularly, the religious activities of *mai* (king) Dunama Dabalemi ibn Salma (1221–1259) of Kanem-Borno have been discussed. He is said to have preferred his newly found religion of Islam to the traditional religions that were widely practiced among the populace within his kingdom. Thus, he not only pressured his followers or subjects to abandon traditional religious practices in favor of Islam, but also desecrated a religious artifact of high significance to adherents of the traditional religions.[31] Regarding *mai* Dunama's sacrilegious act, Palmer notes that according to tradition,

> There was a certain thing wrapped up and hidden away whereon depended their (its possessors) victory in war. This was called Mune . . . and no one was supposed to open it.' However, mai Dunama shunned all warnings and opened it. 'The factor regarded as essential to preserve the efficacy of the Mune and similar *sacra*, which

[31]Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 90-91; see also Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 184-185.

> were and still, in some cases jealously guarded by the Hausa and Jukun chiefs (of Northern Nigeria), is "covering." When the people became Mohamadans, a copy of the Kura'an itself did duty as the "*hidden sacra*," as in the case of the sacrum called Dirki, which was opened and destroyed by the last Hausa Sariki (king) of Kano about 1807.[32]

In the above quote, Palmer shows how certain aspects of traditional religions were weaved into the practices of Islam. It was such practices that were and are still despised by Muslim purists in Northern Nigeria. It is further noted that Dunama's act of "profanity" precipitated a crisis between two major clans (the Saifawa and the Bulala) within his kingdom leading to a separation, and the creation of a new kingdom in the late fourteenth century, the Borno Empire.[33]

According to the Arabic scholar, Ibn Sa'id, *Mai* Dunama made use of the services of experts in Islamic law, waged jihad (Muslim holy war), and opened a hostel for Islamic students and pilgrims in Cairo. He is also "said to have performed the pilgrimage twice and was drowned in the Red Sea when undertaking a third."[34] As John Lavers further observes, there was an earlier establishment of some Islamic offices of state in the Borno Empire during the reign of *Mai* Sulemma (1194-1221), such as the offices of the *Imam* (a worship leader), the *Qadi* (the judge), the *Wazir* (chief minister), the treasurer, and the chief of police.[35] Also, *Mai* "Ali Gaji (1472-1504) was advised, among others, by

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[32]Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 184-185.

[33]Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 90-91; Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 117-118. This early story of *mai* Dunama's sacrilegious act, like several others would further demonstrate the requisite role of religious tolerance and freedom in the unity of any multi-religious country or nation. This translates to mean that religious tolerance and freedom is essential for the sustenance of the unity and survival of Nigeria as one indivisible nation. Acts of religious coercion or aggression could lead to a separation just as seen in the example of the Kanem-Borno Empire above.

[34]Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 91.

[35]Lavers, "Islam in the Borno Caliphate: A Survey," 29.

his chief *Qadi*, Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Kuwata and the Masbarma, ‘Umar b. ‘Uthman—a sound scholar and teacher, who studied under Shaikh Ahmad Fatimi in Masina.”[36] Moreover, “it was as the Chief of *Imam* of *Mai* Idris Alooma that Ahmad b. Fartuwa compiled an account of the ruler’s activities, especially his wars and battles.”[37]

The new Saifawa founded empire of Borno continued to experience internal political struggles relating to the empire’s throne for some time; however, beginning and throughout the sixteenth century, the empire expanded under the influence of a succession of able *mais* (kings). The most notable among them was Idris Alooma (1571-1610) who sought to follow the example of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, and whose administrative prowess led to the consolidation of his government’s internal affairs, expansion of the Borno Empire and its commerce, strengthened defense, and the spread of Islam.[38]

In the old Kanem kingdom only the ruling class and a number of clerical families were Muslims, and during troublous times they tended to renounce their faith. However, during the reign of Alooma (1571-1610), the fortunes of Islam changed. He succeeded in reviving and elevating Islam almost to the status of a state religion. “All the notables

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[36]See S. A. Balogun, “History of Islam Up to 1800,” 212-213; and Lavers, “Islam in the Bornu Caliphate,” 29.

[37]Lavers, “Islam in the Bornu Caliphate,” 30, 32.

[38]Collins and Burns, *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, 91. Mai Idris Alooma’s Imam, Ahmed Ibn Fartua narrated some of the exploits accomplished by Alooma; he shows how Alooma punished a particular tribe in accordance with God’s command to fight unbelievers who, though close to Muslims, are vexatious to them. Alooma also carried out a reprisal attack against the people of Kano and regained the pillage they had taken from Borno, and much more. For a detailed description of the activities of Mai Idris Alooma, read Imam Ahmed Ibn Fartua, *History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu (1571-1583) together with the “Diwan of the Sultans of Bornu” and “Girgam” of the Magumi,* translated from the Arabic with an introduction and notes by H. R. Palmer (London: Frank Cass, 1926), 1-76.

became Muslim,"[39] and he initiated the "process of substituting the *shari'a* for customary law in certain spheres. He separated the administration of justice from the executive, taking legal decisions out of the hands of political chiefs and setting up qadi's courts [courts whose operation was based on the shari'a law], and became the first to construct brick mosques in his territories."[40] These examples suggest that rulers who converted to Islam often became vanguards in the Islamization of Northern Nigeria.[41]

Furthermore, Mohammad Bello, son and successor of 'Uthman dan Fodio and a critic of the Borno Muslim rulers made a commendable statement regarding Borno's Islam. His statement also demonstrates the extent to which Islam was promoted by the rulers of the Borno Empire. Speaking in reference to the Borno Muslim scholars, he noted, "There are not found in our towns (in Hausaland) students and writers of the Qur'an equal to theirs."[42] Such a confession, from Mohammad Bello, a highly respected Muslim figure in Hausaland, further shows the depth to which the religion of Islam was embraced and promoted in the Borno Empire, thus explaining why and how some of the Islamic students who trained in the Borno Islamic schools later became actively involved

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[39]Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 123.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Among such scholars are Clarke, and Palmer. Clarke noted that even though the empire of Borno suffered a decline in its power and influence during the 18th century AD, there was a steady progress and development of Islam in the region, which is credited to the passion some of its *mais* (kings) had for Islam. He further noted that 'the *mais* attempted to rule the kingdom according to Islamic principles and to replace the traditional rituals and worship with Islam.' Clarke also noted that privileges and authority was often bestowed on Muslim scholars and clerics as means of promoting the growth and influence of Islam in the region. See Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 103, and Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan,* 95.

[42]Marvyn Hiskett, "Material Relating to the State of Learning among the Fulani before Their Jihad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 19, no. 3 (1957): 550-578, accessed September 13, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/609826.pdf.

in the Islamic reform movement that took place in Hausaland. To say the least, most of these students became religious zealots who invested their time and resources in the Islamization process of Northern Nigeria. Prominent among these students was Mallam Zaki, Emir of Katagum, who later became a leading figure in the "Uthman dan Fodio led *jihad* (Muslim holy war 1804-1808).[43]

Hausaland

The events in Kano make it almost impossible for one to ignore or not to notice the influence of Muhammad al-Maghili's views on the relationship between religion and politics or religion and the state. It was al-Maghilli who wrote at the request of Rumfa, king of Kano (1463-1499) "The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes."[44] The document was meant to instruct Muslim rulers on how to govern. He also, "wrote a Qur'an for the people of Kano, for he had not brought one with him, and taught the Qur'an and punishment of the law."[45]

His influence is also notable in the Hausa state of (Katsina), where he visited in 1493. Muhammad Korau (1466-1493 AD), who has been identified as the first authentic Muslim ruler of Katsina,[46] overthrew the dynasty that served as the central point of

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[43]Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 104.

[44]Ibid., 61. Al-Maghilli's "*The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes*" is most likely a derivative of his interpretation of the Islamic teachings from the Qur'an and other sources such as Hadith (a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Mohammad) and Sunna (the traditional portion of Muslim law based on Mohammad's words or acts).

[45]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 111.

[46]Fuglestad, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad," 328.

traditional religion, and attempted to expand the practices of Islamic law.[47] Similarly, Ibrahim, who succeeded Mohammad Korau attempted to establish the religion of Islam by coercing his subjects to observe the five Muslim daily prayers on pain of imprisonment.[48] Muhammad Al-Maghili played a leading role in the shaping of the relationship between Islam and ATR, and between religion and politics, especially within Hausaland and in Northern Nigeria.

As Clarke further observes, "Although al-Maghili's treatise [*The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes*] and his work as an [Islamic] educator did not lead to any revolutionary developments in the fortunes of Islam in Kano,"[49] (an outcome that could be explained on the basis of the strong resistance from adherents of the traditional religions who were not willing to accept any kind of government or political structure that weakened or rendered irrelevant the power and authority of their religious leaders), al-Maghili's influence in Kano nevertheless, led to a compromise between Islam and ATR.[50]

As has often been the case with situations of religious coercion, adherents of the traditional religion in Katsina put up a resistance to this process of Islamization. Not even the population and strength of the growing Muslim community in Katsina was strong enough to overcome the resistance that was put forth by the non-Muslim population to its

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[47]Fuglestad, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad," 330.

[48]H. J. Fisher, "The Eastern Maghrib and the Central Sudan," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 3, ed. Roland Oliver (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 294.

[49]Clarke, *West Arica and Islam*, 63 (words in parenthesis mine).

[50]Ibid.

policy of Islamization. As a result, the Muslim rulers in Katsina compromised by accepting a government system that allowed the traditional religious leaders to continue to exercise considerable influence[51] in both religious and political affairs—as the priest-chief continued to play a role in the choice of the ruler.

> Muhammad Rumfa introduced a number of changes, such as, for example, the Muslim festival of Id al-Kabir, also known by the name Id al-Adha. This festival takes place on the 10th day of the 12th month, the month of pilgrimage (Dhu'al-Hajja), and is marked by the sacrificing of animals by Muslims all over the world. Muhammad Rumfa also built a Friday mosque at the request of al-Maghili, and moved the seat of government to the Muslim sector of the city. But the [traditional religion] Priest-Chief continued to play a role in the choice of the ruler.[52]

During the reign of Sarki (king) Kisoki (1509-1565), more Muslim scholars arrived in Kano, more mosques were built, and the king himself used the idea of *jihad* to wage war against those he considered his enemies. For Kisoki, such wars were the will of Allah.[53] However, it appears that not all the Kano rulers during the sixteenth century who were interested in the spread of Islam shared the same ideology with Kisoki—the idea of expanding their political and religious authority through the means of *jihad*. Some of the Kano rulers appeared to be more interested in a scholarly approach in their propagation and spread of Islam. For example, according to the "Kano Chronicle," Sarki (king) Yakubu refused to be reinstated as king after his deposition, and chose to recline to a more dedicated religious life instead of ruling. Similarly, Abubakar Kado (1565-1573) was more interested in a religious life than ruling. Regarding Kado's religious devotion, it has been noted that he and his chiefs spent quality time in prayer, and he took on the

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[51]Clarke, *West Arica and Islam*, 64-65.

[52]Ibid., 63 (words in parenthesis mine).

[53]See Palmer, "Kano Chronicle," and *Sudanese Memoirs,* 113.

role of instructing his seven sons in the Qur'an, and even built a center for Qur'anic reading and learning.[54]

'Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad (1804-1808), the Sokoto Caliphate and Redefinition of Religious Tolerance, and Freedom in Northern Nigeria

Precursors of the Jihad (1804-1808)

The present nature of religious affairs in most parts of Northern Nigeria have their historical roots in the jihad[55] which was waged there in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This jihad (1804-1808), led by Shehu 'Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817),[56] a Muslim teacher, preacher, scholar, reformer, and statesman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century led to the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate. This event brought about significant changes in the interaction between religion and politics in the region now known as Northern Nigeria.

Islamic population and influence had been growing in the region (Northern Nigeria) long before the nineteenth century, and many Muslims were becoming more deeply influenced by Islamic ideology, literate culture, and scholarly disciplines.[57] This intensifying Islamization of the region produced a category of Muslims (purists) who were becoming more sensitive to the nature and orthodoxy of religious practices in their

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[54]Palmer, "Kano Chronicle," and *Sudanese Memoirs*, 114-115.

[55]Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, 64.

[56]Falola, *Key Events in African History*, 133. The word *Shehu*, and *Sheikh* are used interchangeably as titles of 'Uthman dan Fodio. Both titles refer to a man who is respected for his piety or religious learning, and thus given the privilege of leadership.

[57]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 3.

community. Hitherto, the general attitude of Muslims toward individuals' private or public religious life and practices had been passive. But now (towards the end of the eighteenth century), they were becoming increasingly exasperated, not only by the surrounding African traditional way of life, but also with the state of Islamic affairs in the region. Particularly, they queried the quality of Islam that was being practiced by many in the region.

"The nominal acceptance of Islam by some of the local chiefs and courtiers, which amounted to little more than the adoption of Islamic names in addition to indigenous titles, and participation in certain Islamic rites—for instance, the annual sacrifices—and perhaps attendance at Friday mosque"[58] was no longer acceptable by these Muslim purists as true representation of a Muslim convert. It was felt that Hausa political leaders and rulers were only Muslim in name.[59] As a result, Muslim purists began to advocate for a religious reform. This period witnessed a transition from a general passive attitude towards religious practices to what could be termed as Islamic activism among the Muslim elite.

By the end of the eighteenth century, there was growing disapproval of what was considered "un-Islamic" practices, such as, sacrifices and libation to various objects of worship, not adhering to Islamic food prohibitions, not adhering to marriage prohibitions, permitting inheritance through the female lineage which was against Islamic law, and several other practices that were considered un-Islamic. This show of disapproval was more apparent among the Muslim elite who began to strongly advocate for the adoption

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[58]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 5-6.

[59]Ibid., 7-8.

of Islamic alternatives.[60] A few examples may suffice.

Mohammad Bello provides an example of one of the earliest (early seventeenth century) manifestations of discontent displayed by Muslim elite towards Muslim converts in Kano who continued to practice certain aspects of traditional religion despite their profession of Islam. In this instance, Sheikh al Bakri is said to have "accused the Fulani (a nomadic tribe converted to Islam) of heathen practices, because of a certain bush custom of theirs previous to the appearance of the Sheikh."[61] These were ritual practices associated with the process of initiating young men into full membership of the Fulani tribe and courtship ceremonies.

> They [the Fulanis] used to assemble and go out with their children to a place far away from habitation, and then tie certain objects on their children's heads. Then they made a big fire, and sacrificed the cow and worshipped it, and set up pieces of flesh round the fire. And when the hour for magic came, they and their grown up children stood with sticks in their hands, and kept on beating the boys till they reach the fire and meat.
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> Then they would encircle the fire, and the boys saying:
> "We belong to God: and you 'O fire.
> "Fire you are our father, and mother."
> Then they would dance on the fire, and some of them sit in it, without hurt. When morning broke, their spokesmen arose, and said what they thought was appropriate, and taught the children what they thought fitting.[62]

Regarding the above traditional practice and other similar ones, two Islamic theologians in Kano disputed with each other over the appropriateness of such practices within nomadic Fulani Muslim converts. While "Mallam Bakari (Islamic scholar)

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[60]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 7-8.

[61]Mohammed Bello and E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani: Being a Paraphrase and some Parts of Translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello* (Kano, Nigeria: Kano State Printing, 1922), 17, hathitrust.org. The Sheik here most likely refers to 'Uthman dan Fodio.

[62]Ibid., 17, 18.

considered these practices as heathen,"[63] (his counterpart) Mallam Abdullahi Suka did not.[64] Suka argued that although the Fulanis were evildoers, "they know God, and do not desire idolatry, they pray and fast." This example further demonstrates the divergent views held by Islamic scholars, regarding their interpretation of practices that were acceptable or unacceptable among the various converts of Islam prior to the jihad (1804-1808).

In another example, Sheikh Jibril b. 'Umar, an Islamic scholar and early teacher of 'Uthman dan Fodio, whose zeal and rigor brought him to prominence among his Muslim contemporaries, queried the religious practices of some of his contemporaries. He was particularly against the dress code of some Muslim converts, which he described as "nakedness with women," reference to a Muslim convert's refusal to adopt the long robes and veil as required by Islamic tradition. He also opposed the mingling of the sexes in public. He also queried those who, though claiming to be Muslims, were still self-dependent on how they would conduct their private and public lives instead of referring to Muslim learned scholars for guidance or an authoritative ruling.[65]

According to Hiskett, "he [Sheikh 'Umar] was here asserting the ancient and persistent claim of the clerics in Islam to be the sole arbiters of personal and social morality, on the grounds that they alone could interpret divine revelation correctly."[66]

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[63]Bello and Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, 18.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Bivar and Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804," 141-143.

[66]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 8. Also see Bivar and Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804."

Murray Last, an African historian, describes Sheikh ‘Umar as “a learned and controversial figure,” whose “preaching was rigorous, defining a Muslim by the strictest standards, which became the subject of disagreement between him and the Sheikh (Uthman dan Fodio).”[67] It was based on these rigorous terms that Sheikh ‘Umar first called for a jihad, which angered the Tuaregs,[68] a people among whom he had settled to preach and teach when he returned from his first pilgrimage. As a result, he was forced to embark on a second pilgrimage.[69]

It is highly probable that Sheikh ‘Umar preached reform in the courts of the Habe (Hausa) kings,[70] and contributed by his uncompromising attitude and attacks on local practices, in preparing the way for ‘Uthman dan Fodio’s reform movement. Also, ‘Umar was not only influential in shaping the religious views of ‘Uthman, he also influenced Uthman’s younger brother, ‘Abdullah, and his cousins, Muhammad Firabri and al-Mustafa b. ‘Uthman. Later on, at the beginning of the *jihad* (1804) Muhammadan, the son of Sheikh ‘Umar joined ‘Uthman dan Fodio.[71]

This general dissatisfaction with the state of Islamic affairs, continued to grow in the region as religious and social life within the Hausa kingdoms generally continued to be in contrast with the Islamic ideal. These were the turn of events that gave rise to the

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[67]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 5. Also see Hiskett, “An Islamic Tradition of Reform,” 588-589.

[68]The Tuareg people are a large Berber ethnic confederation, principally found in the Sahara Desert. Traditionally nomadic pastoralists, small group of Tuareg are also found in Northern Nigeria. For more reading about the Tuaregs, see Philipp Strazny, *Encyclopedia of Linguistics,* 1123-1126.

[69]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 5.

[70]Edward J. Arnett, *A Hausa Chronicle* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 93; Hiskett, “An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan,” 589.

[71]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 6.

movement of Islamic reformists, championed by Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio of the Muslim *jihad* of 1804-1808, sometimes referred to as the Fulani or Sokoto *Jihad*.

Historians defer on their interpretation of the final events leading to the declaration of the *jihad* by ‘Uthman dan Fodio. Hiskett suggests that ‘Uthman and his companions, together with their students had thought they could reform Islam in Hausaland through religious discuss or arguments. However, they later realized that this approach of dialogue (intellectual religious argument) alone was not yielding the desired outcome for Islam. They then resorted to the use of force, which in the end gave them control of most of Hausaland.[72] Murray Last believes, however, that ‘Uthman dan Fodio and his followers only resorted to *jihad* as a last option in view of the aggressive treatment they received from the Hausa kings.[73] Because of these diverse accounts, the reasons for the *jihad* as presented in our sources will be considered. In order to do so, it is important to first seek to understand the life and teachings of Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio, the man who championed the cause of the *jihad* (1804-1808).

‘Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817), and the Jihad (1804-1808)

According to Muhammad Bello, a certain Fulani woman saint by the name of Umm Hani had foretold the birth of ‘Uthman. It is said that she prophesied the appearance of a Muslim saint who will reform religion, revive the *sunna*, and establish a community of faithful Muslims. He would also draw disciples from the ranks of common and noble people. The community of Muslim faithful (*Jama‘a*), which he would form,

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[72]Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 9 ff.

[73]On the second view regarding the events that led to the Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1808), see Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 8-13.

would not tend cattle as is customary with the Fulanis. Thus, Umm Hanni admonishes those who will witness his advent to endeavor to follow him.[74]

The life and works of Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio is well documented in literature;[75] therefore, a synopsis will suffice here. Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio (1758-1817), a descendant of the early nomadic Fulani settlers in Hausaland in about the thirteenth century,[76] had been a devout Muslim from his youthful years. He greatly benefited from the rigorous and thorough “traditional Muslim system of education, which comprises the memorization of the Qur’an, rudimentary reading and writing at an early stage, the translation of the Qur’an, some knowledge of the hadith, study of Islamic law, grammar, rhetoric, simple arithmetic, and others. He is said to have so read the Qur’an with his father and studied other sciences from a number of other learned men of his time.”[77]

Among his tutors, two individuals, his “paternal and maternal uncle, ‘Uthman, also known as Bidduri,”[78] and his venerated master, Jibril b. ‘Umar, were particularly influential in shaping his religious and political views. The exceptional high moral life and religious piety attributed to ‘Uthman dan Fodio could be credited to his uncle,

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[74]Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al—Maisuri*, ed. C. E. J. Whitting (London: Luzac, 1951), 29-30.

[75]Among the several works on the life of Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio I found very useful are: Robert Raymond Martenson, “The Life and Work of Usmaanu Bii Fooduye, with Special Reference to the Religious Nature of the Encounter between the Hausa Muslim and Fulbe Muslim Community” (PhD diss., St. Paul Minnesota, 1977); Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate.*

[76]Hugh A. S. Johnston, *A Selection of Hausa Stories* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), xxi.

[77]Hiskett, “Material Relating to the State of Learning,” 560, 563. For a detailed description of this system of Muslim education, see Ibn Khallikan and William M. Slane, *Ibn Khallikan’s Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 1 (New York: Casimo Classics, 2010).

[78]Hiskett, “Material Relating to the state of Learning,” 561-563.

Bidduri. It is said, sheikh ‘Uthman (dan Fodio) imitated Bidduri in deeds, and “accompanied him for nearly two years, molding himself according to his pattern in piety and in ordering the right, and forbidding the wrong.”[79] Bidduri also taught ‘Uthman dan Fodio “the Mukhtasar of Khalil b. Ishaq, the most authoritative legal book of the Maliki school of law to which ‘Uthman himself belong.”[80]

Just like Bidduri, Sheik Jibril ‘Umar also, had a tremendous impact on the life of ‘Uthman dan Fodio. This assertion is further confirmed by ‘Uthman dan Fodio himself. Regarding the Sheikh ‘Umar, he states, “If there be said of me (‘Uthman dan Fodio) that which is said of good report, then I am but a wave of the waves of Jibril.”[81] Balogun presents the following summary:

> The influence that al-Hajj Jibril b. ‘Umar had on ‘Uthman was very deep-rooted even though they were together for barely a year, . . . It was from this teacher that ‘Uthman picked up the idea that eventually resulted in his successful jihad against un-Islamic practices that abounded in Hausaland during his time. Al-Hajj Jibril himself had prior to his contact with ‘Uthman made an abortive attempt at reformation in the same area. Consequently, the year during which ‘Uthman stayed with Jibril served as a period of understudy so that he might imbibe the enthusiasm of the teacher and avoid what mistakes had bedeviled the teacher’s attempt at reformation.[82]

Balogun further concludes that “Jibril had a fertile ground for his ideas of reform in ‘Uthman, and he successfully put the ideas across. It remained only to wait for a suitable opportunity so that the already sown seed might germinate and grow.”[83]

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[79]Hiskett, “Material Relating to the state of Learning,” 563.

[80]Isma’il A. B. Balogun, “The Life and Work of the Mujaddid of West Africa, ‘Uthamn B. Fudi Popularly Known as Usumanu Dan Fodio,” *Islamic Studies* 12, no. 4 (December 1973): 274. Accessed October 10, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20846894.

[81]Quoted in Hiskett, “Material Relating to the state of Learning,” 566.

[82]Isma’il Balogun, “The Life and Work of the Mujaddid of West Africa,” 274.

[83]Ibid.

As already noted elsewhere in this chapter, the influence of Jibril ‘Umar on ‘Uthman did not prevent ‘Uthman from questioning what he might have perceived of his teacher as religious extremism. Particularly, they had a theological disagreement on the question of “how to classify a Muslim who commits a grave sin.” While Jibril espoused the “(Kharijite) view that such a sinner was an unbeliever (*kafir*), ‘Uthman held the orthodox view that such a person was only a disobedient Muslim (‘*asi*) and not an unbeliever.” ‘Uthman further argued, any Muslim who accuses his fellow Muslim, and calls him/her a *Kafir* becomes a *Kafir* (unbeliever) himself.[84] Notwithstanding their theological differences, ‘Uthman still held his teacher’s views in high esteem, and concluded that Jibril must have had his reasons for holding the view he held on the question, and that it must not be counted against him. Again, Balogun observes, “This illustrates the high esteem ‘Uthman had for Jibril.”[85]

Another Muslim scholar worth mentioning due to his influence on ‘Uthman’s life, particularly regarding ‘Uthman’s writings, is his teacher, al-Hajj Muhammad b. Raj. Together with him ‘Uthman studied the renowned book of the *hadith*, *al-Bukhari*. Quite often, ‘Uthman quoted largely from the book “in support of his arguments in favor of the *sunna*[86] of the Prophet as against satanic innovations (*bida*).”[87] According to his brother, ‘Abd Allah, both he and ‘Uthman visited with Jibril when he (Jibril) returned from his

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[84]Isma’il Balogun, “The Life and Work of the Mujaddid of West Africa,” 274.

[85]Ibid., 275.

[86]Sunna, sometimes spelled Sunnah, refers to the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals) of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as various reports about Muhammad’s companions.

[87]Isma’il Balogun, “The Life and Work of the Mujaddid of West Africa,” 275.

second pilgrimage; however, ‘Uthman left his brother ‘Abd Allah with Jibril and proceeded to study *al-Bukhari* with al-Hajj Muhammad b. Raj, in the 1786.[88]

At the age of twenty, at about 1774-5, ‘Uthman began to preach and teach in his home town Degel, and afterwards he went on preaching tours, where he gained his first converts at a place called Kebbi within Hausaland.[89] In his preaching and teaching career, mostly to the general populace, he emphasized the importance of studying only the basic religious rudiments necessary for daily living, and not to be overly concerned about details, which he suggests should be left to the ‘Ulama (Islamic scholars).[90] While residing at Degel, ‘Uthman travelled to other towns in the state of Gobir in Hausaland where his followership increased tremendously. With such an increase in the number of Islamic converts, he thought it necessary to make contact with the king of Gobir.

It appears the king of Gobir, Bawa Jangwarzo (1777-1790)[91] was favorably disposed to ‘Uthman and his mission for Islam. ‘Uthman’s acquaintance with the ruler of the state increased his influence among the people and “it came about that those who did not fear God, feared to deny his order because of his connection with the Sultan. . . .”[92] The mission of Islam was fast expanding, and at Zamfara (another state within

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[88]‘Abdullah Ibn Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, trans. Mervyn Hiskett (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1963), 31-32, 90.

[89]Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 27, 84, 86.

[90]L. A. B. Balogun, “A Critical Edition of the Ihya’ al-Sunna Wa-Ikhmad al-bid’a of Utman b Fudi Popularly Known as Usumanu Dan Fodio” (PhD diss., University of London, 1967), 112-113, 416. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global.

[91]Bawa’s death is put about 1789-90, suggesting the end of his reign as king of Gobir. See J. D. Fage and Roland Anthony Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa,* 5:134.

[92]Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 27, 86.

Hausaland) where ‘Uthman and his assistants along with his brother ‘Abdullah had gone to preach, both men and women came in throngs to listen to them. For this, ‘Uthman was criticized for encouraging the mixing of the sexes in public. Responding to this criticism on behalf of his brother, Abdullah argued, “Although both sexes came to their assemblies, they were seated separately; and moreover women could not be prevented from attending the assemblies because to leave them in ignorance was a greater evil than their mixing with men at such religious gatherings.”[93] Such a response, and similar ones (like when ‘Uthman defended the religious status of Muslims who commit grave sin), further demonstrates how ‘Uthman perceived or interpreted certain Islamic religious requirements during his time.

While ‘Uthman was still engaged with the mission at Zamfara, during the ‘*Id al-Kabir* of 1788 or 1789 AD, he was summoned together with all other Islamic scholars to Magami for the ‘*Id* prayers by Bawa, the Sultan (ruler) of Gobir. According to the Fulani sources,[94] Sultan Bawa had planned to kill ‘Uthman, but for the large crowd seemingly in support of ‘Uthman, he aborted his plan, and instead, he offered gifts to the *Ulamas* (Muslim scholars) who all accepted the gifts except ‘Uthman who said, My *Jama‘a* (his followers)[95] and I are in no need of your wealth but I ask of you five things: (1) allow me to call people to God in your country; (2) do not stop those who respond to my call; (3)

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[93]See Isma’il Balogun, “The Life and Work of the Mujaddid of West Africa,” 6; Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 86-88.

[94]See *Anis al-Mufid*: ‘Abd al-Qadir b. Gidado dan Laima; and *Dabt* of Junaidu, as quoted in F. H. El-Masri, “The Life of Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio before the Jihad,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 4 (December 1963): 441, accessed October 10, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856671.

[95]Jama‘a means the followers of any learned man. A kind of sacred community.

treat with respect any man with a turban; (4) free all (political) prisoners; (5) do not burden your subjects with taxes.[96]

The Sultan accented to all five demands presented by ‘Uthman dan Fodio.[97] Elmasri, a chronicler of ‘Uthaman dan Fodio, observes that ‘Uthman had been recognized as the leader of his *jama‘a*, thus he was qualified to request on behalf of his *jama‘a* the release of political prisoners and the exemption from taxes.[98] The question is, why would Sultan Bawa want to kill ‘Uthman who ended up finding favor with him? More so, the Hausa tradition collected by British administrators presents ‘Uthman as a “court scholar attached to the Gobir royal family and a tutor of Yunfa,”[99] a nephew to Sultan Bawa, and heir to the Gobir throne. However, the narrative from Hausa sources has been disputed by Fulani sources, which claim that ‘Uthman had neither contact nor alliance with the “heretical” sultans of Gobir.[100]

To argue the validity of either the Hausa tradition or the Fulani sources in regards to ‘Uthman’s relationship with the Hausa kings prior to the jihad is not the focus of this work. However, what is obvious is that ‘Uthman dan Fodio “was a link in a chain of

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[96]El-Masri, “The Life of Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio before the Jihad,” 441.

[97]This account is also reported by ‘Uthman’s brother, Abdullah dan Fodio, “The sultan of Ghubir, who was Bawa, sent word to all the ‘*uluma*’ that they should gather together at his court. . . . We gathered together before him, and he said what he had to say, and gave much wealth in alms to the ‘*ulama*’, then Sheikh ‘Uthman stood up before him and said to him: ‘Indeed I and my community have no need of your wealth, but I ask you this and this,’ and he enumerated to him all matters concerning the establishment of religion. The Sultan replied to him, ‘I give you what you ask, and I consent to all that you wish to do in this country.’” See Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 88-89.

[98]El-Masri, “The Life of Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio before the Jihad,” 441.

[99]Ibid., 440.

[100]Ibid., 441.

reforming Muslims who had repeatedly sought to bring about the acceptance and practice of orthodox Islam by the Sudanese rulers and their subjects, and thereby to destroy (what they considered) pagan and syncretistic practices,"[101] which were in reality, to the Hausa people, practices associated with their indigenous religions.

As I have already established in this work, the introduction of Islam into Hausaland did not obliterate the indigenous traditional religious practices of the region. Also, the attitude of Hausa kings and rulers, as well as their policies towards Islam, and its religious leaders varied, depending on the level to which they (the Hausa kings) received or embraced Islam.[102] For instance, according to *The Kano Chronicle*, the eleventh king of Kano, Sarki (king) Yaji (1349-1385), fully embraced Islam, and introduced certain Islamic religious offices into his royal court to which he appointed certain Wangarawa Muslims; while his son Kanajeji (1390-1410) the thirteenth king of Kano reverted to the practices of the traditional religion by restoring the traditional religious cult that had been destroyed by his fathers.[103] The fourteenth king of Kano, Umaru (1410-1421) son of Kanajeji embraced Islam. He is often described as a man earnest in prayers. Due to his religious inclination he resigned from the throne and

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[101]Marilyn R. Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," *The Journal of African History* 6, no. 3 (1965): 334, accessed October 10, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/180172. For Uthman's reforming views, see Hiskett, "Kitab al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdom Attributed to 'Uthman dan Fodio," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 23, no. 3 (1960): 558-579, http://www.jstor.org/stable/610038. Also, for additional reading on the general Islamic reforming activities in Hausaland during the period under consideration, read Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 25, no. 1/3 (1962): 557-596, http://www.jstor.org/stable/610921.

[102]Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 335-337.

[103]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 70-74.

withdrew into a secluded Islamic religious life. However, unlike Yaji (1349-1385), his approach towards the Islamic religious enterprise seems to have remained passive.

Subsequently, during the reign of Mohammad Rimfa (1463-1499), the twentieth king of Kano, it appears Islam once again enjoyed uninterrupted royal patronage.[104] This changing trend in the relationship between Hausa rulers and Islamic scholars and clerics continued down to the time of 'Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817). As Waldman observes, "In Hausaland, in the eighteenth century, the will of the individual ruler determined the extent to which Muslims would be tolerated or the principles of Islam applied."[105] Thus, when "'Uthman entered this setting which was bound to arouse his criticism, but unlikely to provide any adequate outlet for his grievances,"[106] he, like other Muslim reformers most likely determined to be more assertive in his quest for religious reforms.

Based on the above premise, a number of assumptions can be inferred from the five demands presented to Bawa, the king of Gobir by 'Uthman: (1) it could be viewed that Muslim leaders were fed up with the passive attitude of Hausa rulers, and their lack of "reverence" for Islam and its leaders, thus the demand, "to treat with respect any man with a turban"; (2) the second demand, "to allow me to call people to God in your country, and not to stop anybody who intends to respond to my call," sounds more like a demand for religious freedom, and could imply that Muslims were denied freedom of

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[104]Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," 77-78.

[105]Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 336, 338. Also, "whenever the chronicles say that Islam flourished anywhere in Hausaland, it is more likely that the reigning *sarki* (king) was willing to encourage, and possibly to protect, the presence of Islam and Muslim learned men in his kingdom. It does not necessary mean that any extensive conversion took place among his subjects.

[106]Ibid., 338.

religion by the Hausa kings; (3) it could also, be perceived as a demand for social justice; (4) and finally, the audacity to make such demands of the king could also be perceived as a direct challenge to his (the king's) authority and the engagement of religious leaders in political or civil matters, particularly by demanding the king "to free all political prisoners, and to grant tax exemption to the *jama'a*."

Waldman notes that "'Uthman criticized both the harshness and arbitrary nature of the exercise of control by those in power, and also the specific practices to which most of the population objected."[107] Therefore, whichever way we choose to interpret 'Uthman's demands, it is evident his views were viewed with favor by the masses who continued to embrace his Islamic reform message. 'Uthman did not stop at criticizing the "ill practices" of the Hausa rulers; he also "taught the people about a religion in which these practices would be outlawed and in which government would be administered with social justice."[108]

As M. A. Al-Hajj observes, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the *jama'a*, led by 'Uthman had grown from a "coterie of radical scholars and students into a popular party drawn from all segments of the population." It was made up of those who had

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[107]Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 344. The various reasons for which 'Uthman criticized the Hausa kings are found in Hiskett, Kitab al-farq: "A Work on the Habe Kingdoms attributed to Uthman dan Fodio," 558-579.

[108]Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 344-345.

grievances against the existing governing order.[109] Thus, by 1788, the *jama'a* was formidable enough to compel Bawa, king of Gobir, to acquiesce to some specific demands.[110] Despite their numerical strength and what was perceived by the *jama'a* as the authority to establish Islam,[111] at this point, both 'Uthman and the Sultans remained cautious not to allow the relationship between the *jama'a* ('Uthman's Muslim Community) and the Hausa rulers to develop into armed conflict.[112] However, when in 1795 Gobir, under Yaqubu (1791-1795), the successor of Bawa, was defeated by Katsina, and Yaqubu was killed in Battle, 'Uthman began to contemplate the use of force against the rulers of Gobir.[113] Waldman suggests that the discontinuing of Bawa's policies towards Islam by his predecessors partly account for 'Uthman's decision to advocate or support the idea to overthrow the Hausa rulers.[114] Abdullahi states,

> And when our Shaykh, 'Uthman saw a considerable increase in the numbers of the community and a strong desire among them to break away from the unbelievers and declare the *jihad*, he began to encourage them to arm themselves by saying: 'Verily the keeping of arms in readiness is *sunna*'. And we began to acquire arms and he began to pray to God to show him the sovereignty of Islam in the lands of the

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[109]M. A. Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," in *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate*: *The Sokoto Seminar Papers*, ed. Y. B. Usman (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University, 1979), 10-13. Al-Hajj, mentions four groups who had grievances with the Hausa kings: the settled Fulani, who were denied certain privileges enjoyed by the Hausas, the Fulani pastoralists, who often had conflicts with peasant Hausa farmers, the Hausa peasantry, who suffered injustices due to the feudal system of government in eighteenth century Hausaland, and the slaves, who some were Hausa free Muslims captured in inter-tribal wars. The nature of the grievances held by these groups against the Hausa rulers is further elaborated in Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 341-345.

[110]Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," 13-14.

[111]Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 27,

[112]Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," 14. 'Uthman tried to prevent crises between the people and their rulers saying, "I will not interfere between anyone and his chief; I will not be a cause of parting." See Bello and Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, 47.

[113]Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," 14.

[114]Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," 345.

Sudan.[115]

From the above statement it appears that ‘Uthman and his followers had already resolved to break away from the existing governing authority before the Hausa kings made certain pronouncements proscribing certain aspects of Islamic practices. Arnett observes, the Hausa kings, Yakubu (1791-1795), Nafata (1795-1799), and Yunfa (1799-1808) during each of their reigns over Gobir, visited Shehu ‘Uthman dan Fodio at Degel and received his blessings.[116] Therefore, it could be assumed that although Nafata (1795-1799), like his predecessor, Yaqubu, was alarmed by the growth of the *jama‘a* and their defiance to his authority, he did not immediately take actions to proscribe Islam until the threat to his authority and kingdom became obviously imminent. Abdullah’s testimony further supports this assumption.

> When the kings and their supporters saw the shaykh’s Community [Muslim community under ‘Uthman] acquiring arms, [that they became] frightened as never before. In the past they were exasperated by its large size and its existence outside their jurisdiction, but now they began to show their enmity by their tongues and threatened the Community [‘Uthman’s Muslim community] with attacks and annihilation. . . . And they began to forbid what they called ‘the garb of the Community’ like the turbans (for men) and the stipulated veils for women. [117]

The above statement refers to king Nafata’s declaration proscribing certain Islamic practices. This declaration was his attempt to arrest the growing threat posed to his kingdom by the followers of ‘Uthman dan Fodio. The three declarations were (1) that henceforth no one in the community should preach Islam except Shehu ‘Uthan dan Fodio, (2) that all converts to Islam or those who were not born into Muslim families should

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[115]Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 54.

[116]Edward J. Arnett, *Gazetteer of Sokoto Province* (London: Waterlow, 1920), 21.

[117]Muhammad, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, 54.

revert to their former religion, and (3) the wearing of turbans by men and veils by women should stop.[118]

With these declarations against Islam and its adherents, it was only a matter of time before a war of arms began. According to Al-Hajj's narrative of the final events leading to actual war between the *jama'a* and the Huasa rulers, a certain disciple of the Shehu 'Uthman dan Fodio, Abd al-Salam, migrated with his followers to Gimbana in Kebbi in order to escape from persecution during the reign of Nafata (1795-1799). However, when Yunfa (1799-1808) succeeded Nafata, he dispatched an urgent message ordering Abd al-Salam and his followers to return to Gobir. And when they were defiant, he sent an expedition against them. Gimbana was sacked, some followers of Abd al-Salam were killed, while the survivors were taken captive.[119]

On their way back to Alkalawa the capital of Gobir, the expeditionary force passed through Degel, Shehu 'Uthman's hometown. At Degel, the expeditionary force encountered some members of the Muslim community who attacked them and freed the captives. In response to this act of disobedience, Yunfa ordered 'Uthman to leave Degel with his family, but 'Uthman, sensing the implication of the king's order—that the rest of the community would be attacked and the offenders punished,[120] replied: "I will not abandon my community but I shall leave your country (with them), for God's earth is

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[118]Arnett and Bello, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, 48, 105.

[119]Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," 15.

[120]Ibid.

wide."[121] As a result, 'Uthman and his followers emigrated to Gudu, a place some thirty miles from Degel on the western limits of Gobir, and the holy war (jihad) began in 1804.[122]

The basis for declaring the jihad was clearly articulated by 'Uthman dan Fodio. These basic arguments, constituting the ideology of the jihad evoked a sense of duty compelling most of the aggrieved parties in Hausaland to mobilize revolutionary forces within their states. In his justification, 'Utman states, among other arguments,

> (i) that the foundations of the religion of Islam is the application of *Shari'a* law; (ii) that it is incumbent upon Muslims to follow an *Imam* [worship leader], or Caliph [civil and religious leader]; (iii) that *hijra* from the land of unbelief (*balad al-kufr*) to the land of Islam (*balad al-Islam*) is obligatory; (iv) that those who support the unbelievers should be regarded as themselves unbelievers; and (v) that the *jihad* against the unbelievers as well as the apostates (*murtaddun*) is obligatory.[123]

According to Al-Hajj, the implications of the above arguments are that

> (i) the Hausa states are not to be considered as Muslim states because they do not apply the Shari'a as the law of the land; (ii) the Hausa rulers are not legitimate imams, or caliphs, because they have not been dully elected by the Muslim community; (iii) their territories are *bilad al-kufr* from which migration to *bilad al-Islam* is a religious obligation; (iv) their supporters (that is, *ulama'-al-su'*) become themselves unbelievers on the basis of *muwalat* (friendship of unbelievers); and (v) there is no distinction between pagan and apostate (syncretists) since the jihad applies to both. The conclusion seems, those who are not with us are against us and those who are against us are unbelievers—as is usually the case in any religious war.[124]

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[121]Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al—Maisuri*, quoted in Al-Hajj, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad," 15.

[122]Al-Hajj, "The History of the Sokoto Caliphate," 15.

[123]Uthman B. Fudi, *Masa'il Muhimma*, MS, quoted in Muhammad Al-Hajj, "The History of the Sokoto Caliphate," 16. A more comprehensive list of 'Uthman's arguments in support of the jihad is presented in A. D. H. Bivar, "The Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad," *The Journal of African History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 235-243, accessed August 9, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/179999.

[124]Al-Hajj, "The History of the Sokoto Caliphate," 16.

The jihad literature describes the emigration to Gudu by the *Jama'a* as *hijra* in the manner of the *hijra* of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.[125] Muhammad left Mecca as a persecuted preacher, and established a militant community at Medina, which ultimately succeeded in overthrowing the Qurashite regime and establishing the foundation of the theocratic state. Similarly, when 'Uthman's and the entire Muslim community at Degel embarked on a *hijra* to Gudu, they indicated their final break with Gobir and the beginning of the jihad which resulted in the removal of the various governments in Hausaland and the establishment of a theocratic state, the Sokoto Caliphate.[126]

The Sokoto Caliphate and Redefinition of Religious Freedom and Tolerance in Northern Nigeria

The term Sokoto Caliphate refers to the Islamic hegemony and the territory (north western Hausaland) it ruled beginning in 1809 to the time of its conquest by the British colonialists in the early years of the twentieth century. The caliph who resided at Sokoto was the head of the Caliphate, while emirs whose appointments he ratified governed the

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[125]The term *hijra* is derived from the Arabic word *al-hijra* (from the root word h-j-r, which literally means cutting oneself from sociable and friendly relations; to give up, to abandon, to emigrate or to immigrate, etc.). The term is commonly used to denote the sense of leaving one's own country and taking up residence in another country. It has further been used to denote the act of emigration from the land of the unbelievers to the land of the believers for the sake of faith (Qur'an 5:97; 29:26, etc.). As a technical term, hijra connotes the emigration of the Prophet Mohammad and his early companions in 622 CE, from Mecca to Medina, previously called Yathrib. For addition reading on the meaning and usage of the term hijra, read Mohammad al-Faruque, "Hijra," in *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God,* vol. 1, ed. Coeli Fitzpatrick and Adam Hani Walker (London: Oxford University Press, 2014), 254-257.

[126]Al-Hajj, "The History of the Sokoto Caliphate," 15, 16.

various emirates under his dominion.[127] Although the caliph had no direct control over the daily administration of the emirates, he occasionally, either directly or indirectly, "intervened in the affairs of the emirates to prevent or correct deviations from the established Islamic practice."[128]

The general expectation was that all emirates under the authority of the Sokoto Caliphate would work to advance the political and economic interests of the Caliphate and promote the religion of Islam—the state religion. As Falola observes, "The emirs exercised the powers of kings, but were expected to show allegiance to Sokoto by sending tributes and gifts, and contributing to joint military expeditions against the enemies of the Caliphate. All leading state officials were expected to contribute to the growth of Islam."[129] Those emirs whose activities were considered incongruous to the general principles of Islam, and by implication against the welfare of the Caliphate were often deposed and replaced. In 1844 the emir of Katsina, Saddik, was accused of oppression, and thus removed from office. Similarly, the emir of Zaria, Sidi Abdulkadir, was deposed in the 1850s for committing what was considered serious political and moral offenses. Sambo was also removed from office for his failure to defend Zaria against its

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[127]For a detailed account of the Sokoto Caliphate, see Last, The Sokoto Caliphate and R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and Its Enemies* (London: Longman Group, 1971).

[128]For an account on the relationship between Sokoto and its emirates, see Sa'ad Abubakar, "The Established Caliphate: Sokoto, the Emirates and their Neighbors," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oluseyi Press, 1980), 303-314 (page 304 for this quote).

[129]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 37.

external enemies.[130]

Emirs who wanted to maintain loyalty to the Caliphate, like Mallam Musa of Zaria (1804-1821), often strove to insure traditional practices (both social and religious) were in harmony with Islamic principles and precepts as conceived by the Muslim reformers. "Musa's religious interest . . . differed radically from that of the Habe [Hausa rulers]" and he subtly worked to place the government in the hands of Muslim religious leaders.[131] "The reformers wanted to establish a state based on Islamic precepts, the *Maliki Madh'hab*[132] and the *Qadiriyya tariqa* and to rid governance of the region of what they defined as non-Islamic law, practices, and observances."[133] However, the ideal community the reformers had sought to create was challenged by both internal and external forces emanating partly from lack of genuine conversion on the part of some of

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[130]For additional reading on the dynastic history of Zaria and how it connects to the Sokoto Caliphate, see Michael G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 141-196.

[131]M. Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800-1950*, 142-143.

[132]The Maliki madhab is one of the four schools of Fiqh or religious law within Sunni Islam. It is the second largest of the four schools, followed by approximately 25% of Muslims, mostly in North Africa and West Africa. Madhabs are not sects, but rather schools of jurisprudence. There is, technically, no rivalry or competition between members of varying madhabs, and indeed it would not be uncommon for followers of all four to be found in a randomly selected American or European mosque. The Maliki School derives from the work of Imam Malik. It differs from the three other schools of law most notably in the sources it uses for derivation of rulings. All four schools use the Qur'an as primary source, followed by the sunnah of the prophet Muhammad transmitted as hadith (sayings), ijma (consensus of the scholars or Muslims) and Qiyas (analogy); the Maliki School, in addition, uses the practice of the people of Medina (amal ahl al-medina) as a source. This source, according to Malik, sometimes supersedes hadith, because the practice of the people of Medina was considered "living sunnah," in as much as the Prophet migrated there, lived there and died there, and most of his companions lived there during his life and after his death. The result is a much more limited reliance upon hadith than is found in other schools. "The Maliki Madhab," copied from Google, the Maliki Madhab, accessed November 12, 2017, http://www.islamawareness.net/Madhab/Maliki/ maliki.html.

[133]Jennifer Lofkrantz, "Intellectual Discourse in the Sokoto Caliphate: The Triumvirate's Opinions on the Issue of Ransoming, ca. 1810," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 385-401, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24393055.

its inhabitants, and also, resistance from kingdoms that would not surrender to the Caliphate without a fight.

In his description of the Muslim community, 'Uthman's son, Muhammad Bello, observed that not all people were genuine members of the *jama'a* (Muslim community). Thus, there were those who feared the authority of the previous rulers [the Hausa rulers]. This group did not observe Islamic religious rites. Also, there were Fulanis (nomads), whose connection to the Muslim community was based more on their ethnic affiliation to the Shaikh ('Uthman dan Fodio) instead of religious convictions. These Fulanis, even though joined in several expeditions, generally neglected religion and the theory of jihad. Another group included students or children who had embraced the Islamic principles taught by 'Uthman dan Fodio, and had deserted their parents or teachers to join Shaikh 'Uthman. This group criticized the idea of jihad, and made fun of the *jama'a* (Muslim community).[134]

There were also, those whose attraction to the Muslim community was wholly based on worldly benefits. A further group included those who were once genuine members of the community, but had been overwhelmed by worldly temptations. A final was made up of those who felt compelled to join the Muslim community as their only alternative.[135]

In his *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*, Adeleye further observes, "In many parts of the Caliphate, the Muslim conquest was not accomplished until the third

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[134]Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 58-59.

[135]Ibid., 59. Some teachings of 'Uthman dan Fodio were challenged by other Muslim scholars who perceived him as an extremist. For additional reading, see Ibraheem Sulaiman, *The African Caliphate: The Life, Work and Teachings of Shaykh Usman dan Fodio* (London: The Diwan Press, 2009), 131-155.

decade after the outbreak of the jihad of the Shaikh [‘Uthman dan Fodio].”[136] This outcome was due to the difficulties encountered in the founding of the emirates. Opposition was not uncommon even within the established emirates, thus “the task of suppressing opposition became the pre-occupation of the emirates throughout the Caliphate’s existence.”[137]

Despite the challenges that confronted the Caliphate, it continued to expand its territory during the nineteenth century “in consequence of the formation of theocratic states whose main principles were the subjugation of the states to the written law of God [as stated in the Qur’an, and Sunnah] and uniformity of religious allegiance.”[138] Further, as Islamic allegiance broadened in several states, these states came to be considered theocratic and “Islam came to be manifested through the channels by which these states acted. Especially the legal and taxation system.”[139] “Within these states a rigid application of Islamic law was sought.”[140]

> Although the Fulani [settled Fulanis] states of Northern Nigeria appear in certain aspects to be a continuation of the Hausa states, retaining many Hausa institutions, they were new creations in that they were Muslim in spirit and outlook, which could not be said of the states they supplanted. There was an Islamic norm against which the actions of the rulers and officials could be measured and criticized.[141]

The nature or structure of the Sokoto Caliphate and what it aimed to achieve was

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[136]Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804-1906*, 37.

[137]Ibid.

[138]Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam Upon Africa*, 96.

[139]Ibid.

[140]Ibid., 97.

[141]Ibid.

mostly a reflection of the reformist ideas. It was the propagation of these ideas that precipitated the jihad and defined the nature of the relationship between the Caliphate and the emirates. As Adeleye asserts, "The central idea of 'Uthman b. Fodiye's reform movement was the establishment of Islamic law and Islamic ideals as the basis of government in the place of systems ridden by non-Islamic laws, observances, and practices, which the Shiakh saw around him among the 'Sudanese' people."[142] Thus it became that in Hausaland, political structure and governance, the freedom of religion and tolerance was limited or defined by Islamic law and precepts—a major departure from the ancient religious and political heritage of the region.

'Uthman dan Fodio's grievances with the Hausa rulers were not limited to issues of political injustice, but also concerned issues of morality. He accused the Hausa rulers together with some of their subjects of syncretism, suggesting that his view of religious freedom did not guarantee or permit the freedom of conscience. He had argued in favor of the enforcement of the 'divine laws' (*akkam al-shar*'), and the obligation to wage war against non-Muslim kings and their subjects (either those who had never converted to Islam or those who once converted to Islam, but in exercising their freedom of conscience, decided to revert to traditional religions) in order to take the government from them.[143]

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[142]Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906*, 40. "The Hausa states and their neighbors were negroid people and their country was therefore *bilad al-sudan* hence 'Sudanese.'"

[143]Biver, "The Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad."

Conclusion

In pre-Islamic Northern Nigeria, and even during early Islam, there was an interaction and overlap between religious and civil affairs, particularly as seen in the dual role of the "king/priest," who was in some instances viewed as a "divine-king." Despite this natural assumption of civil authority by the "king/priest," African traditional rulers neither sought to define civil order solely on the basis of religious injunctions nor waged war against other rulers solely based on religious differences.

However, with the Islamic conquest of the region and the establishment of its Caliphate, religious and civil affairs were not only fused together, but religious norms became the sole basis for defining civil injunctions, and rulers together with their subjects within the emirates of Northern Nigeria could only be "fully legitimized" if they were loyal to or submissive to the religion of Islam in their practices. This systematic transition from a tradition of relative religious tolerance to intolerance in the religious interactions of Northern Nigeria survived into the mid-nineteenth century when Christian missionaries and British colonialists arrived in the region.

When the British colonialists finally took over political power from Northern Nigeria Muslim rulers in 1903, the policies introduced to address religious and political issues in the region where such that further emboldened religious and political problems rather than resolve them. This was due to the fact that British interest in the region was not to correct religious or political anomalies, but to consolidate colonial rule. The preceding chapter will further show how British colonial government policies impacted religious interaction in Northern Nigeria.

CHAPTER 5

A RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE COLONIAL LEGACY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Introduction

This chapter examines the impact British colonial government policies had on religious and political interaction in Northern Nigeria during the occupation of the region by the British colonialists, particularly during the period beginning in 1900 to 1959. Although Britain's interest in West Africa dates from the late eighteenth century when the African Association was founded, European interest in the region was generally concerned with scientific discoveries and industrial revolution.[1] The initial main objective of the African Association, as Adu Boahen has shown,[2] was the promotion of scientific knowledge about Africa. And although, early Christian missionary enterprise in the region now known as Northern Nigeria began in the eighteenth century, its impact was very minimal as missionary enterprise in the region was short-lived. Similarly, Britain's interest in colonizing the region, which began in the late nineteenth century, would only be "fully actualized" at the beginning of the twentieth century.[3]

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[1]Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, 106-107.

[2]Adu A. Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara, and the Western Sudan 1788-1861* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 1-28.

[3]See T. Umaru, *Christian Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, 46.

The British conquest of the West African region now known as Nigeria occurred in two stages: the southern phase from 1850 to 1897, and the northern phase from 1900 to 1914.[4] It is with the later phase and the continual occupation of the region by British colonialists up to the year 1959 that this chapter is particularly concerned.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to show how British colonial policies impacted the interactions and relationship among the various religious traditions (ATR, Islam, and Christianity) in Northern Nigeria. In particular, it examines how British colonial administration policies impacted adherents of the different religious traditions as they undertook their various missionary enterprises. By the year 1905, virtually the entire region of West Africa, which is now known as the country of Nigeria, was under British rule.[5] The policies of British colonial administration eventually became a major factor among the forces that determined religious and political interaction among the various religious traditions in the region.

The chapter is divided into three major parts:

1. A brief introduction

2. Religious and political interactions in Northern Nigeria prior to and during the early years of British colonization. The focus of this part is to demonstrate the nature of the interaction among the various religious groups before the arrival of British colonialists, and during the early years of British colonization. This section will further present an overview of Christian missionary activities, and Colonial administration

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[4]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 54.

[5]Ibid., 53.

policies in Northern Nigeria.

3. The impact of British colonial administration policies and programs on Northern Nigeria religious and political interactions. The focus of this third part is to demonstrate how British colonial administration policies and programs impacted directly on adherents of the various religious traditions (Islam, ATR, and Christianity) in the region. Special attention will be paid to their various religious missionary enterprises, particularly that of Islam and Christianity. It will be examined how these enterprises understood and practiced tolerance during the colonial period, and how they were impacted by British colonial administration policies.

Religious and Political Interactions in Northern Nigeria Prior to and During the Early Years of British Colonization

The occupation of Nigeria, and particularly Northern Nigeria, by British colonialists was a result of a wider European interest in Africa, often referred to as "the scramble for Africa"[6] by African history scholars. During the nineteenth century, there was a general growing interest in Africa among European countries, mostly for the

[6]The Scramble for Africa (or the Race for Africa) was the proliferation of conflicting European claims to African territory during the New Imperialism period, between the 1880s and the start of World War I. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the transition from the "informal" imperialism of control through military influence and economic dominance to that of direct rule. Attempts to mediate imperial competition, such as the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 among the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the French Third Republic and the German Empire, failed to establish definitively the competing powers' claims. These disputes over Africa were among the central factors precipitating the First World War. European nations saw Africa as ripe for the taking. Some Europeans argued that by colonizing Africa, they were also exporting civilization to a continent which they regarded as evolutionary backward and undeveloped. It was a European responsibility to act as trustees of Africa until Africans were mature enough to govern themselves. However, colonization was in reality driven by commercial interests. Europe would benefit enormously from its exploitation of Africa. "Scramble for Africa," *New World Encyclopedia*, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Scramble_for_Africa. For additional reading on the "scramble for Africa," see Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991); Trevor Rowell, *The Scramble for Africa (Ca. 1870-1914)* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1986).

purpose of "ensuring greater economic advantages for their countries, preventing rival powers from exercising control, and resolving political and diplomatic problems in Europe by using the competition for overseas territories."[7]

As a result, when Britain finally succeeded in colonizing the West African region now known as Nigeria by 1905, British colonial government officials introduced new policies and programs that would enable them successfully govern the region. However, these colonial policies, to a larger extent, failed to adequately address issues that concerned religious and political interests of the different religious and ethnic groups that existed in the region. The reason for this failure could be attributed to the fact that European colonial interest in Africa, generally, was not concerned primarily with religious or political issues, as they were with issues of trade and technological advancement for the benefit of Europe. The connection between European economic interest and subsequent imposition of colonization in West Africa has been extensively discussed in secondary literature.[8]

By the time of the British occupation of Northern Nigeria, particularly beginning in 1900, Islamic rule had been firmly established in some of the larger emirates of Hausaland (Sokoto, Kano, Zaria), and in Borno. Non-Muslim inhabitants of emirates

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[7]Falola, *The History of Nigeria,* 53.

[8]Some of the secondary literature include the following: Roger T. A. Anstey, "Capitalism and Slavery: A Critic," *The Economic History Review* 2, no. 21 (1968): 307-20; Antony G. Hopkins, "Economic Imperialism in West Africa: Lagos, 1880-92," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 21, no. 3 (December 1968): 580-606; Alexander D. Nzemeke, *British Imperialism and African Response: The Niger Valley, 1851-1905: A Case Study of Afro-British Contacts in West Africa* (Paderborn, Germany: Schoningh, 1982); Toyin Falola, *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?* (London: Zed, 1987); Anne Philips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa* (London: James Currey, 1989); William Otto Henderson, *The German Colonial Empire, 1884-1919* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); P. J. Cain and Antony Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (Harlow, England: Longmans, 2001). For older literature see the bibliographic essays in Fage and Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa*.

controlled by Muslim rulers "paid the statutory tax in addition to discharging other obligations towards the Islamic state"[9] such as the payment of market dues and caravan tolls. Also, district chiefs remained subordinate to Emirs.[10] However, in other emirates where Islamic influence was minimal, non-Muslim subjects enjoyed a limited, relative freedom in managing the affairs of their immediate communities. Also, communities that were not under the full control of the Islamic Caliphate established after the 'Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1808), only recognized a vague suzerainty of the emirs who ruled within the purview of the Caliphate. A vast area of Northern Nigeria, particularly the area now designated as north central or the middle-belt region—parts of the present day Bauchi, Plateau, Niger, Kwara, Kaduna, Taraba, Nassarawa, and Benue States, remained outside the expanding influence of Islam. Some of these areas mentioned above suffered raids from the Islamic powers, "but in others, Islamic influences were completely nonexistent."[11]

Before the establishment of Islamic rule in parts of Hausaland, the region originally comprised small states and horticultural communities whose inhabitants were adherents of the African traditional religions. These people practiced what some scholars

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[9]C. N. Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria," *The Muslim World* 81, no. 2 (1991):133-145, accessed November 28, 2017, http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/doi/10.1111/muwo.1991.81.issue-2/issuetoc; C. N. Ubah, "Administrative Principles and Practices in some Nigerian Emirates: 1900-1918," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 8, no. 3 (1976): 44, accessed April 9, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41971249.

[10]Sa'ad Abubakar, "The Emirate-Type of Government in the Sokoto Caliphate," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 2 (1974): 218-223, accessed April 9, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857009.

[11]Ubah, "Colonial Administration." Some of the territories that were not under the full control of Islam engaged in series of stalemates and negotiated tribute-payments in exchange for peace with the Caliphate. See Moses Ochonu, "Colonialism within Colonialism: The Hausa-Caliphate Imaginary and the British Colonial Administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt," *African Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 2 and 3 (2008): 101, accessed April 9, 2018, http://asq .africa.ufl.edu/files/Ochonu-Vol10Issue23.pdf.

termed "pagan administration."[12] This so-called "pagan administration" lacked a centralized government structure.[13] It was the lack of centralization in the administration of Hausaland that partly made it easier for a succession of alien rulers to impose a centralized rule over these separate communities of Hausaland. This situation gave rise to what became the highest and earliest form of a centralized administrative structure, the Islamic emirates of Northern Nigeria, during the pre-colonial era of Nigeria.[14] In their organization, these Islamic emirates, basically, bore the semblance of feudalism. Isaac Okonjo, a Nigerian historian, further comments:

> There was, in each emirate, a clearly ascertainable ruling elite comprising a selection of leading Fulani families whose ancestors were credited, either by objective history or by legend, with being the founders of the state. These families perpetuated themselves by ties of marriage, and they and their privileged descendants tended to monopolize the kingship and the other principal political, military, administrative, and judicial offices within the state. Various teachings and tenets of Islam made it comparatively easy for these ruling families to entrench their positions and to monopolize the principal instruments of [religious, political, and economic] power.[15]

Among the Islamic teachings and tenets referred to by Okonjo was the Islamic obligation to appoint a commander and to pay allegiance to the commander and his deputies. Also, it was obligatory for the faithful to appoint emirs in their states, and judges to administer the law and uphold the social order.[16] The natural implication of

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[12]For additional reading on "Pagan Administration" see Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) and William M. Hailey, *Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa* (London: Kraus Reprint, 1979).

[13]Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 103-106.

[14]Sidney J. Hogben and Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 116-135.

[15]Isaac M. Okonjo, British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950: A Nigerian Review (New York: NOK Publishers, 1974), 5-6.

[16]Bivar, "The Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan."

these obligations is that any form of insubordination to the commander and his deputies is tantamount to rebellion and thus punishable in accordance with Islamic law. Okonjo further averred, "These tenets ensured that the faithful who, in a typical Muslim emirate, comprised the majority of the population would remain committed to the maintenance of the *status quo* and to the defense of the state against subversion by forces which could not but be anti-state and anti-religion."[17]

In addition, there was another set of Islamic teachings that enabled the rulers to appropriate to themselves the major sources of economic resources. For instance, the faithful were obligated to wage jihad against non-Muslim rulers, apostate rulers, and even rulers who though professed Islam, mixed practices of Islam with those of ATR. The purpose of the jihad against such rulers is to remove them from power, and to replace them with faithful Muslim rulers. Similarly, it was obligatory for the faithful to wage jihad against all apostate Muslims, enslave them, and loot their property. Also, under these Islamic teachings the religious status of a state was to be determined by reference to the religious beliefs and practices of its king or ruler,[18] therefore, a non-Muslim king could not rule a true Muslim state.[19] Okonjo further asserts, "These last sets of Islamic

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[17]Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950*, 6.

[18]Bivar, "The Wathiqat Ahl Al-Sudan."

[19]It was this last sentiment that was vigorously espoused by a twentieth century Islamic cleric and scholar, Shaikh Abubakar Gumi, when he consistently preached and urged Muslim men in Nigeria to mobilize together with their children and wives in order to vote into political offices faithful Muslims who will protect the interest of Islam in the country. Also, during the periods Gumi served as religious adviser to different governments in Nigeria "he used his office to impose the Islamic elements in government decision-making in the country." For additional reading, see Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Nigeria* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 163-171; Hazaifa A. Jangebe, "Islamic Reform in Nigeria: The Contributions of Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, no. 9 (2015): 176-181, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_9_September_2015/19.pdf.

tenets provided theological basis for the never-ending spiral of raids and counter raids, which characterized nineteenth century Fulani (Muslims) relations with their non-Muslim neighbors."[20] Such was the state of affairs in Northern Nigeria when Christian missionaries began to make inroads into the region.

Christian Missionary Enterprise in Northern Nigeria

As earlier noted in this work, the beginning of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria could be dated to the early eighteenth century, or even to the late seventeenth centuries. As Ayandele noted,[21] records indicate that by 1708, Christianity had already registered its presence in the region. However, these early missionary enterprise did not last. The reason for its short lifespan is closely related to the fact that Islam, the dominant religion was highly protective of the territories it conquered in Northern Nigeria and Muslim were not disposed to converting to Christianity. Thus by the time the British colonialists finally conquered the region in the beginning of twentieth century, the influence of Christianity was still very minimal compared to Islam.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a renewed interest among various Christian missionary organizations in Britain, the United States, Canada and Italy to evangelize Northern Nigeria. As early as 1856, Samuel Ajayi Crowther,[22] head of the

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[20]Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950*, 6.

[21]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria, 1870-1918," 503.

[22]Samuel Ajayi Crowther is perhaps the most widely known African Christian of the nineteenth century. He was a central figure during the mid-nineteenth century Christian enterprise in Nigeria. For more reading on Samuel Ajayi Crowther, see *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, accessed May 2, 2018, https://dacb.org/stories/nigeria/legacy-crowther/. Also see Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 505-506.

Niger Mission that was founded in 1857, together with Dr. S. F. Schon had thought of reaching Huasaland in Northern Nigeria with the gospel. In order to facilitate their conceived mission, "a few years later they compiled a useful tentative Hausa dictionary, the first of its kind."[23] Subsequently, in 1880 the Wesleyans began missionary work in Nupe, a territory of Northern Nigeria; and in 1881 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions expressed interest to begin Christian missionary work in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, within the same time period, W. A. Allakura Sharpe, an ex-slave of Kanuri origin [Kanuri is the most populous tribe in Borno] had been in conversation with his Mission on the need to train indigenous Christian missionary workers for the purposes of evangelizing the empire of Kanem Borno in Northern Nigeria.[24]

This renewed missionary interest that began during the second half of the nineteenth century could be attributed partly to the various accounts of explorers, such as, Heinrich Barths, "who painted the picture of highly civilized peoples, industrious and prosperous; of large populations eager for the manufactured goods of Europe; of a literate people, superior in all respects to the coastal peoples with whom Christian missions were becoming disillusioned."[25] Similarly, Edward Wilmot Blyden, a celebrated pan-

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[23]See Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 505. Also see "Former Efforts to Evangelize Hausaland" in *The Church Missionary Gleaner,* vol. xxvii, 1900 (London: Church Missionary House, 1900), 7, hathitrust.org.

[24]For additional details, see Methodist Mission Archives, Sharpe to John Kilner (26/7/1880), and Methodist Mission Archives. *Minutes* Yoruba Mission (1881), quoted in Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria." The Wesleyan missionaries were non-state missionaries that helped promote literacy, human rights, and democracy for the local peoples. See Robert D. Woodberry, "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *The American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012): 244-274, accessed April 9, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41495078.

[25]Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 120. Also see Henry Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa: Including Accounts of Tripoli, The Sahara, The Remarkable Kingdom of Bornu, and the Countries Around Lake Chad* (London: Ward, Lock, 1890), 286-310.

Africanist Negro missionary of Liberia, "whose authority on Islam was respected," portrayed inhabitants of Northern Nigeria as a people who could easily be incorporated into Christianity. It was this exaggerated perception that Northern Nigerian peoples, including Muslims, would be very easy to convert that led to the renewed interest among Foreign Missionary Societies to evangelize the region.[26]

Moreover, the movement for the abolition of slave trade in the first half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain was accompanied by the activities of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, a leading evangelical and leader of the anti-slavery movement, who advocated for a combined effort of government, commerce, and Christian missionaries for the abolition of slave trade in Africa.[27] The result was a missionary-cum-trading enterprise that began with the arrival of the 1841 expedition in the basin of Niger and Benue Rivers in Northern Nigeria.[28] The kind of Christianity that was introduced to Africa, for the time being, as Brian Stanley notes, "Which espoused the ideal of 'commerce and Christianity' was a Christianity of a fundamentally evangelical variety."[29] "Other missionaries, notably, Roman Catholics who were forbidden to engage in trade by canon law, and High Anglicans of the Universities' Christian Mission, whose primary

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[26]Edward W. Blyden, *The African Problem and Other Discourses, Delivered in America in 1890* (London: W. B. Whittingham, 1890), 90-104.

[27]Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London: John Murray, 1840), 282, 511. Buxton was not the only one to advocate for the union of "commerce and Christianity" in the European missionary enterprise in Africa. The "great explorer," David Livingstone, strongly advocated this view also. See Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (New York: Putman, 1973).

[28]For additional reading on the work of the alliance between Christian missions, government, and commerce, read Edmond P. T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 16-28, and J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London: Longman, 1981), 4-14.

[29]Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860," *The Historical Journal,* no. 1 (1983): 71-94, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2638849.

concern was to establish an episcopal system in sub-Saharan Africa did not"[30] embrace the Christian missions and commerce alliance. This record further shows that Christian missionary enterprise began in Northern Nigeria before the closing years of the nineteenth century. However, "formal missionary activities unconnected with commerce and government did not appear until then, but Christian missionaries were already working in Northern Nigeria on the Niger expedition of 1841."[31]

Ayandele proposes three phases of missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria. The first, 1870-1888, he claimed witnessed relative success, which he credited to the methods adopted by Christian missionaries in winning the affection of traditional rulers, and diffusing the notion that they (Christian missionaries) were torchbearers of European imperialism. During the second phase, 1888-1900, Christian missionary enterprise was discredited because of its partial alliance with British imperialism. And the third phase, 1900-1918, witnessed the separation of the alliance between British administration and Christian missionaries, and the subsequent baring of Christian proselytization activities in Northern Nigeria by the British colonial government.[32]

During the first phase of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria (1870-1888) Christianity achieved a minimal success. However, no Muslims where converted to Christianity during this phase. Those who converted to Christianity were

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[30]Brad Faught, "Missionaries, Indirect Rule and the Changing Mandate of Mission in Colonial Northern Nigeria: the Case of Rowland Victor Bingham and the Sudan Interior Mission," *Canadian Society of Church History* (1994), accessed March 7, 2018, https://historicalpapers.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/historicalpapers/article/view/39452/35775.

[31]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 17.

[32]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 504-505.

basically adherents of ATR. Two missionary societies were notable during this period—the Niger Mission and the Church Missionary Society. Through their activities, Christianity gained entrance from north central to the core northern regions of Nigeria where the influence of Islam was very strong, and mission stations were set up in limited places. For instance, the Emir of Nupe allowed Christian missionary activity in his territory; as a result, in 1875 a mission station was opened in Kippo Hill. The Emir even wrote letters attempting to convince his counterparts, the Emirs of Nassarawa and Yola to allow Bishop Crowther, the leader of the Niger Mission to begin missionary work in their territories.[33] Also in 1880, the Sultan of Sokoto, and Emirs of Ilorin, Gwandu and Bida accepted gifts of leather-bound Arabic bibles,[34] an indication that at least some Muslim rulers were open to inter-religious dialogue.

It is based on this record that Ayandele concludes, "The opportunities put at the disposal of [Christian] missionaries by the Northern Nigerian rulers in the pre-colonial period show that [these Muslim rulers] where not inherently intolerant of Christianity." He further observes, "Muslim rulers of Northern Nigeria entertained no religious fear of the missionaries. What they dreaded like the plague were the imperialistic accompaniments of missionary enterprise."[35] However, what Ayandele failed to consider is that the absence of records showing any Muslim conversion[36] during this period

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[33]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 506.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., 507.

[36]Andrews E. Barnes, "'The Great Prohibition': The Expansion of Christianity in Colonial Northern Nigeria," *History Compass* 8, no. 6 (2010): 441, accessed May 2, 2018, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2010.00686.x.

suggest that Muslim rulers of Northern Nigeria were willing to tolerated Christian missionary enterprise only if such enterprise does not attempt to proselytize among Muslims. This observation is further elaborated in the second phase of the Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria.

This limited success, as earlier mentioned, was achieved partly because of the methods adopted by Christian missionaries, which also suggest religious compromise. As Ayandele further observes, Bishop Samuel Crowther and his team of African missionaries "had succeeded in overcoming the suspicion of the traditional rulers, that they were heralds of alien rule. These missionaries carried out their activity within the customary law and traditional politics." They "recognized and respected the authority of the chiefs and courted their favor and influence for the progress of their enterprises."[37]

During the second phase of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria (1888-1900), missionaries were confronted with daunting challenges, which led to the retrogression of Christian missions in the region. This setback is largely attributed to the fact that Muslim rulers began to consider Christian missions as a disguised means of European imperialism. In 1890, a team of missionaries arrived with Graham Wilmot Brooke as their leader with high hopes of making converts from among Muslims of Northern Nigeria. Unfortunately, the very methods adopted by these enthusiastic Christian missionaries for the purpose of winning the confidence of the Muslim rulers was misinterpreted. When they began to adorn themselves in Muslim garbs, the Emirs began to fear that they were political spies. And when they discredited, as false Christianity, the teachings of their missionary predecessors in an attempt to correct what

[37]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 505.

they perceived as religious compromise, the apprehension of Muslim rulers rather increased.[38]

As subsequent events demonstrate, the increased apprehensions on the part of Muslim rulers of Northern Nigeria were not completely unfounded. It was true that there was an alliance formed between Christian missionary enterprise and British colonial interests. The nature of this alliance and what it produced are well discussed in Ayandele.[39] Suffice it to note here that the union between Christian missions and British colonial interests failed to achieve its aim. Muslim leaders where generally opposed to any enterprise that sought to convert Muslims to Christianity, or subjugate their political authority. The third phase (1900-1918) of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria will be considered as this work further discusses the impact of British colonial government policies on Christian missionary enterprise.

Prior to the beginning of the twentieth century the religion of Islam had enjoyed dominance in Northern Nigeria and felt little or no threat to its increasing influence. Both political power and economic resources were firmly controlled by rulers of Islamic descent, particularly from the Fulani tribe of Northern Nigeria. There were neither political influence nor proselytizing religious views as strong as that of Islam, whose influences was already spreading into North Central Nigeria.[40] And because the primary focus of European colonization in Africa was not to correct religious and political

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[38]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 507-508.

[39]Ibid., 139-144.

[40]T. G. O. Gbadamosi and J. F. Ade Ajayi, "Islam and Christianity in Nigeria," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 347.

anomalies in the region, British colonial government policies failed to bring greater balance or fairness to the religious and political structures that had existed in the region prior to their conquest. On the contrary, British colonial administration policies, to a larger extent, further complicated the nature of religious and political interactions among the adherents of the various ethnic groups, and religious traditions in region.

British Colonial Administration Policies in Northern Nigeria

Frederick (Lord) Lugard (1858-1945), the first British appointed High Commissioner to the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1900-1906), introduced certain policies which were not intended to, but eventually served the purpose of Islamic expansion. At the end of his first year in office, Lugard reported that "the Fulani rule [which in effect was Islamic rule] has been maintained as an experiment, for I am anxious to prove to these people [Muslim rulers] that we have no hostility to them, and only insist on good government and justice, and I am anxious to utilize if possible, their wonderful intelligence, for they are born rulers, and incomparable above the negroid tribe [that is the non-Muslim ethnic groups] in ability."[41] To this, C. N. Ubah asserts, Lugard's "doctrine of indirect rule under which the basic elements of the emirates were retained to facilitate and consolidate imperial rule is well known to all students of British colonial administration in Africa."[42] It appears, from the inception of his administration, Lugard had concluded that the Islamic system of government he found in Northern Nigeria, which included the practice of Shari'ah, the Islamic legal system, would be maintained

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[41]Frederick Lugard, *Northern Nigeria 1900-1901* (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1911), 13, accessed January 10, 2018, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101013344468;view=1up;sep=4.

[42]Ubah, "Colonial Administration," 133.

and Muslim rulers would be retained in their various offices. Thus, the imbalance in favor of Muslim control in the religious and political structure of the region would continue to exist long after the region came under the oversight of British colonial government.

The period between 1900 and 1914 was marked by British efforts to consolidate their gains and to entrench a new political system in Nigeria; however, in order to achieve this goal, the British colonial government had to overcome certain challenges emanating from the changes they sought to bring to the region. There was protest and resistance to an alien government on the part of the colonized. In most cases, the British colonial authorities responded to such oppositions with the use of force, thereby coercing the inhabitants of the region to accept policies and changes they opposed.[43]

The inhabitants of Northern Nigeria, like the Yoruba and the Igbo of South West, and South East respectively, demonstrated some level of resistance to imperial rule. Falola notes, "There were uprisings among the Yoruba and the Igbo during the First World War, and the army and the police were used to destroy opposition forces in different parts of the country."[44] Also, for the purpose of convenience, and in order to minimize the cost of governance among other things, the British colonialists "established a dual political system [in Nigeria]: a centralized administration to manage the entire country, and a local government format known as indirect rule. Indirect rule was a system

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[43]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 67.

[44]Ibid. The Yoruba, and the Igbo are other two major tribes in Nigeria besides the Hausa tribe. In present day Nigeria, unlike the Igboland, Islamic presence is strong in Yorubaland. British colonial government policies brought about changes in the politics, economy, and cultures of the various regions of Nigeria against the people's wishes.

of local government that enabled the British colonialist to govern Nigeria through indigenous rulers and institutions."[45]

The British indirect rule was however, more successful in Northern Nigeria, (a predominantly Muslim region, where an Islamic system of government was already established), than it was in other regions of Nigeria; most likely, due to the various institutions of government already established in the Muslim occupied region of Northern Nigeria, such as the Emir-ship, and the Islamic courts. These had developed from the Sokoto Caliphate, founded at the end of the 'Uthman dan Fodia led jihad in the early 1800s. The indirect rule "maintained and utilized the region's existing forms of administration, from regional emirs to local judges, rather than replacing them with British officers and institutions."[46]

However, it must be noted that the adoption of certain Islamic government structures by British colonial administration through its policy of "indirect rule" in Northern Nigeria, particularly as claimed by British colonialists themselves, was not intended to favor Islam above ATR and Christianity. "From the earliest period of colonial rule in Northern Nigeria the British colonial administrators had sought to portray

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[45]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 67-70. The basic idea behind the British policy of 'indirect rule' was that new regulations and instructions to the people would be announced through their chiefs and kings. And while indigenous institutions would be retained, any aspects of such institution that was incongruous to British colonialism was to be abandoned. For additional reading on the British indirect rule system of government in Nigeria, read Frederick D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, Scotland: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1926). Frederick John Dealtry Baron Lugard, often referred to as Lord Lugard by students of Nigerian history, served as British high commissioner to the protectorate of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1906. He is generally credited as the chief architect of the indirect rule system of government in Northern Nigeria.

[46]Jonathan Raynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims: Islam and Indirect Rule in northern Nigeria," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 3 (2001): 601-618, accessed November 17, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3097556.

themselves as objective,"[47] especially in religious matters. As Frederick Lugard clearly stated,

> The attitudes which British governments have endeavored to assume is that of strict neutrality, impartiality, and tolerance in all religious matters—"that everyman should be free to worship God as he chooses." If, however, any particular form of religion sanctions or enforces act, which are contrary to humanity or good order, the government intervenes regardless of religious sanctions.[48]

This statement, made by a prominent British colonial administrator, and other similar ones, suggest that British colonial administrators sought to maintain religious neutrality in Northern Nigeria. Raynolds observes, "At the level of policy and rhetoric British colonial officials strove to maintain an appearance of even-handedness," portraying themselves as neutral in matters of religion, except in cases where the breach of peace and "good order" seems eminent. In practical terms, British colonial officials tended to favor those religious, and political traditions that were complementary to their efforts and purpose for colonization. Thus Reynolds further asserts, "On the level of action rather than policy, what was to be defined as a threat to "good order" was any religious belief or act that ran contrary to the orthodoxy of the Masu Sarauta [possessors of political power],"[49] who in this case were Sufi Muslims of the Qudiriyya

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[47]Raynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims," 604.

[48]Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 594.

[49]Raynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims," 601.

brotherhood.[50] These were the Muslim rulers of the various Emirates of Northern Nigeria whose style of ruler-ship the British colonialists admired, and eventually appropriated through the British policy of indirect rule.

Moreover, there are certain statements which seemingly contradict the claim to religious neutrality by British colonial government officials. Frederick Lugard, in his evaluation of the various religious traditions in Northern Nigeria, appraised Islam above Christianity and ATR. Although he notes the limitations of Islam, he nevertheless expressed affirmation for the Islamic religion. On the contrary, Lugard expressly disapproved of the indigenous religions of Northern Nigeria. He asserts Islam "is a religion incapable of the highest development, but its limitations suit the limitations of the people [of Northern Nigeria]. It has undeniably had a civilizing effect, abolishing the gross forms of pagan superstition and barbarous practices, and adding to the dignity, self-

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[50]"Sufism is the mystical dimension of Islam based on the esoteric understanding of the Qu'ran." The term Sufi derives from the Arabic word Sufi meaning wool such as garments woven from wool that were generally worn by early Muslim mystics knows as Sufis. The Sufi orders first emerged when Sufi masters started to form brotherhoods around 1200 CE. Individual Sufi scholars contributed to the Islamization process of many African tribes in the West. Through this creation, Sufism became one of the major sources through which the Muslim philosophic thought is gleaned. The goal of each Sufi is to emulate their Saint to show their level of commitment and to observe the same rituals, practices, rites and obligations as their Saint did, to gain enlightenment and to get to know their maker better. Sufism is represented primarily in Northern Nigeria. Muslims in Nigeria can be divided into two groups: Sunni and Shia. Under the Sunni division comes: Sufi, Wahhabi, and the Muslim Brotherhood. This leads to the two brotherhoods in Sufism: Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, which emerged in Ilorin, Nigeria, that encompass a rich array of traditions, practices and beliefs that form a distinct stream of thoughts in Sunni Islam. See "Sufism in Nigeria," Navigating Nigeria, Posted on April 6, 2015 by Nfagbene, accessed January 2, 2018, https://navigatingnigeria.wordpress.com/2015/04/06/sufism-in-nigeria/. For additional reading, see Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

respect, and self-control of its adherents."[51] Thus, even though Lugard was aware of the folk-nature of Northern Nigeria Islam, especially among those he termed "ignorant peasantry," he nevertheless admired its general effect among the people of Northern Nigeria. Thus Lugard concludes, "[Islam's] general effects has been to encourage abstinence from intoxicants, a higher standard of life and decency, a better social organization and tribal cohesion, with a well-defined code of justice."[52]

Furthermore, Lugard thought that Christianity "has not proved so powerful an influence for the creation of political and social organizations [in the region]." Also, he thought that the Christian religion is "sometimes apt to produce in its converts an attitude of intolerance, not intended by its teachers, towards native rulers, native customs, and even to native dress, especially when wholesale conversion have overtaxed the supervision of the European mission staff."[53] The views expressed by Frederick Lugard may suggest that British colonial government officials preferred Islam to Christianity and the Traditional Religions in Northern Nigeria, and thereby, negates the claim to religious neutrality as made in his previous statements. But there are other statements or views attributed to British colonial government officials, which seems to affirm their claim to religious neutrality.

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[51]Lugard, *The Dual Mandate,* 78. Lord Lugard was not the first person to espouse such view about the effect of Islam in Africa. Edward Blyden, a distinguished native African author, says Islam has been in Africa "the most effective instrument in molding the intellectual, social, and political character of millions whom it has brought under its influence. . . . It is the most effective educational force in Negroland." See Edward Wilmot Blyden, *West Africa Before Europe and Other Addresses, Delivered in England in 1901 and 1903* (London: C. M. Phillips, 1905), 39, 74.

[52]Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 78.

[53]Ibid.

For instance, while acknowledging the adoption and modification of Islamic system of government into the colonial order, Lugard rightly observes that British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria should preserve "the independence of those ethnic groups who had maintained their liberty against the Muslim conquerors."[54] In his analysis of the religious and political situation in Northern Nigeria, Lugard argued that

> it is not part of the policy of this protectorate to place these ethnic groups [ethnic groups who have succeeded in maintaining their liberty from the Islamic Caliphate] forcibly under Muslim rule even though that rule may be more advanced and intelligent than anything they are as yet capable of evolving themselves. Good governance is no equivalent for self-government, its aim is to develop among them the same measure of self-government as is accorded to the Muslim states, to foster their own institutions and to refrain from turning them into Muslims by imposing Muslim rule upon them or even by the more insidious process of appointing [Muslims] as their chiefs, or judges for their courts, or teachers for their schools, while nominally allowing them independence.[55]

To further buttress his argument, Lugard cited a verdict by a Northern Nigeria Emir, the Emir of Yola, who in the year 1913, expressed views similar to that of Lugard. The Emir suggested that non-Muslim rulers should govern non-Muslims, including those in an Emirate, especially "if they are a distinct tribe with district of their own." The Emir of Yola further argued that placing a Fulani Muslim ruler over non-Muslim ethnic groups would cause them to "think you are trying to make them Fulani and Mohammedans, and they resent this."

It almost appears as if the Emir of Yola is advocating for religious and political

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[54]Frederick Lugard, *Political Memoranda, Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative 1913-1918* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 302.

[55]Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 302. At the end of the 'Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1809) some of the Northern Nigerian tribes remained unconquered by the Islamic jihadists. These tribes continued in their indigenous religious and political practices up to the time the British colonialists arrived. It was these tribes that Frederick Lugard referred to in his argument. He was not necessarily suggesting that Muslim rulers should have no authority over non-Muslim subjects within their Emirates.

liberty for the non-Muslim ethnic groups, but in reality the idea he espoused was that of another form of colonization, and indirect rule—what might be termed "internal colonization." Thus, Emir of Yola concludes, "As the British govern us through ourselves, so we must govern the Pagans, through their own Chiefs. If we think we can deal directly with the Pagan peasantry we are deceived."[56]

This view expressed by the Emir of Yola, more than a century later, after the 'Uthman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1809), provides additional understanding of the nature of administration policies under Islamic rule towards non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria. It suggest that some adherents of Islam in Northern Nigeria at least acknowledged to some extent the existence of other religious traditions, and were willing to accord adherents of these indigenous religions and culture relative freedom in their religious and political practices, insofar as Islamic interest was protected.

The Impact of British Colonial Administration Policies and Programs on Northern Nigerian Religious and Political Interactions

The Impact of Colonial Administration Policies on Islam

It is a commonly held view, especially among most Nigerian Christians that British colonial government policies and programs favored Muslims and aided Islamization in Northern Nigeria; however, Mohammad Umar, in his book *Islam and Colonialism*, argues for a different perception of British colonial policies and programs towards Islam in Northern Nigeria. Umar suggests that far from favoring Muslims and aiding the spread of Islam, British colonial policies and programs constituted partial

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[56] Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 302.

challenges to the religious, political, and social development of Muslims, and the Islamic religion in general. He further argue that British colonial policy of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria was a means of appropriating Islamic government structure and laws for the interest of the colonial government. He proposes that the supposed ownership and support of Islam were the British means of limiting suspicion, and perhaps resistance to imperial policies.[57] Thus what Umar is suggesting is that whenever certain Islamic norms conflicted with British colonial government policies and programs, such Islamic norms were impeded.

Similarly, Ayandele argues that what seems to be British colonial government support for Islam was actually a design to forestall the advancement of other competing groups of Europeans. According to Ayandele, the British administrators' supposed support for Muslim rulers and Islam was a means of disguising their imperialistic motives.[58] Ubah disagreed with this interpretation, suggesting that the Emirs' Islamic status as 'defenders of the faith' pitched them in direct opposition to Christian missionary enterprise, and that in prohibiting Christian missions from working in the emirates, the British colonial government was in fact protecting Christian missionaries from the impending hostility of Muslim rulers.[59] Crampton, on the other hand assumed a middle

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[57]Umar, *Islam and Colonialism*, 18-32.

[58]Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 516-517.

[59]C. N. Ubah, "Problems of Christian Missionaries in Muslim Emirates of Nigeria 1900-1928," *Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1976): 351-371. Also, "according to classical Muslim authorities, one of the most important justifications for the existence of the emirate was the safeguarding of religion." See, for instance, Edmond Fagnan, *Les Status Gouvernmentaux* (Algers, 1915), 5.

position by assigning blame on the British colonial government as the major source of bias towards Islam.[60]

This work further proposes that the main aim of colonial policies and programs was to advance British interest and consolidate its gains in the region. British colonial government officials had no particular interest to aid the expansion of any particular religious tradition in the region apart from consolidating the interest of the British government. Colonial government policies toward religion generally were aimed at facilitating colonial rule. Andrews Barnes further supports this view. He observed that just as colonial policies aided the expansion of Islam in Northern Nigeria, the policies implemented in the Southern Provinces of Nigeria aided the spread of Christianity there.[61] Moreover, British colonial policies, particularly as they were implemented in Northern Nigeria did not only affect inter-religious and political relations, but also impacted the interactions among the various forms of Islam practiced in the region. There were instances where colonial policies discriminated against other forms of Islam[62] for the purpose of furthering colonial government interest.

Before the British conquest of Northern Nigeria (1900), as already stated elsewhere in this work, there was an established Islamic Caliphate (the Sokoto

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[60]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 46-75.

[61]Andrews E. Barnes, "'Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted': Colonial Administrators in Northern Nigeria during the First Third of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25, no. 4 (1995): 412-441, accessed May 1, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581862.

[62]During the British occupation of Northern Nigeria, there were different forms of Islamic groups in the region: The Qudiriyya brotherhood, the Mahdists, and the Tijaniyya and Sanusiyya brotherhoods. "Unlike the Qadiriyya, the British viewed these other groups with varying degrees of distrust." This was most likely, akin to the fact that the other Islamic groups' frequent "competition with the Qudiriyya for the allegiance of the region's populace," was viewed as an obstruction to the peace of the region, something the British colonial administration prized highly.

Caliphate), and those in control of political power within the Sokoto Caliphate were generally descendants of its founders, who happened to be Sufi Muslims of the Qudiriyya brotherhood. "Thus the system of indirect rule obliged British colonial administrators to show a certain degree of respect for and deference to this particular state-centered form of Islam."[63] As Reynolds further notes,

> British colonial administration of Northern Nigeria took active steps to categorize the region's Muslims as either "good" or "bad," by evaluating the various Islamic groups in the region against a set of criteria that includes: perceived levels of Islamic education and piety whether they were "outsiders" to the region of Northern Nigeria, and whether they were a threat to religious "orthodoxy" and authority of the Masu Sarauta [the possessors of governance]. This process was to influence religious and political events in the region throughout the tenure of British colonial rule and even into independence.[64]

Therefore, while British colonial government officials did not deliberately support the spread of any particular religious tradition in Northern Nigeria, their preferential treatment to those Muslims in possession of political power and religious dominance eventually aided the spread of Islam in the region during the colonial period (1900-1959). This was made possible through the various basic institutions of the Islamic emirates of Northern Nigeria (like the emirship and Muslim courts, which were retained), which the British colonialists explored as means to facilitate and consolidate colonial rule in the region.[65] While under colonial rule, the expansion of Islam was uninterrupted.

Ubah (a Nigerian historian) suggested two main phases of British colonial government policy in Northern Nigeria. The first phase, "lasted from the beginning of colonial rule (1900) to the 1920s." This was a period when "little or no account was taken

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[63]Raynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims."

[64]Ibid.

of non-Muslim interests in the formulation and execution of colonial policy," and "the dominant consideration was the interests of the emirates, [which eventually] aided Islamization." And the second phase "began in the 1930s and lasted through the rest of the colonial period." According to Ubah, this second phase "was characterized by a reexamination of the existing policy for the purpose of taking the identity of non-Muslims into account in the administrative process."[66]

After the British government conquered Northern Nigeria, British colonial officials expressed divergent views (1903-1904) on the policies that would be appropriate towards non-Muslims. Many—perhaps a majority were opposed to the British policy of indirect-rule[67] on the basis that it would be a futile effort trying to "develop good leaders out of the existing Muslim Emirs" who were said to be corrupt and prone to "tyranny and gross oppression of the lower class due to the decay of religious restraints."[68] This view further argued that it would be an act of injustice on the part of the British Government to place under the Fulani-Muslim rulers, ethnic groups who had fought for and maintained their independence from such rule.

The minority view on the other hand, supported Fulani-Muslim rule, and even suggested its expansion to non-Muslim populations that had succeeded in resisting such

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[66]Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria," 134.

[67]The British policy of "Indirect Rule" "was the cardinal principle upon which the Administration of Northern Nigeria was based." This was "rule through the Native Chiefs, who are regarded as an integral part of the machinery of Government, with well-defined powers and functions recognized by Government and the law, and not dependent on the caprices of an Executive Officer." Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 296.

[68]Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 296-297.

rule by adhering to their various forms of indigenous religious and political practices.[69] "The argument put forward in support of this [later] viewpoint was that the Fulani system of administration was of superior quality to that of the non-Muslim populations. The expectation was that such imposition would be a blessing to the people concerned, as it was believed that this would raise their level of cultural development."[70]

Frederick Lugard, who at the time, bore the title of High Commissioner of the Northern Nigeria Province (1900-1906), ruled in favor of the indirect rule system of government with the hope that his British representatives, the Residents,[71] would endeavor to educate the various rulers (Chiefs and Emirs) in accordance with British colonial government policies. It was noted, however, that no independent or revolted non-Muslim "ethnic groups were to be included in the jurisdiction of a Muslim ruler without the express sanction of the Governor."[72] Such policies tend to suggest that, although Lugard, to a large extent was against the placing of non-Muslim ethnic groups under Muslim rulers, he was nevertheless willing to make concessions on such policies as far as they served the purpose of his colonial administration. Regarding this, Ubah observes,

> In administrative matters Lugard's attention was devoted to Muslim areas, the greatest jewels in British imperial diadem in Northern Nigeria. If he thought of non-Muslims, it was how to use Muslims for purposes of their administration. For

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[69]Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 296-297.

[70]Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria."

[71]A Resident was a chief government officer in a "Province of which large areas are under the immediate rule of a Paramount Chief [or Emir], who, with Native Officials, himself administers a form of Government." In the British indirect rule system of government in Northern Nigeria, it was the "duty of residents to carry out loyally the policy of the Governor, and not to inaugurate policies of their own." See Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 9-10.

[72]Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 297.

instance, he was in favor of appointing Muslims as judges of courts in non-Muslim areas. Though he insisted that the latter should not see themselves as Muslim missionaries, nothing was done to ensure that they did not.[73]

On the other hand, it appears Lugard was in sympathy with Christianity. Brad Faught, in particular, considers Lugard as one who was in sympathy with Christianity, but "wore his Christianity lightly, and therefore, while it was clear to him that part of the 'white man's burden' was to take his faith to the far-flung areas of the earth, such faith was not to obstruct the achieving of the more general goal of civilization."[74] Although, "Lugard believed the imperial mission to be a divine one,"[75] he however, did not believe that such mission would be accomplished through the activities of "over-zealous missionaries." Thus while Lugard, in his March 1903 address to the conquered people of the Sokoto Caliphate announced that henceforth their leaders (Muslim leaders) were subject to the colonial authority, he nevertheless stated that his government would not interfere with their religion.[76] This declaration was a reiteration of his previous assurance to the Lamido (Emir) of Adamawa[77] in 1901, when Lugard stated that his government

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[73]Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria," 135. Also see Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 302. Sir Percy Girouard was the governor of the Northern Protectorate between 1907 and 1909. Although Lugard reported that his "successor, Sir Percy Girouard, wavered" on the view that non-Muslims should not be placed under Muslim rule, other records indicate that while Girouard admired the native administration in Muslim territories, and abhorred the administration in what he termed the "primitive pagan and cannibal communities," he ultimately favored administration based on tribal lines. See Percy Girouard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Report 1907-1908* (London: Darling and Son, 1909), 29-30, http://web.ncf.ca/fm122/percy-girouard/northern_nigeria_report_1907_08.pdf.

[74]Faught, "Missionaries, Indirect Rule and the Changing Mandate," 127.

[75]Ibid., 127.

[76]Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945* (London: Collins, 1960), 13.

[77]Adamawa is one of the states in North East Nigeria.

would not interfere with the emir's chosen form of religion.[78] How this colonial government policy of "non-interference" with Islam would affect Christian missions will be discussed latter.

Thus Ubah concludes, "There was no coherent and comprehensive policy on the administration of non-Muslim territories during Lugard's tenure." Furthermore, this failure during the administration of Lugard, after his departure allowed the evolvement of "the policy under which non-Muslims were marginalized under his immediate successor, Sir Percy Girouard."[79] As already noted in this work, "at the level of policy and rhetoric the British colonial administration strove to maintain an appearance of even-handedness," especially in regards to religious matters. But in practice, colonial policies were implemented without taking into cognizance its actual effect on religious interactions among adherents of the various religious traditions. What mattered most to British colonial officials was that the implementation of such policies facilitates and consolidate imperial rule in the region. Ubah further observes that "the British [colonialists] did not bother themselves about the religious implications of such policy. Whatever appeared likely to strengthen their hold on power was what they were interested in, and not in the spread of Islam as such."[80]

Lugard's successor, Sir Percy Girouard (1907-1909), did not effect any policy change in regards to religion during his tenure in office neither, Similarly, Sir Hesketh

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[78]See C. O. 446/16 No. 37793, Wallace to Secretary of State, 26 September 1901, enclosing dispatch 433 from colonel Moorland to Wallace enclosing Conditions of Appointment to Bobo Amadu the new Lamido. Cited in Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 46.

[79]Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria,"135.

[80]Ibid.

Bell (1909-1911)[81] and Sir Charles Lindsay Temple (1911-1912)[82] continued to implement the religious policies of their predecessors throughout their respective tenures in office as governors of Northern Nigeria Protectorate.[83] When in 1914 the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated,[84] and Sir Frederick Lugard was appointed Governor-General (1914-1919) of the British colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, he continued to foster the policies he held so dear—the policy of indirect rule, by which in its implementation [Muslim] emirs were privileged and thus obtained greater influence over the people [and eventually] aided the spread of Islam among non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria and beyond."[85]

Ubah's observation is reflective of the sentiments Lugard had expressed during his March 1903 address to the conquered people of the Sokoto Caliphate. Lugard stated,

> Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of State, will be appointed by the [British] High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual law of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs, but will set them aside if he desires for good cause to do so. The Emirs and Chiefs who are appointed will rule over the people as of old times and take such taxes as are approved by the High Commissioner, but they will obey the laws of the [British colonial] Government and will act in accordance with the advice of the [British]

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[81]Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria,"135.

[82]For additional reading on the contributions of Sir Charles Lindsay Temple to the development of the indirect rule system of government in Northern Nigeria Protectorate, read Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950*, 37-39; and Charles L. Temple, *Native Races and Their Rulers* (London: Frank Cass, 1918).

[83]William N. M. Greary, *Nigeria under British Rule* (London: Frank and Cass, 1927), 208, 209, 228-232.

[84]On the Amalgamation of the separate territories of Nigeria, see Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 68-69; Also see T. N. Tamuno, "British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History,* ed. Obaro Ikime Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), 393-395.

[85]For a detailed description of how this colonial policy of indirect rule aided the spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria, read Ubah, "Colonial Administration and the Spread of Islam In Northern Nigeria," 135-137.

Resident.[86]

In this pronouncement of the paradoxical way in which the British "indirect" rule would work in the Sokoto Caliphate, Lugard also pledged that his government would not interfere with the Muslim religion. Thus it was natural that such a pronouncement would appeal to adherents of Islam, whose fears, partly, were that the "British invaders" might interfere with their religion.[87] While such British colonial administration pronouncement might appeal to, and embolden adherents of Islam, what it meant for Christian missionary enterprise was quite different, as it is subsequently shown in this work.

The Impact of Colonial Administration Policies on Christian Missionary Enterprise

The impact of colonial administration policies on religious and political interactions in Northern Nigeria can further be understood by considering the responses of British colonial administrators to Christian missionary enterprise in the region, and their perception and treatments of adherents of African Traditional Religions. The fact that Christian missionary interest in the Muslim emirates of Northern Nigeria predates the conquest of the region by the British colonialists has already been established in this work.[88] The desire to evangelize the region has long been part of the Christian missionary

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[86]Quoted in Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945* (London: Collins, 1960), 13. Also, see Lugard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Report 1900-1911,* 162-3.

[87]Peter Kazenga Tibenderana, "The Role of the British Administration in the Appointment of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria, 1903-1931: The Case of Sokoto Province," *The Journal of African History* 28, no. 2 (1987): 236, accessed March 26, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/181548.

[88]"By 1708, it is recorded, there were no fewer than 100,000 Christian adherents in the Kingdom of Kororofa and a sixty-bed hospital had been built by the Roman Catholic Priests. About [the same period], Rome attempted to introduce Christianity into Bornu, and one Father Carlo de Genova was appointed Prefect of the projected mission." See Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria," 503, and *Missionary Impact*, 117-120.

enterprise.

However, when the region came under the full control of the British colonial government in 1903, one of the major questions the British rulers had to deal with was "whether Christian missionaries should be allowed to undertake proselytizing activities in the Muslim emirates"[89] of Northern Nigeria. And if they were to be allowed, to what extend should they be allowed? It was within this context, during the third phase of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria (1900-1918), that British colonial government eventually made policies limiting the scope of missionary enterprise in the region.

During the mid and later part of the nineteenth century, Northern Nigerian Muslims had begun to exhibit an attitude of hostility towards white people in general—all of whom they regarded as Christians.[90] This hostile attitude towards Christians could be understood, partly, by considering the method Islam was further propagated in Northern Nigeria, particularly, its further expansion beginning from 1804 to 1831. During this time Islamic expansion was mainly through "fire and sword," as shown in the U'thman dan Fodio led jihad (1804-1809). By the mid nineteenth century, Islam in Northern Nigeria had evolved into a hostile religion. Unfortunately despite the violent nature Islam had assumed in Northern Nigeria, various Christian missionary groups entertained an "illusive [believe] that the Northern Nigerian peoples, including the Muslims would be very easy to convert."[91] It was under this illusive believe that the

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[89]Ubah, "Problems of Christian Missionaries," 351.

[90]Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, 121.

[91]Ibid., 120.

Sudan Interior Mission, the Church Missionary Society, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society launched their initial missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria.[92]

The success anticipated by the various Christian missionary societies mentioned above was not realized. This was largely due to the spiritual eminence of the Sokoto Caliphate. By the later part of the nineteenth century, the larger part of Northern Nigeria was already under the control of Muslim rulers appointed from Sokoto. Thus towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Church Missionary Society began to hope for a military subjugation of Northern Nigeria as a means to open the door for its proselytization activities in a similar fashion to what had happened in the Southern region of Nigeria.[93] But Lugard, who by 1899 was already aware of the religious susceptibilities of Northern Nigerian Emirs had a different view altogether and chose to tread the path of caution. As a result, when the British protectorate of Northern Nigeria was proclaimed in 1900, Lugard sought the co-operation of the Muslims rulers. One of the means through which he sought to win the confidence of these Muslim rulers was by pledging that his government would not interfere with their religion.[94]

A common phenomenon that characterized the British colonial administration was the desire to avoid friction by preserving religious neutrality, even though their policies and programs did not always, when implemented, reflect their claim to religious

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[92]Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914*, 124-125.

[93]Ibid., 125-126, 135. In Southern Nigeria, Christian missions followed the military expeditions. Wherever the British military had subjugated the opposition of the indigenous people, Christian missionaries followed up with the gospel.

[94]Reference had been made in this work regarding Frederick Lugard's pledge to the Lamido of Adamawa in 1901, and to the Muslim leaders assembled during the installation of the new Sultan of Sokoto in 1903, that his government would not interfere with their religion (Islam).

neutrality. It was in his efforts to actualize the desire to preserve religious neutrality that Frederick Lugard made a declaration signifying his colonial government willingness to cooperate with the existing religions of their new conquered region.[95] In this statement, Lugard asserted that government would in no way interfere with the Islamic religion, and religious freedom would be granted to all men. In essence Lugard pledged that the British colonial government would not interfere with the religious status quo—whereby Islamic dominance was apparent.

Crampton further notes that Christian missions were greatly disappointed with the cautious attitude of Lugard, but "doubted if the American missionaries[96] with their different background [their position on the separation of church and state] expected government support." However he further noted, The American missionaries "were grieved when they encountered government hindrance."[97] The missions were concerned that the British colonial government went beyond its original pledge to the Muslim rulers. Christian missions understood Lugard's pledge to mean that he would not coarse Muslims into accepting the Christian faith, and not that he would prohibit Christian

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[95]On the motive of Lugard's declaration to the Muslim rulers, see Ayandele, "The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870-1918," 514-515. Ayandele suggests that "Lugard's anti-missionary feelings were temporary and confined to the last half of the 1900." However other sources strongly portray Lugard as an administrator favorably disposed to Muslim rulers in Northern Nigeria for the purpose of consolidating British colonial rule in the region. For example, see Reynolds, "Good and Bad Muslims," 603; Barnes, "'Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted'," 413.

[96]Beginning in 1841 to the 1900s, several missionary societies came to Nigeria for the purpose of evangelizing the region. Among them was the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. See B. C. D. Diara, "European and American Christian Missions and Nigeria's National Development (1840-1960)," *Journal of Education and Social Research* 3, no. 10 (2013): 90, accessed May 22, 2018, http://mcser.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/viewFile/2346/2321.

[97]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 47.

evangelization in Muslim territories—a point that Lugard himself seems to acknowledge.[98]

Thus while Lugard was hesitant in allowing Christian missionary activities in territories with Islamic presence, his government encouraged the establishment of Christian missions in regions where its inhabitants were predominantly adherents of ATR. However, not all Christian missionary bodies that have shown an interest in evangelizing Northern Nigeria agreed with Lugard's approach. In particular, Lugard regretted "that the local Church Missionary Society representative at Oyo did not agree with my views, replying that if they were to wait for the concurrence of the Mohammedan chiefs they may wait forever."[99] However, as Crampton further notes, "Lugard felt that he would be interfering with the Muslim religion if he allowed Christian missionary activities where they were not welcomed by the Muslim rulers prior to British conquest."[100]

Lugard defended his policy thus: "I hold that it would be a misuse of the power and authority of the government if that power were used to compel natives of the country to accept a mission which they resented and which they would not accept unless compelled by superior force."[101] Also, Lugard believed that "without the moral support of

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[98]Rowland V. Bingham, *Seven of Years and a Jubilee! The Story of the Sudan Interior Mission* (New York: Evangelical Publishers, 1943), 81; C.M.S. G3/A9/1912 No. 93, Memo of interview with Lugard July 25, 1912, cited in Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 48.

[99]Lugard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Report 1902*, 78.

[100]Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 48.

[101]C.M.S. A3/L5/1898–1905, 479, Lugard to Baylis, October 27, 1903, cited in Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 48.

government [Christian] missions would not be tolerated. In effect, the missions obtains its footing on the support of British Bayonets."[102]

The above records shows that although Lugard had sought to limit the pace at which Christian missions evangelize Muslim territories in Northern Nigeria, there was an alliance, particularly between the Christian Missionary Society and the British Colonial Government, at least up to the year 1906. This alliance however did not prove successful, as both parties had presumed it would.[103] Ubah suggests that the missionaries were "to a large extent responsible for the hostility shown to them in the emirates and for the restrictions placed on their activities [by the British colonial administration]."[104]

Before Frederick Lugard became the High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate, the Church Missionary Society was already planning to penetrate the emirates with the gospel. It was for this purpose, to carry the gospel to the Mohammedans of Northern Nigeria that the Church Missionary Society further sought Lugard's consent. While Lord Lugard consented to the mission's request, he however, laid down a clear policy on how the missions may proceed.

Thus the missionaries where advised to advance to only those places where the "administration can afford them effective guarantees of safety, [not only for the sake of

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[102]Lugard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Report 1902*, 77.

[103]The complications and disappointments that characterized the alliance between Christian missions and government/commercial interest are extensively discussed in Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 117-152. "The peculiar situation of Northern Nigeria—its tremendous size, the unifying effect of Islam, the absence of horrible barbarities, like twin-murder, trial by ordeal, human sacrifice, and the impressive literacy that existed—made impossible the cooperation of Government and missions that characterized the military expeditions of Southern Nigeria."

[104]Ubah, "Problems of Christian Missionaries," 355.

their own safety] but [also], with the object of avoiding any violence which may involve the [British colonial] administration."[105] This seeming alliance between Christian missions and the British colonial administration could only remain in effect as long as Christian missionaries heeded Lugard's counsel. Thus when a missionary party led by Bishop Tugwell of the Church Missionary Society decided to advance their missionary enterprise beyond the limits set by Lord Lugard, he modified his policy in such a way that it became even less favorable to Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria generally.[106] To further justify his colonial government policy which placed further limitation on Christian missions, Lugard argued, "If [Christian missions] are established by order of government the people have some cause to disbelieve the emphatic pledges I have given that their religion shall in no way be interfered with."[107]

The basic aim of the British rulers was to preserve religious neutrality in Northern Nigeria, and avoid unnecessary friction with the dominant Muslim population. It was to effect this policy that Lugard's successors, beginning in 1907, further limited the activities of Christian missionaries beyond areas with high Muslim population, to areas with minimal or none Islamic presence. When in 1907, Percy Girouard assumed the administration of Northern Nigeria, he further severed the Government alliance with

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[105]Sonia F. Graham, *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919: With Special Reference to the Work of Hanns Wische*r (Ibadan, Nigeria: University Press, 1966), 7.

[106]Ubah, "Problems of Christian Missionaries," 355-358.

[107]Lugard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Report no. 409, 1902* (London: Darling and Sons, 1908), 77, accessed February 28, 2018, http://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/ilharvest/Africana/Books2011-05/3064634/3064634_1902_northern_nigeria/3064634_1902_northern_nigeria_opt.pdf. The British colonial government policy that limited Christian missionary enterprise was not peculiar to Lugard's period in office, his successor, Sir Percy Girouard, admitted that in regards to Christian missions, his policy and that of his predecessor are identical. See Girouard, *Northern Nigeria Annual Colonial Report No. 594,* 9.

Christian missions by completely "prohibiting Christian missionary enterprise from the predominantly Muslim areas, and when possible, from pagan areas also."[108] Although, Britain had already conquered the region, there was need to work with tact in order to win the confidence of their new subjects. The British colonial rulers had to exhibit an attitude of religious neutrality by completely discontinuing their alliance with Christian missions.

Regarding this further prohibition of missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria, Barns observes, "In Northern Nigeria, colonial administrators determined not only where and how missionaries could proselytize, but they even sought to determine the substance of that proselytizing."[109] The priority of the British rulers was to preserve peace and tranquility in their newly conquered territory. Therefore Barns' observation should be understood through Lugard's statement, that "it is unwise and unjust to force missions upon the Mohammedan population." In other words, the British rulers could not allow Christian missions in areas where Muslim rulers have claimed dominion without the ruler's consent.

Furthermore, Lugard's statement quoted above revealed the nature of the existing relationship, which the British colonial government met, between the two proselytizing religions (Islam and Christianity) in the region. It shows that Islam was not welcoming of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, especially in territories where Islam had registered its presence or claimed dominion over. Even before the colonialists assumed control over

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[108]Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, 146.

[109]Barnes, "Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted," 413.

the region, Christian missionaries recognized that Muslim rulers constituted a serious obstacle to the preaching of the gospel.[110]

It was during this period when British colonial government policies had severely limited Christian missionary enterprise that the Roman Catholic mission renewed its interest to evangelize Northern Nigeria.[111] Its earlier missionary enterprise between the 15th and 17th century was short-lived. This renewed interest however, encountered strict government policies that restricted Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria,[112] most likely, due to the strained relationship between the British colonial government and the Christian Missionary Society.[113] Although the British colonial government restriction on Christian missionary enterprise appears not to have any exemptions, Nwafor asserts that the Catholic mission was completely disenfranchised, while the Christian Missionary Society enjoyed certain privileges, which led to the emergence of the Church of England partially as the state-church.[114] If this assertion is true, it further reveals that the British colonial administrators gave preferential treatment to certain Christian religious groups.

From this moment onward, Christian missions also began to realize the need to work as a separate entity from both government and commercial interest in order to avoid

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[110]Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact*, 508.

[111]Martin J. Bane, *Catholic Pioneers in West Africa* (Dublin, Ireland: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1956), 146-150.

[112]Bane, *Catholic Pioneers in West Africa*, 170-171.

[113]Nwafor, *Church and State: The Nigerian Experience*, 59-60. The strict British colonial government policies toward Christian missions affected the Roman Catholic mission especially in the area of land acquisition for church and school buildings. According to Nwafor, the Catholics were denied land ownership privileges, and the landed properties they had acquired during their earlier missionary enterprise were appropriated.

[114]Ibid., 60.

being suspected as vanguards of European imperialism.

Christian missionaries had expected that they would be granted unlimited access by the government to carryout proselytization activities in Northern Nigeria; however, contrary to their expectations, the government restricted their activities. This issue of limiting Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria was of great concern to Christian missionary bodies to the extent that it became part of the issues discussed at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, under Commission VII (Missions and Governments). In particular, the commission noted the excessive restrictions placed by the British colonial government on Christian missions in Northern Nigeria, Egypt, and the Sudan.[115]

In general, there appears to be a preference among British colonialists for Islam as the ideal religion for the conquered people of Northern Nigeria. Such attitude by the British rulers is not limited to the Northern Nigerian experience. There was a similar situation in the Northern territories of the Gold Coast (Ghana). During the early years of colonial rule in Northern Ghana, the Islamic religion was favored.[116] It must be noted however, that the British colonial ruler's preference for Islam in Northern Nigeria was not necessarily born out of a genuine sympathy with the Mohammedan religion. What the

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[115]Hartford Seminary Foundation, and Duncan Black Macdonald Center, *The Muslim World: A Quarterly Review of History, Culture, Religions & the Christian Mission in Islamdom* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1948), 2. Also see World Missionary Conference, *World Missionary Conference 1910, v*ol. 7: *Missions and Governments* (London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910), 113, hathitrust.org.

[116]See, for example, Benedict G. Der, "Church State Relations in Northern Ghana, 1906-1940," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 5, no. 1 (1974): 41-64; David Kimbel, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of the Gold Coast Nationalism 1850-1928* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1963), 79-80; Mervyn Hiskette, "The Development of Islam in West Africa," *Legon History Series, Longman Studies in African History* (London: Longman, 1994), 279; Gabriel M. Okafor, *Christianity and Islam in West Africa: The Ghana Experience—A Study of the Forces and Influences of Christianity and Islam in Modern Ghana* (Wurzburg, Germany: Echter, 1997), 96.

colonial administration strived to achieve was to consolidate British colonial rule over the region.

Although British colonialists had no intention to aid the Islamization of the region, they were constrained to make certain compromises, which tended to favor the spread of Islam whose adherents were to a large extent firmly in control of political power and economic resources. It was through the Muslim rulers that British colonial government officials hoped to consolidate their rule over the region. It was under these circumstances that both adherents of Christianity and the African Traditional Religions were eventually brought under the control of Islam in Northern Nigeria. It was a kind of unintended support for the quest of Muslims in Northern Nigeria to establish their religion as a state-religion.

Table 1 shows the 1952 and 1963 population statistics by religious groups in Northern Nigeria. It further provides a picture of the uneven distribution of the Christian faith, and the dominance of Islam in Northern Nigeria up to the year 1963, three years after Nigeria became an Independent Republic.

The statistics in table 1 also show that the Christian faith gained most of its converts in areas of Northern Nigeria where the British colonial rulers allowed Christian missionary enterprise. The following states are geographically located within these areas: Kwara, Niger, Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Benue. As the table further illustrates, some of these areas have a significant percentage of adherents of African Traditional Religions. It is, therefore, most likely that Christianity would have made more converts in Northern Nigeria if the British colonial government had not restricted the activities of Christian missions in the region.

Table 1. Population by religious groups in Northern Nigeria, 1952 and 1963

Present State (North of Nigeria)	1952			1963		
	% Muslim	% Christian	% ATR and Other	% Muslim	% Christian	% ATR and Other
Sokoto	96.3	0.5	3.2	98.9	0.4	0.7
Zamfara	96.3	0.5	3.2	98.9	0.4	0.7
Jigawa	98.4	0.4	1.3	98.0	0.8	1.2
Kano	97.8	0.5	1.7	97.0	1.1	1.8
Yobe	87.3	0.5	12.2	94.8	1.0	4.2
Katsina	95.2	0.3	4.5	94.6	0.4	5.1
Borno	80.9	0.6	18.5	88.3	2.7	8.9
Kebbi	79.0	0.3	20.7	85.5	0.5	14.0
Bauchi	76.3	1.1	22.6	83.4	1.6	14.9
Kwara	63.4	6.5	30.1	75.6	13.6	10.8
Gombe	70.1	2.5	27.4	75.0	6.2	18.8
Niger	46.8	3.5	49.7	62.4	4.0	33.6
Kaduna	57.3	10.2	32.5	55.7	25.1	19.2
Kogi	22.5	18.5	59.1	37.5	28.2	34.2
Adamawa	32.9	3.8	63.3	34.6	16.0	49.4
Nasarawa	23.4	7.8	68.8	30.2	13.8	56.0
Taraba	19.0	2.0	78.0	26.2	13.7	60.0
Plateau	25.5	11.4	63.1	26.1	23.2	50.7
Benue	2.8	7.1	90.1	2.8	53.4	43.8
Total North	73.0	2.7	24.3	71.7	9.7	18.6

Source: Philip Ostien, "Percentages by Religion of the 1952 and 1963 Populations of Nigeria's Present 36 States," *Nigeria Research Network Oxford Department of Internal Development* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2012), accessed May 15, 2018, http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.odid.ox.ac.uk/files/BP1Ostien.pdf. Also see *Census Population of Nigeria* (Northern Region), vol. II (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Office of Statistics, 1963), 215-270.

Religious statistics from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*[117] shows the existence of a significant percentage of ATR in twentieth-century Northern Nigeria. Thus while Islam is still the dominant religion, a significant percentage of the Northern Nigerian

[117]David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, eds. *World Christian Encyclopedia,* vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 160-169.

population adhere to traditional religious practices. For instance, the following peoples or ethnic groups are estimated to be more than 90% traditionalists: *Chawai* in Kaduna state, *Daka* in Taraba and Adamawa states, *Jukun* in Taraba and Plateau states, *Kamantan* and *Kadara* in Kaduna state, Kamuku in Sokoto state, Ngamo in Yobe and Bauchi states, and Maguzawa in Kano state. The Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC), and United Methodist Church of Africa (UMCA) are shown to have made converts among the above named ethnic groups. Therefore, the remaining 20% from the above named ethnic groups could be designated as Christian converts.

The records in the *World Christian Encyclopedia* further show that among the various Christian missions who had engaged in the evangelization of Northern Nigeria, the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA, an outgrowth of the Sudan Interior Mission SIM), and the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM)[118] had made significant progress in the region. In most recent times, the Charismatic and Pentecostal Christian Movements emerged as one of the fastest growing Christian groups in Northern Nigeria. This phenomenal encroachment into a vastly Muslim populated region has often resulted in creating tensions between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.[119] Most recent statistics of the various religious groups in Nigeria puts the population of Muslims at

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[118]In 2016, the combined population of Borno, Kano and Sokoto states was estimated at 34.3 million people; from this population, Catholics are estimated at 3.13%, while the baptized membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Nigeria is estimated at 42,654 at the close of the year 2017. See Nigeria Statistics by Diocese: Catholic Population, accessed June 13, 2018, http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/scng1.html; Northern Nigeria Union Conference, accessed June 13, 2018, http://www.adventistyearbook.org/ViewAdmField.aspx?AdmFieldID=NONI. For more on the general religious statistical report of Northern Nigeria see joshuaproject.net.

[119]For additional reading on the role of the Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in the evangelization of Northern Nigeria, see Matthew A. Ojo, "Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (April 2007): 175-188.

48.8%, Christians 49.3%, and adherents of ATR 1.4%.[120] This shows that despite the challenges Christian missionary enterprise encountered in the rise of religious intolerance in Nigeria, a significant progress has been made since the last few decades.

Conclusion

As already noted in this work, Christian missionary enterprise begun in what is known as Northern Nigeria before the eighteenth century,[121] and by the late nineteenth century Canon Charles H. Robinson, a missionary from England who had been on a mission trip to Northern Nigeria gave a glowing account of the region, showing optimism regarding the people's readiness to accept Christianity.[122] However, after several decades of the presence of Christianity in Nigeria, its growth or spread within the Northern region remains low compared to other regions of Nigeria. This low growth of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, as already shown in this work is partly attributed to the dominant nature of Islam, and British colonial government religious policies.

Christianity is unevenly spread in present-day Northern Nigeria. While there exists a viable presence of Christianity and Christian activities in north-central Nigeria, the Christian faith struggles to survive or thrive in most of the core-northern states of Nigeria.[123] This uneven spread of Christianity in Northern Nigeria is partly due to the

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[120]Pew Research Center, Global Religious Features, accessed June 17, 2019, http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/nigeria#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016.

[121]Ogbu Kalu, *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 133-134.

[122]Edmund P. T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 37. For additional information on Canon, Charles H. Robinson's account of his missionary trip to Northern Nigeria, see Charles Henry Robinson, *Nigeria Our Latest Protectorate* (London: Horace Marshall and Son, 1900).

[123]These states are composed of Sokoto, Zamfara, Borno, Yobe, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Jigawa, and Bauchi. They are situated in the northeast and northwest geographical zones of northern Nigeria.

British colonial government policy of restriction, whereby Christian missionary enterprise was restricted to places with minimal or non-Islamic presence. These areas were the so-called "pagan areas" of Northern Nigeria, occupied predominantly by adherents of traditional religions. The Islamic jihad (1804-1809) gained more success in some parts of the northern region than it did in others. The jihadists encountered series of resistance within north-central region of Nigeria (also referred to as the Middle Belt region), and from the Borno Empire.

For instance, in the southwest section of Northern Nigeria, the influence of the Islamic jihadists did not really go beyond Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara state in present-day north-central Nigeria. A good example of this resistance was that of the Tiv—one of the major ethnic groups found predominantly around the heavily forested area of the Benue River in north-central Nigeria.[124] Also, these series of resistance to the Islamization agenda of the early nineteenth century jihadists partly explain why the presence of Christianity is more evident in north-central Nigeria.

Similarly, the jihadists failed to conquer the Borno Empire that had long existing contact with Islam, dating back to as early as the eleventh century.[125] Despite the increasing influence of Islam on the Kanuri people and other minority ethnic groups of Borno Empire, many enclaves of adherents of ATR remained within their sphere of influence, mostly among the minority ethnic groups. It was within these enclaves of adherents of ATR that

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[124]Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Nigeria: *The Tribe, the Nations, or the Race—the Politics of Independence* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965), 14-15.

[125]Ibid.

Christianity made most of its converts.[126] Thus, in present-day Northern Nigeria, Islam remains the dominant religion, while there exist a sizable Christian minority spreading across the various ethnic groups and ethnic groups of the region. Among these ethnic groups and ethnic groups, those that persistently resisted the influence of the early nineteenth century jihadists, and their Islamization agenda, are today, predominantly Christians.[127]

Christianity survived amidst the growing influence of Islam in Northern Nigeria due to its proselytizing nature. African Traditional Religions survived the encroaching influences of both Islam and Christianity based on its inseparable link with the customs and traditions of Africans. Thus it is common to notice elements of the African indigenous religion in the religious practices of many adherents of both Islam and Christianity in northern Nigeria.[128] Regarding the syncretic religious practices among Nigerian ethnic groups, Isaac T. Sampsom noted that although ATR is "often marginalized, it has a fair amount of followers, and therefore has a significant degree of influence in the determination of state-religion relations."[129] Sampson further asserts that

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[126]Barnes posited that "Christian missions experienced real success in Christianizing traditionalist peoples." See Barnes, "'The Great Prohibition'," 454.

[127]For example, all the tribes of Benue state, and most of the tribes of Plateau state, in present-day North-central Nigeria are predominantly Christians. Also in Borno state, the kanakuru and Chibok tribes are predominantly Christians. Recently, Chibok has come to world limelight as a result of the kidnapping of schoolgirls by the Boko haram terrorist group.

[128]For additional reading on the merging nature of Islam and Christianity with ATR see Gilliland, *African Religion Meets Islam*, 69-75, and David Adamo, "Christianity and the African Traditional Religion(s): The Post Colonial Round of Engagement," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 31, no. 1 (2011), accessed April 12, 2018, https://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/285/808.

[129]Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religion and the Nigeria State: Situating the de facto and de jure Frontiers of State-Religion Relations and its Implications for National Security," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 3, no. 2 (2014): 312, accessed April 17, 2018, https://academic.oup.com/ojlr/article/3/2/311/1379483.

"in spite of apparent dominance of Islam and Christianity in public relations, the syncretic nature of religion among Nigerian ethnic groups has paradoxically made [ATR] a sort of melting pot, as those who profess both Islamic and Christian faiths frequently patronize traditional religious priests for spiritual rituals."[130]

Although Islam and Christianity remain the most viable religions in present-day Northern Nigeria, adherents of African Traditional Religions are sparsely found among the various ethnic groups and ethnic groups of the region. Also, the interaction among adherents of these three major religious traditions in Northern Nigeria had remain tensed, and on several occasions marred by violent conflicts,[131] this is particularly the case between adherents of Islam and Christianity, perhaps due to their competing natures, which is born out of their mission to proselytize. Furthermore, the competing natures of Islam and Christianity inevitably lead to the marginalization of African Traditional Religions in Northern Nigeria.

In theory, the British colonial rulers envisaged the emergence of a secular state, but in reality, the Islamic religion emerged not only as the dominant religion, but also, as a "state-religion," especially in Northern Nigeria where its influence remains dominant. Thus, when Nigeria finally became an independent republic in 1960, one of its major

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[130] Sampson, "Religion and the Nigeria State," 312.

[131]The conflict between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria has been documented in several literatures. Here are a few examples: Abubakar Abdulkadir, "A Diary of Ethno-Religious Crisis in Nigeria: Causes, Effects, and Solution," Social Science Research Network, accessed April 11, 2018, https://papers .ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2040860; Robert Conrad, "Points of Tension: Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 19, no. 2 (1992); Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crises of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*; Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration, 51-65; Daniel E. Agbiboa, "Ethno-Religious Conflict and Elusive Quest for National Identity in Nigeria," *Journal of Black Studies* 44, no. 1 (2013): 3-33; Ukoha Ukiwo, "Politics, Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no., 1 (2003): 115-138.

challenges in relation to religious and political interaction was how to clearly articulate the relationship between religion and the state. This still remains a major challenge in twenty-first century Nigeria.[132] This apparent and often real establishment of religion remains a major challenge to the quest for religious freedom and tolerance in Nigeria.[133]

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[132]Among scholars who discussed the complicated nature of the relationship between religion and the state in Nigeria, I found the article by Isaac Terwase Sampson very relevant. See "Religion and the Nigerian State: Situating the *de facto* and *de jure* Frontiers of State—Religion Relations and its Implications for National Security."

[133]For example, see United States Department of State International Religious Freedom Report for 2011, 4-5, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192957.pdf.

CHAPTER 6

THE MODERN NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION AND ITS PROVISIONS FOR TOLERANCE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Twenty-first century Nigeria is a multi-religious state, and its Constitution has provisions for tolerance and freedom of religion. As this study suggests, however, the Nigerian constitutional provision for tolerance and religious freedom is neither fully practiced by adherents of the dominant religions (Islam and Christian), nor adequately enforced or protected by government authorities. More so, Nigeria's designation as a secular state remains largely a myth due to ongoing interference of the state in religious affairs, and vice-versa. Northern Nigeria has often been plunged into violent conflicts emanating from acts of religious intolerance.

This chapter briefly describes the creation of the modern NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION, specifically assessing and evaluating the origins, and meaning of the provision for tolerance and religious freedom, and its application by adherents of the dominant religions (Islam and Christianity), and the Nigerian government authorities.

The Origins of the Modern Nigerian Constitutional Provisions for Tolerance and Religious Freedom

The history of Nigerian constitutional development can be divided into two epochs, the colonial period—which covers six constitutional instruments (1914, 1922,

1946, 1951, 1954, and 1960), and the post-colonial period—which encompasses four instruments (1963, 1979, 1989, and 1999). During the period of British colonization, the constitutional instruments were enacted through an order-in-council of the British monarch. But the post-colonial constitutional instruments were enacted in two ways: an Act of parliament (1963 constitution) and military decree (1979, 1989 and 1999).[1] It is this later part—the post-colonial epoch of Nigerian constitutional development that this chapter is concern with. It was during the post-colonial period that the provision for tolerance and religious freedom was clearly articulated in the NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION.

The modern NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION, which made provision for fundamental human rights and basic freedoms, including provisions for tolerance and religious freedom, came into effect on October 1, 1960,[2] when Nigeria gained independence from Britain. Three years thereafter, on October 1, 1963, Nigeria became a republic.[3] Since Nigeria's independence was first declared on October 1, 1960, this study views the 1960 independence constitution as the beginning of the modern NIGERIAN

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[1]Sam Eleanya, "Nigeria—Constitutional Development History and Legal Complex," *Law Nigeria* (March 7, 2018), accessed October 22, 2018, http://lawnigeria.com/2018/03/nigeria-constitution-development-history-and-legal-complex/. For additional reading on the Nigerian constitutional development during the colonial period, see G. O. Olusanya, "Constitutional Development in Nigeria 1861-1960," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 518-544.

[2]See Moses E. Akpan, "The 1979 Nigerian Constitution and Human Rights," *Universal Human Rights* 2, no. 2 (1980), 27-28, 31, accessed October 24, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/761809. Also, see *Report of the Constitutional Drafting Committee Containing the Draft Constitution*, vol. 1. (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, 1976), 15.

[3]Although Nigeria became an independent nation on October 1, 1960, the British monarch, Elizabeth II retained her seat as titular head of state until the nation adopted a new constitution in 1963, which changed its status to a republic—the Federal Republic of Nigeria. See Toyin Falola and Bukola Adeyemi, *Nigeria* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 60-61.

CONSTITUTION.

When Nigeria became an independent nation on October 1, 1960, the "British rulers seemingly bequeathed to the new nation-state a secular regime;"[4] and the nation's constitution, like other member states of the United Nations made provision for tolerance and freedom of religion among other human rights declarations. Chapter 3, section 23 of the 1960 Constitution of Nigeria states:

> Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own. [The 1999 version adds, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian]. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination. [Finally], Nothing in this section [of the constitution] shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society—in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedom of other persons, including their rights and freedom to observe and practice their religions without the unsolicited interventions of members of other religions.[5]

When in 1963, Nigeria became a republic the country retained in its constitution the section on freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The Nigerian constitutional provision on freedom of conscience has been preserved throughout the various stages of Nigerian constitutional development, during both civil (1963 to1966, 1979 to 1983, and

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[4]Sampson, "Religion and the Nigeria State," 311.

[5]See "The 1960 Constitution of Nigeria," *Law Nigeria,* chap. 3, sec. 23, accessed April 17, 2018, http://www.lawnigeria.com/CONSTITUTIONHUB/Constitution/1960ConstitutionofNigeria.html.Nigeria.html.

1999 to date), and military rule (1966 to 1979, and 1983 to1998).[6]

The continued retention of the Nigerian constitutional clause on tolerance and freedom of religion further suggests that the present challenges confronting Northern Nigeria on issues of tolerance and religious freedom is primarily situated, not in the nation's constitutional stipulations, but rather in the practices of Nigerian government authorities and adherents of the various religious traditions.

As Hakeem Baba-Ahmed observes, "the Nigerian constitution guarantees freedom of [religion] as a basic right of citizens, [presently] there is no specific institutionalized hindrance or barrier to the right to [individual freedom of thought, conscience or religion] in any part of Nigeria."[7] Also, the constitution further states, "The government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion."[8] This constitutional statement notwithstanding, does not really equate to an establishment clause that would prevent governments from promoting or supporting religion in some way. As a result, both federal and state governments have continued to

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[6]See for instance, chapter 4 section 38 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. https://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org/sites/fdl/files/assets/law-library-files/Nigeria_Constitution_1999_en.pdf; Chapter 4, section 35 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/nig_const_79.pdf; and Chapter 4, Article no. 37, of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) Decree 1989, accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.concourt.am/armenian/legal_resources/world_constitutions/constit/nigeria/nigeri-e.htm.

[7]See Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, "Religious Freedom in Nigeria; Myth or Reality–(Bonded Freedom: Notes on Religion and Politics in Nigeria)," Care Fronting-Nigeria, accessed April 27, 2018, http://carefronting.org/religious-freedom-in-nigeria-myth-or-reality-bonded-freedom-notes-on-religion-and-politics-in-nigeria/.

[8]See Article 10 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

provide support for the two dominant religious groups (Islam and Christianity) in Nigeria.[9]

Therefore, the problem of religious intolerance and freedom in Northern Nigeria emanates primarily, from the varying interpretations and applications of the constitutional provisions for tolerance and religious freedom by the Northern Nigerian government authorities, and adherents of the various religious traditions, particularly, Islam and Christianity.

For instance, several states in Nigeria have made policies, and have often embarked on practices that discriminate between citizens, primarily on the basis of their religious affiliation. Some of these policies and practices, as identified by Baba-Ahmed,[10] include, the restriction of access to economic resources and political power by government officials, restricting individual freedom to personal life choices such as, government ban on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in some northern Nigerian states solely on religious reasons, blocking minority religious groups access to land acquisition for the purpose of building churches or schools, making policies, which offend religious codes of dress in schools, and restricting individual freedom of choice in

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[9]One major example of government providing support for Islam and Christianity is the establishment and funding of pilgrim agencies for both religions: Nigerian federal government established and funds National Hajj Commission of Nigeria, and Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission. Similarly, state governments established and funds Muslim pilgrim and Christian pilgrim welfare boards. See https://www.nigeriahajjcom.gov.ng and https://www.ncpc.gov.ng.

[10]Baba-Ahmed, "Religious Freedom in Nigeria; Myth or Reality."

dress code in the public place, again solely on religious reasons.[11]

Also, the ascendancy of religion in modern Nigerian politics has further complicated inter-religious interactions in the country. According to Iheanyi M. Enwerem, "many Nigerians no longer view issues in the country from the stand point of ethnicity as they used to in recent past. Now, government policies and actions and the motives behind them are largely seen through the lens of religion."[12] In present day Nigeria, while the constitutional provision for tolerance and religious freedom clearly stress and promote religious freedom and tolerance, adherents of both Islam and Christianity, as well as government authorities tend to uphold this constitutional provision only when it promotes their personal religious and political agendas.

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[11]Most of these anti-religious freedom policies and practices are more obvious in northern Nigerian states, especially those states where adherents of the Islamic religion are the majority. For instance when I pastored a Seventh-day Adventist church in a predominantly Muslim region of northern Nigeria, Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state (from the year 2002 to 2005), my congregation and church was victim to some of these policies and practices that restricted freedom of religious practices. To further confirm these assertions, the Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo stated, "There is a growing persecution of Christians in the country including in places where they are being prevented from erecting their places of worship, pointing out that the devil is out to stoke religious tension in Nigeria." See Sylvester Ugwuanyi, "Osibajo Decries Growing Persecution of Christians," *Daily Post*, April 26, 2018, accessed April 26, 2018, http://dailypost.ng/2018/04/26/osinbajo-decries-growing-persecution-christians/. Also, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom noted in its report, the continued reports from northern Nigeria Christian leaders that the "state governments discriminate against Christians by denying applications to build or repair places of worship, access to education, representation in government bodies, and employment, and the adoption of Christian girls by Muslim men to be brides." See United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Nigeria Chapter—2017 Annual Report. Accessed April 26, 2018, http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Nigeria.2017.pdf. The commission has recommended that Nigeria be designated as a "country of particular concern" since 2009.

[12]Iyeanyi M. Enwerem, "The Politicization of Religion in Modern Nigeria: The Emergence and Politics of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)" (PhD diss., York University, 1992), iv. It is recently reported that the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) who also currently serve as the President of Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC). Rev. Ayokunle Olasupo, while lamenting on the incessant killing of Nigerians, by the boko haram terrorists, herdsmen, and other militia groups, called on Nigerian Christians to defend themselves in other to survive since government authorities seems to fail in their responsibility of protecting lives and property. This is an example of how most Nigerians view most violent crises in the country. See Ameh Comrade Godwin, "Defend Yourselves, Herdsmen, Boko Haram, more Powerful than Nigerian Government—CAN Tells Christians," *Daily Post*, April 23, 2018, accessed April 26, 2018, http://dailypost.ng/2018/04/23/defend-herdsmen-boko-haram-powerful-nigerian-govt-can-tells-christians/.

The Meaning, and Application of the Provision for Tolerance and Religious Freedom in Nigeria

The genesis of the present problem, particularly, in Northern Nigeria with the interpretation and application of the Nigerian Constitutional provisions for tolerance and religious freedom, partly began in 1914, when the British colonialists initiated the process that united the Northern (which had been operating as a Caliphate under Muslim rulers prior to British conquest) and the Southern protectorates of Nigeria (which had been greatly impacted by Christianity and Western ideologies) into one political entity.

Prior to the 1914 Amalgamation, the various region comprising what is now modern Nigerian was a political entity with numerous diversities; these diversities which included differences in the administrative structures, religious, and legal practices where a result of the variation in the social make-up of the various communities in different regions of Nigeria. This diversity made governance difficult for the British colonial rulers once they had conquered the various regions that constituted what is now known as Nigeria. In order to ease the difficulty of governing this complex political entity, the colonialists introduced different administrative structures of government in the two Protectorates (the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria), and the Colony of Lagos.[13] This diversity in governance also resulted to the adoption of different kinds of

[13]For additional reading on the state of the Nigerian society prior to, and after the 1914 Amalgamation of the protectorates, and colony of Lagos, see Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 110-130; Frederick Lugard and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record; Being a Reprint of the Report by Sir F. D. Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria and Administration 1912-1919; Together with Supplementary Unpublished Amalgamation Reports, and Other Relevant Documents* (London: Cass, 1968); and A. E. Afigbo and Toyin Falola, *Nigerian History, Politics, and Affairs: The Collected Essays of Adiele Afigbo* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2004), 213-234.

legal system by the colonial rulers, with the hope that it would address the various needs of the governed in the various regions.

According to Lamin Sanneh in Northern Nigeria, "the motivation behind such legal work was the colonial government's interest in investing in the local legitimacy and stability of alien suzerainty over Muslim populations."[14] However, in the process, while "Muslims were trained and equipped to run a modern state,"[15] with certain privileges that allowed the promotion of certain Islamic practices, Christian subjects were not accorded such privileges, "except as trustees of the secular state."[16] This policy partly accounts for the divergent views held by Nigerian Muslims and Christians on how a secular state operates. In present-day Nigeria, the attitudes of Muslims and Christians towards secularism differ.

Under the British indirect rule in Northern Nigeria, the Muslim emirs continued to appear as visible heads of government in their respective territories. In addition, the British colonialists under the leadership of Lugard promised the Muslim emirs that government would not interfere with the Islamic religion. This promise, however, did not necessary mean the colonialists had embraced a "full-scale" practice of Islamic law (Shari'ah) as the law for the conquered northern emirates. [17] What the colonialists did

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[14]Lamin Sanneh, "Shari'ah Sanctions as Secular Grace? A Nigerian Islamic Debate and an Intellectual Response," *Transformation* 20, no. 4 (2003): 235, accessed October 29, 2018, http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.andrews.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/026537880302000409.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Shari'ah was the basic instrument that defined religious and political life in the Muslim Caliphate of Northern Nigeria. This Shar'iah law applied to all matters including crime and capital offenses. See James N Anderson, *Islamic Law in Africa* (London, Cass, 1954), 173.

was to partly "recognize Shari'ah under 'native law and customs,' to cover the traditional norms in force in the Muslim and pagans areas that comprised Northern Nigeria."[18]

On their part, however, Muslim emirs took advantage of the indirect rule system of government, along with the promise made by their "colonial overseers" that government would not interfere with their religion to consistently push for the full implementation of the Islamic Law (Shari'ah) in their territories. As Joseph Kenny asserts, "During the period of British rule Islamic law was applied in Northern Nigeria more widely than in any other part of the British Empire, except the Aden Protectorate."[19] Also by granting official recognition to certain aspects of Shari'ah, under 'native law and customs,' the colonial rulers unwittingly allowed judges, serving under the Islamic legal system to apply the law according to the views and concerns of Muslims. As Kenny further observes, "While the British curbed Shari'ah mainly in the area of criminal law, local customs modified it in most other matters, such as land, testimony, marriage and divorce."[20]

During the British colonial rule, the status of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria went through various stages of reviews.[21] The purpose of these reviews was to limit the application of the criminal aspects of the Islamic law (Shari'ah), while at the same time, allowing it to fully address matters pertaining to personal status and family law. These

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[18]Joseph Kenny, "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a 'Secular' State," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26, no. 4 (1996): 340. Accessed April 11, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1581837.

[19]See Kenny, "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria," also see Anderson, *Islamic Law in Africa*.

[20]Ibid., 184-219.

[21]To learn more on the reviews Sharia went through during British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria, see Kenny, "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria."

reviews further allowed the civil courts deal with criminal matters, as it was applicable to all Nigerians.[22] Despite these reviews, there remained a complexity within the Nigerian judicial system whereby different kinds of laws (Islamic law, English common law, and customary law) were being practiced concurrently, resulting in a sort of legal pluralism. Furthermore, the variation in the legal system corresponds broadly, though not exactly, to the three religious traditions in Northern Nigeria (Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions) whose co-existence have been marred by tension and sometimes even violent conflicts.[23]

The pluralistic feature of Nigeria as a country is a major factor in the country's constitutional development. In Nigeria, there is ethnic pluralism, religious pluralism, and legal pluralism. Legal pluralism is a key factor in the interpretation and application of the constitutional provision for tolerance and religious freedom in Nigeria. A. A. Oba provides a summary of this development as follows:

> The pre-colonial Nigeria comprised of over 250 nation states embracing over 500 ethnic and linguistic groups. These ethnic groups spread across the three main geographical units in the country, namely, the north, the west, and the east. The north was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani and the Kanuri peoples, the west by the Yoruba speaking ethnic groups, and the east by the Igbos.
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> Prior to the colonial era, most of these states existed as independent political entities. After the amalgamation by Lord Lugard in 1914, Nigeria became a country and a single administrative entity until federalism was introduced in 1954 through the creation of regions along the lines of the three geographical entities. In 1963, after independence, the regional arrangement was transformed by the creation of twelve states. After a series of state creations, the Federal Republic of Nigeria now consists of thirty-six states and a Federal capital territory. Legal pluralism is an inherent

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[22]Anderson, *Islamic Law in Nigeria*, 219; "Law and Customs in Muslim Areas in Africa: Recent Developments in Nigeria," *Civilization* 7, no. 1 (1957): 28, accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41230253.

[23]A. A. Oba, "Islamic Law as Customary Law: The Changing Perspective in Nigeria," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (2002): 818-826, accessed September 17, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3663189.

> feature of federalism. Nigeria has three tiers of government—the Federal, State, and Local governments—having or sharing legislative competence over different aspects of substantive or procedural law. Each of the three defunct regions had distinct and similar laws though in many aspects, they exhibit important differences especially in matters pertaining to the administration of law. This is of significance in the Nigerian legal system. The creation of states and further states has not completely obliterated the significance of the three origin units in Nigeria. The laws applicable in the states grew out of the laws of the former regions.[24]

Thus much of the current problem with the interpretation and application of the Nigerian constitutional provision on tolerance and religious freedom emanates from Nigerian legal pluralism.

Most adherents of Islam in Northern Nigeria had not been satisfied with the pluralistic nature of the legal system whereby the practice of Islamic law (Shari'ah) is limited, and is being practiced alongside the English style law (common law), and customary law. The limiting of the application of Islamic law (Shari'ah) by the NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION[25] has been challenged, especially by Northern Nigerian Muslims. For instance, during the meetings of the Constitutional Drafting Committee when Nigeria was transiting to democratic rule in 1978, after a period of military rule that lasted from 1966 to 1978, Muslim representatives requested that a provision be established in the Nigerian constitution for a Federal Shari'ah court of appeal.[26] This

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[24]Oba, "Islamic Law as Customary Law: The Changing Perspective in Nigeria," 817-818.

[25]The 1960 constitution of Nigeria had unified the criminal dimensions of English, Islamic, and customary law. The Islamic law (Shari'ah) was limited to dealing with cases pertaining to marriage, family relationships, divorce, child custody, guardianship of infants, gifts, and others. Thus by 1978, there were three systems of law in Nigeria: "Muslim, customary, and general (the latter being a combination of British colonial law and of laws and decrees promulgated by the federal government, military regimes, and state governments)." Furthermore, see J. Isawa Elaigwu and Habu Galadima, "The Shadow of Sharia over Nigerian Federalism," *Publius* 33, no. 3 (2003): 134, accessed April 16, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3331167.

[26]Prior to this period Shari'ah courts were limited to state levels. There were no federal Shari'ah courts established in Nigeria.

court would address matters of Islamic personal law. This request "provoked intolerant, provocative, and spurious exchanges between Christian and Muslim members of the drafting committee as well as their fellow religious devotees in the larger [Nigerian] society."[27] At last, both parties reached an agreement. A Shar'iah court of appeal could be established in any state that so desired.[28]

Unfortunately, "While religion generated intense political heat among the elite members of Nigeria's Christian and Muslim [representative] communities of the [constitutional drafting committee], the interests of the adherents of traditional religion were hardly regarded as important. A gesture was made, however, to permit the establishment of customary courts of appeal in states that so desired."[29]

When the British colonial rulers conquered Northern Nigeria, they encountered Islam as firmly established as the state religion in the region. The Sokoto Caliphate[30] was well established and regulated, and the Islamic law (Shari'ah) was the law of the state.

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[27]Elaigwu and Galadima, "The Shadow of Sharia over Nigerian Federalism," 130. As Elaigwu and Galadima noted at one point, 50 Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly walked out of some the session in protest, thus making it impossible for the Assembly to operate. In the end, a compromise was found. A Shar'iah court of appeal could be established in any state that so desired. In addition, appeals from state Shari'ah courts of appeal were to go to the Federal Court of Appeal, which was to include three justices learned in Islamic law. This example is not an isolated incident. As noted by Yushau Sodiq, during colonialism, the Emirs opposed the British supervision of Islamic law, arguing that what was decided according to Islamic law should not be subject to review and reversal by an alien legal system that did not recognize Islamic legal system. See Yushau Sodiq, "A History of Islamic Law in Nigeria: Past and Present," *Islamic Studies* 31, no. 1 (1992): 98, accessed October 22, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20840064.

[28]It is important to note that the establishment of state Shari'ah courts of appeals did not eliminate the limitations placed on the application of the Islamic law (Shari'ah). These courts were only permitted to handle cases of Islamic personal and civil laws, as has been the practice during colonial period beginning in the 19th century.

[29]Elaigwu and Galadima, "The Shadow of Sharia over Nigerian Federalism," 130-131.

[30]The establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate is discussed in the account of the Usman dan Fodio led jihad of the 19th century in Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*.

Thus, when the colonialists promised not to interfere with the Islamic religion, the Muslim emirs interpreted it to mean that no aspect of their religious practices would be tempered with, including the full practice of Shari'ah.[31] However, on their own part, as already noted in this chapter, the colonialists did not intend to adopt the Islamic law as it was being practiced in the region. This misconception[32] on the part of Northern Nigerian Muslims is another major factor that led to the crises over Shari'ah in Nigeria—the nature and the extent of its implementation.

Prior to the British conquest, the Islamic law (Shari'ah) was fully implemented in Northern Nigeria.[33] This practice however, changed when the British conquered the region. The colonialists imposed certain limitations on the scope and application of Shari'ah, particularly the aspect that dealt with criminal law.[34] Punishment for crimes such as theft, adultery, sodomy, and murder among others as required by Shari'ah was abrogated. For instance, "amputation as punishment for theft was abolished, with imprisonment as a substitute," while whipping continued "for cases of alcohol consumption, adultery, and false accusation of adultery."[35]

Perhaps as Elaigwu observes, the most controversial question regarding the

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[31]See Oba, "Islamic Law as Customary Law," 825.

[32]Some students of Islamic studies argue that Lugard's promise of non-interference with the Local's religion meant that Lugard assured Northern Nigerian Muslims of British recognition and support of the local legal system. See Sodiq, "A History of Islamic Law in Nigeria," 97.

[33]Ibid., 90-96.

[34]Sanneh, "Shari'ah Sanctions as Secular Grace? 235-236.

[35]Allen Christelow, "Islamic Law and Judicial Practice in Nigeria: An Historical Perspective," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2002): 190-191, accessed October 29, 2018, http://web.a .ebscohost.com.ezproxy.andrews.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=6cd22fb8-7987-4e12-add2-a082ecb44098%40sdc-v-sessmgr03.

practice of Shari'ah in modern Nigeria is, "How far Shari'ah can be enforced without violating fundamental norms and constitutionally protected human rights in the [Nigerian] federation."[36] It is therefore no surprise that the recent extension of Shari'ah by some Northern Nigerian states to include criminal law attracted wide criticism from the Nigerian central government, Christians, some Muslim scholars, and the international community due to human rights implications.[37] The major concern is that the full implementation of Shari'ah would violate the human rights provisions of the Nigerian constitution.[38]

These concerns are based on the fear that a full implementation of Shari'ah would constitute an Islamic state, where the Nigerian constitutional provision for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion would be hardly guaranteed. It has been argued that in a typical Islamic state, Muslims often view the concept of religious toleration as the freedom to remain what you were born or freedom to become a Muslim.[39] This view is exemplified in the practices of some Northern Nigerian Muslims who tend to deny their fellow Muslims the right or freedom to change their religion.[40] Commenting on such

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[36]Elaigwu, "A History of Islamic Law in Nigeria," 125.

[37]M. H. A. Bolaji, "Sharia in Northern Nigeria in the Light of Asymmetrical Federalism," *Publius* 40, no. 1 (2010): 114, accessed October 31, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40608343.

[38]See Bolaji, "Shari'ah as Group Rights and the Plight of Religious Minority Groups in Nigeria," *International Journal on World Peace* 30, no. 4 (2013): 31-59, accessed October 31, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24543695. In this article, Bolaji argues that even the implementation of Shari'ah as group-differentiated rights would still jeopardize the rights of minority groups in Northern Nigeria.

[39]See Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (Boston, MA: One World Publications, 2000), 306.

[40]One of such incidences is a recent story of the 19-year-old University student, Nabila Umar Sanda, who converted from Islam to Christianity. Read the story at *World Watch Monitor Nigeria*, "Nigerian student arrested after converting from Islam to Christianity," January 16, 2018, accessed November 8, 2018, https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/01/nigerian-student-arrested-converting-islam-christianity/.

Islamic tendencies, Alexander Pierce further asserts, "Many aspects of Western society would be totally changed under Islamic law. . . . Freedom of religion would consist only of the freedom to become a Muslim, but not for a Muslim to become something else."[41]

In Nigeria, while Christians express concerns over the Muslim tendency to Islamize the nation, Muslims argue that Nigeria has a distinct Christian orientation. According to Josiah Idowu-Fearson, a former Anglican bishop of Sokoto (1990 to 1998), "The Nigerian Muslim feels that the state and the Christian faith are not separate but that one is an extension of the other."[42] In order to substantiate these concerns and other similar ones, Nigerian Muslims often point to the organization of the weekdays, with Saturday and Sunday as weekend-days off, and Nigerian yearly public holidays such as long recesses for Christmas and Easter, and short breaks for the Muslim religious festivals (Id al-Fir and Ia al-Adha). Also, the school calendar and uniforms used by students are all considered to be Christian-oriented.[43]

Furthermore, Nigerian Christians are accused of being hostile to adherents of other religious traditions. Matthew Ojo points to the impact of the aggressive Pentecostal Christian's activities in Northern Nigeria. He observes that Charismatic and Pentecostal

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[41]Alexander Pierce, Facing Islam, Engaging Muslims: Constructive Dialogue in an Age of Conflict (Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2012), 129-132.

[42]Josiah Idowu-Fearson, "The Shari'a Debate in the Northern States of Nigeria and Its Implications for West Africa Sub-Regions," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth (Nairobi, Kenya: Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, 2004), 19-20.

[43]Martha Th. Frederiks, "Let Us Understand Our Differences: Current Trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Transformation* 27, no. 4 (2010): 269, accessed November 8, 2018, https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.andrews.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/0265378810378562. For additional reading on the arguments often posited by Nigerian Muslims and Christians over the implementation of Shari'ah, see Sodiq, "Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?" *The Muslim World* 99, no. 4 (2009): 661-668, accessed November 11, 2018, https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.andrews.edu/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2009.01292.x.

Christians in Northern Nigeria have often adopted antagonistic stance towards Muslims.[44] Similarly, Nigerian Christians generally have often failed to demonstrate tolerance towards adherents of ATR,[45] whose toleration largely accounts for the spread of both Islam and Christianity in Nigeria.

Also, although section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria prohibits any state or federal government from adopting a state religion, there is an obvious preference for Islam and Christianity by Nigerian governments. Enyinna S. Nwauche argued that the Nigerian government active promotion and support for Islam and Christianity make the two dominant religions, the *de facto* state religions of Nigeria.[46]

Moreover, despite the Nigerian constitutional provision to protect individual religious rights,[47] the Nigerian government authorities to a large extent, has often failed in its responsibility to protect religious freedom rights or punish acts of religious

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[44]Ojo, "Pentecostal Movements," 175-188.

[45]The relationship between Christianity and African religion and culture was among the topics discussed at the ecumenical conferences that was held between 1900 and 1959 in America, Europe, Asia and Africa. See L. Ugwuanya Nwosu, "African Religion in Ecumenical Perspective," *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale di studi e documenttazione dell'istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 49, no. 2 (1994): 161-179, accessed November 23, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40760878.

[46]Enyinna S. Nwauche, "Law, Religion and Human Rights in Nigeria," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 8, no. 2 (2008): 572-573, accessed November 14, 2018, http://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/images/ahrlj/2008/ahrlj_vol8_no2_2008_enyinna_s_nwauche.pdf.

[47]Chapter IV (Fundamental Rights) section 46, article 1 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that "Any person who alleges that any of the provisions of this Chapter has been, is being or likely to be contravened in any State in relation to him [or her] may apply to a High Court in that State for redress. See Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.

intolerance and even religious persecutions, which still exist in Nigeria.[48] The sad reality is that the Nigerian government has failed to adequately enforce the laws protecting religious rights. Worse still, the Nigerian government authorities have been accused of violating the laws protecting religious freedom.[49]

In its most recent report (2017 Annual Report), the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom observes that the "conditions of religious freedom in Nigeria remained poor." This submission is based on the fact that the "Nigerian government at the federal and state levels continued to repress" religious groups, and religious differences are often identified as part of the causes for violent conflicts across the nation.[50] In addition to the various challenges already identified, many citizens of Nigeria, especially Christians, consider the recent expansion of the Islamic law (Shari'ah) as a great challenge to the constitutional right to religious freedom and tolerance.

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[48]A report by Open Doors USA, an organization that seek to empower persecuted Christians in more than 60 countries around the world provides the following example: "In May 2016, church leaders in Kebbi State [Northern Nigeria] governed by Sharia (Islamic) law were arrested and sentenced to three years in prison. This arrest happened after local Muslim Vigilantes had violently disrupted worship at their church, claiming church leaders built it without a permit." In the same area, Christian communities are being pressured by Muslim clerics to renounce their faith and convert to Islam in order to get government funding for wells, schools and clinics. A Christian villager once testified that his late son was denied medical treatment because he resisted the pressure from Muslim clerics to convert to Islam. Open Doors USA, Nigeria, accessed April 23, 12018, https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/nigeria/. Also, in July of 2016, a Christian woman was allegedly murdered by Muslim fanatics while preaching in the early hours of the day near Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. See Evelyn Okakwu, "How Abuja Female Preacher was Brutally Murdered—Family," *Premium Times,* July 14, 2016, accessed April 23, 2018, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/206887-abuja-female-preacher-brutally-murdered-family.html. The Islamist group, *Boko Haram* continue to terrorize both Christians and Muslims critics in Northern Nigeria.

[49]See, for example, the country report of The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for 2011, and 2017. http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/book%20with%20cover%20for%20web.pdf, page 98. http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report-chapters-and-summaries/nigeria-chapter-2017-annual-report, page 15.

[50]United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Nigeria Chapter—2017 Annual Report.

Conclusion

As already noted in this chapter, the practice of Shari'ah in Nigeria's legal system is not a new phenomenon. During the pre-colonial period, those areas in Northern Nigeria controlled by the Sokoto caliphate operated a legal system based on the Islamic law. Subsequently, the British colonial government administration, and the various versions of the Nigerian constitutions since its independence in 1960, accommodated a limited practice of Shari'ah, which stripped the Islamic law of its power to punish criminal offenses. In 1999, however, political leaders in twelve mostly Muslim majority Northern Nigeria states decided to expand the implementation of the Islamic law to include criminal matters, and even went as far as criminalizing certain personal moral choices. This development became an issue of serious concern to many Nigerians, as well as the international community, who felt the development could lead to the creation of an Islamic state, where the fundamental human rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion would be violated.[51]

However, Northern Nigerian Muslims respond to these concerns by arguing that the Islamic law applies only to Muslims, and that it does not in any way limit the religious freedom of Christians.[52] But to the contrary, the evidence shows that the many

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[51]Elaigwu and Galadima further describe the problem with the recent reintroduction of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria thus: Although the practice of Shari'a in personal and civil matters had been accommodated by the British and by Nigeria's various constitutions, what was new in 1999 was the extension of Shari'a from civil to criminal matters, thus producing such punishments as decapitation, amputation, and stoning to death, threatening the well-being of non-Muslims, endangering fundamental rights protected by Nigeria's federal Constitution, and posing significant challenges to elected officials and federal courts. The extension of Shari'a to criminal law in 12 northern states also has increased inter-communal and intergovernmental conflict, threatening the fabric of Nigerian Federalism. See "The Shadow of Sharia over Nigerian Federalism," 123.

[52]See for example, Mohamed Mahmoud, "When Shari'a Govern: The Impasse of Religious Relationships in Sudan," *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007): 275-286.

religious practices of Northern Nigerian Muslims are indeed threatening and even violating the religious freedoms of their non-Muslim neighbors. Similarly, in the south, Nigerian Christians have also been accused of violating the Nigerian constitutional provision for tolerance and religious freedom. And the Nigerian government authorities, part of whose responsibility is to protect individual's religious rights and punish offenders, have often failed to do so, and had even shown religious preference by establishing and funding pilgrim commissions, and boards for adherents of Islam, and Christianity while neglecting adherents of ATR.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The focus of this dissertation has been on the study of the interactions of Islam, African Traditional Religions, and Christianity in relation to political structures and power in Northern Nigeria beginning from pre-Islamic to Colonial times. It has focused on the question of whether there existed patterns of tolerance and freedom of religion in this region. This study has shown that such toleration has existed in the history of Nigeria.

I believe that this history can provide useful context and suggested directions in the ongoing dialogue towards greater tolerance and even freedom of religion in Northern Nigeria, and perhaps the entire Nation.

Religious related conflicts in Northern Nigeria have at times led to violence, including property damage and the loss of human life. Indeed, this conflict has the real potential to pose an existential threat to Nigeria as a united Federal Republic. This study proposes that the many instances of religious related conflicts in Northern Nigeria have masked the true religious heritage of the region, which is, a heritage of relative religious tolerance, and perhaps even freedom.

The failure on the part of Nigerian government authorities to adequately implement the stipulations of the country's Constitution on religious matters, together

with the fact that many people lack the true knowledge of Northern Nigeria's religious heritage, could lead to the false assumption, that the religious history of Northern Nigeria has always been marred with acts of intolerance and violent conflicts.

This chapter provides a brief summary of the material presented. It then offers some conclusions in the light of the historical findings of this study. Finally, some suggestions are proffered in light of these findings regarding the ongoing dialogue towards a greater tolerance and religious freedom in Nigeria.

Summary

The religious history of Northern Nigeria reveals among other things that the ongoing religious conflicts in the region has not always been the norm. Prior to the introduction of Islam, religious interactions among adherents of the African Traditional Religions was relatively peaceful, and the interaction between religion and civil affairs was casual. Similarly, early religious interactions between and among adherents of Islam and ATR were initially peaceful. Islam was peacefully introduced in Northern Nigeria in Kanem-Borno during the 11th century, through the activities of Muslim scholars and merchants. From the 11th to the 14th centuries, the religion of Islam spread to the Hausalands in Northern Nigeria. During the early part of this period (11th to 14th century) Northern Nigeria witnessed what is termed in this work as *Laissez Faire Tolerance* (letting things be the way they are) in its religious interaction.

However, during this early period also, several proselytized indigenous rulers began to use their "political power" to promote the expansion of Islam within their sphere of influence. Thus began a more intentional fusion of religion and politics within the

region.[1] Despite the growing influence of Islam during this period, it remained to a large extent a religion of the ruling elite. Islam had little influence outside the cities as most of the populace continued to adhere to ATR. During this period of inter-religious interaction in Northern Nigeria, both adherents of ATR and Islam were involved in what could be called syncretism in modern religious terms. Adherents of ATR embraced aspects of Islamic religious practices and vice versa.[2]

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, there was a major departure from this heritage of relative tolerance and religious freedom in Northern Nigeria. Prior to this period, minor skirmishes had ensued between adherents of ATR and Islam, but these conflicts were short-lived and were never developed into major violent conflicts. However, beginning in the early nineteenth century, Islamic reformists began to express a growing desire to consolidate the establishment of Islam within Hausaland and beyond. It was the quest to "purify" and expand Islam that eventually led to the disruption of the relatively peaceful coexistence that had existed in the region between Muslims and adherents of ATR. The event is extensively discussed in the religious activities of the Muslim reformer and jihadist Shehu Uthman dan Fodio,[3] who beginning in 1804 led a jihad that overthrew several rulers in Hausaland, and led to the founding of the Sokoto Caliphate.

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[1]See "The Kano Chronicle."

[2]See E. G. Parrinder, "Islam and West African Indigenous Religion," *Numen* 6, no. 2 (April 1959), 139-141, accessed January 14, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3269310. Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*; Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*.

[3]See Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*.

The Sokoto Caliphate was a combination of an Islamic state and Hausa monarchy.[4] The Caliph, the head of the Caliphate resided at Sokoto in Northern Nigeria, from where he oversaw the affairs of emirates governed by Emirs whose appointments he ratified. These Emirs were expected to work for the advancement of the political and economic interests of the Caliphate. The Islamic law, Shari'ah, defined the Caliphate's principle of governance. As a result, Emirs who failed to give absolute allegiance to the governing principles of the Caliphate as defined by Shari'ah, were often deposed and replaced.[5] However, notwithstanding the influence exerted by Islam in those regions ruled by the Caliphate, the Caliphate continued to experience minimal resistance to Islamic rule from people who were not truly converted to Islam. This trend of events continued within the Caliphate up to the time of its conquest by British colonialists in the early years of the twentieth century.

The beginning of Christian missionary enterprise in Northern Nigeria is dated from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries. This early period of Christian missionary activities witnessed little success in the region, partly due to the dominance of Islam. However, with a renewed interest to evangelize Northern Nigeria beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century by several Christian missionary societies, Christianity gradually became more noticeable in the region and was further perceived as an eminent threat to the spread and dominance of Islam by Muslim fundamentalists.

British colonialism did not hinder the development or growth of Islam in Northern

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[4]See Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*.

[5]Murray Last provides a detailed account of the Sokoto Caliphate in his book, *The Sokoto Caliphate*. Also, see Sa' ad Abubakar, "The Established Caliphate: Sokoto, the Emirates and their Neighbors," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, 303-314.

Nigeria as often argued by some modern Muslim scholars who claimed that British colonial policies favored Christianity and hindered the growth of Islam. On the contrary, some of the British colonial administration policies limited Christian missionary enterprise in accordance with the wishes and demands of Northern Nigerian Muslim elites. Thus, while the colonialists sought to maintain a neutral position in religious affairs, they were willing to make concessions as long as these concessions favored their overall colonizing agenda. Thus to a large extent, British colonial government policies favored and strengthened the dominance of Islam in Northern Nigeria by restricting the spread of Christianity, and also by refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of ATR, whose religious practices were considered as uncivilized, barbaric, and simply dismissed as animism.

As Jibrin Ibrahim asserts, "An essential aspect of the 'civilizing mission' of the colonial authorities was the concerted effort to eradicate the practices and symbols of traditional African religions."[6] Ibrahim further observes that

> within a few years [of colonial rule] countless gods, deities, totems, or 'idols' were plucked from their sacred repositories only to re-emerge in new shrines in Europe known as museums. So active was the attack on indigenous beliefs and ceremonies that in a few decades most practitioners could no longer publicly admit their adhesion to the religion of their ancestors.[7]

In recent times, the religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria emanates partly from the aggressive competition for dominance by Islam and Christianity.[8] A few examples of these violent religious related conflicts and acts of intolerance in Nigeria might suffice at

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[6]Ibrahim, "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria," 116-117.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*.

this point. Beginning from the year 1980 to 1984 Muhammadu Marwa (also known as Maitatsine) masterminded a series of religious riots in Kano state, which eventually spread to other parts of Northern Nigeria. These riots led to the loss of hundreds of lives within the region.[9] Similarly, in 1991, Muslim fanatics masterminded a religious riot in Kano that scuttled the attempted public evangelistic campaign of the German Christian evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke.[10] Recently, the murder of a Pentecostal Christian woman who went out to evangelize in one of the satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja, has been linked to acts of religious intolerance.[11]

Acts of religious intolerance are not limited to Northern Nigeria. Recently, in Southwest Nigeria, protest and scuffles have erupted over the use of the Islamic veil by Muslim schoolgirls attending public schools. The crisis, which was began by some Christians led to the disruption of educational activities, litigations in courts, and heightened religious tensions across the nation. The discussions over the issue were primarily centered on Muslim-Christian strife.[12] Numerous violent religious related

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[9]Hiskett, *The Course of Islam in Africa* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 130; see also, Aguwa, "Religious Conflict in Nigeria: Impact on Nation Building," *Dialectical Anthropology* 22, no. 3/44 (December 1997), 337-338, accessed January 28, 2019, https://www.Jstor .org/stable/29790463.

[10]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 212.

[11]Imanuel Jannah, "How RCC Evangelist was Murdered while Preaching," *Vanguard*, July 10, 2016, accessed February 1, 2019, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/07/abuja-evangelist-murdered-preaching/.

[12]Fatima Abubakar, "Media Influence on the Perceptions of the Usage of Hijab in Nigeria's Public Institutions and Surrounding Controversy in the Lagos-Ibadan Axis," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 38, no. 4 (2018): 521-536, accessed February 1, 2019, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13602004.2018.1544737.

conflicts in Nigeria have been documented between 1987 and 2011.[13]

The influences exerted by Islam and Christianity, the two most viable religions in Nigeria, have almost eclipsed ATR. In present day Nigeria, while "it is regarded as a sign of status or education to be called Muslim or Christian,"[14] adherents of ATR are often treated with disrespect. And while the religious rights of Muslims and Christians are often respected, though depending largely on the region of the country, adherents of ATR hardly enjoy freedom of religion. And although the modern Nigerian Constitution makes provisions for tolerance and religious freedom, not all adherents of the three major religions (Islam, Christianity, ATR), and government entities practice religious tolerance. The level of tolerance and religious freedom experienced in Nigeria varies from region to region; depending on which religious tradition dominates the region.

In Northern Nigeria where Islam is the most viable and dominant religion, the level of tolerance and freedom accorded to adherents of Christianity and ATR is limited. For instance, Christians could worship in their church buildings, but government authorities prohibit them from holding public evangelistic campaigns in most towns and cities. Also, while land lots are sold to, and sometimes given free to Muslims in all parts of the towns and cities for the purpose of building Mosques and other religious institutions, Christians are often denied such privileges. And in some cases, even existing

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[13]See Rotgak I. Gofwen, *Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria and Nation Building: The Throes of Two Decades 1980-200* (Kaduna, Nigeria: Human Rights Monitor, 2004); Obed Minchakpu, "Islamic Violence Paralyzes Teenager, Churches in Nigeria," Copyright Compass Direct 2006, accessed February 1, 2019, http://www.christianpersecution.info/islamic-violence-paralyzes-teenager-churches-in-nigeria/; Samson M. Nwaomah, "Boko Haram: New Dimension in Religious Crises and Implications for Christian Missions in Nigeria," in *The Ethical Wrongfulness of Terrorist Actions*, ed. Mahmoud Masaeli (Ottawa, Ontario: Commoner's Publishing, 2010), 104-123.

[14]Parrinder, "Islam and West African Indigenous Religion," 133.

church buildings and Christian schools are demolished under the pretext of town planning, and or city reconstructions. It must be noted that in these instances, Mosques and other Islamic religious buildings are never tempered with. Furthermore, there is also, an "imposition of Islamic values [upon non-Muslims] in everyday life," such as the separation of sexes in public transport (which also limits the mobility of non-Muslim women) and in public schools.[15]

Conversely, Muslims who reside in regions where Christianity is the most viable religion are sometimes subjected to acts of religious intolerance. An example is the recent controversy in southwestern Nigeria over the use of the female Muslim head covering (*hijab*). In some schools, female Muslim students have been subjected to making the difficult choice of either dressing according to their religious convictions (wearing the hijab), or face disciplinary actions from school authorities.[16] Similarly, in southeast Nigeria, converts to the Islamic religion are often subjected to ridicule, denunciation, and generally treated with displeasure by the majority in their society.[17] And as earlier noted in this work, adherents of ATR in most parts of Nigeria are often treated disrespectfully.

In more recent times, following the introduction of the criminal law to the jurisdiction of Shari'ah (Islamic law) in Northern Nigerian, a series of violent conflicts

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[15]Ludwig, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Northern Nigeria," 612-615; Obed Manchakpu, "Nigerian Churches Marked for Demolition in Zamfara State," *Worthy News,* accessed February 1, 2019, https://www.worthynews.com/815-nigerian-churches-marked-for-demolition-in-zamfara-state.

[16]Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, "The Crisis over Hijab in Osun State: Our Response—Muswen," accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.nscia.com.ng/index.php/news-room/115-the-crisis-over-hijab-in-osun-state-our-response-muswen.

[17]Egodi Uchendu, "Being Igbo and Muslim: The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria and Conversions to Islam, 1930s to Recent Times," *Journal of African History* 51 (2010): 79-80, accessed February 12, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/3543917/BEING_IGBO_AND_MUSLIM_THE_IGBO_OF_SOUTH-EASTERN_NIGERIA_AND_CONVERSIONS_TO_ISLAM_1930s_TO_RECENT_TIMES?auto=download.

ensued between Muslims and Christians. As Mohammed Bolaji observes, "the extension of Shari'ah has worsened Christian-Muslim relations in northern Nigeria, causing the supporters and opponents of Shari'ah to engage in series of clashes that have led to numerous deaths and significant loss of property."[18] The primary contention over the introduction of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria is government adoption of Muslim values in a religious pluralistic society. The current practice of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria could undermine the religious rights of members of minority religious groups (Christians and adherents of ATR) in the region.

The impact of politics on religious interactions in Nigeria can never be overemphasized. It has been widely conjectured that there is a link between Nigerian politics and the activities of the Muslim fundamentalists group, Boko Haram.[19] Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, the group had repeatedly attempted to establish an Islamic state in Northern Nigeria. *Boko Haram* whose official name is "Jama' atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda' awati Wal-Jihad" which means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's teaching and Jihad" gained wide global recognition in 2014, when it kidnapped 276 female students from a government girls school in Chibok, a town in Borno state northeast Nigeria. The group's attacks were initially directed mainly at security forces and government officials, who they considered a threat to their forceful

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[18]Bolaji, "Shari'ah as Group Rights and the Plight of Religious Minority Groups in Nigeria," 32.

[19]The meaning of Boko is vague; some believe it descended from the Arabic world "book"; a more accepted view defined Boko as something inauthentic or fake usually associated with the Western world. Haram literally means "something that is prohibited." Consequently, Boko Haram has been interpreted as "Western education is forbidden," highlighting the rejection of everything that is associated with Western values. See Egiegba D. Agbiboa, "The Nigerian Burden: Religious Identity, Conflict and the Current Terrorism of Boko Haram," *Conflict, Security and Development* 13, no. 1 (2013): 1-29.

Islamization agenda. However, their campaign has long expanded to include attacks on Christians, critical Muslim, traditional leaders, suspected collaborators, United Nations offices, and girl schools. Ioannis Mantzitos provides a chronology of some of these attacks.[20]

According to Mohammad Isa, "the term Boko Haram implies a sense of rejection and resistance to imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organization, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the jihadist state [the Sokoto Caliphate]."[21] Isa further argues that

> Islamic scholars and clerics who once held sway in the caliphate state and courts assigned the name *boko* to northern elites who spoke, acted, ruled and operated the state like their western colonial masters. It is not uncommon to hear in discussions among Islamic scholars and average northerners that poverty and collapsed governance—the bane of the region—can be blamed on the failure and corrupt attitudes of *yan boko* (modern elites trained at secular schools) who have acquired a Western education and are currently in position of power. As such, the system represented by the *yan boko* is unjust, secular and has no divine origin. It is therefore un-Islamic, which in turn accounts for its ineptitude and corruptness.[22]

The above assertion further suggests that there is a shared view between *Boko Haram* and the nineteenth century *jihadists* whose religious wars led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. As suggested in the third chapter of this work, both Uthman dan Fodio (the leader of the *Jihad* 1804-1808), and *Boko Haram* seems to espouse similar religious ideologies, which are credited to the teachings of the ancient Islamic scholar Al-

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[20]Ioannis Mantzikos, "Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria and Neighboring Countries: A Chronology of Attacks," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 6 (2014): 63-81, accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26297293.

[21]Muhammad K. Isa, "Militant Islamist Groups in Northern Nigeria," in *Militias, Rebels and Islamist Militants: Human Security and State Crises in Africa*, ed. Wafula Okumu and Augustine Ikelegbe (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 2010), 332.

[22]Ibid.

Maghili in his "*Obligation of Princes*." In this document, Al-Maghili encourages the use of violence or war to remove corrupt leaders from office and correct moral decay.[23]

Boko Haram often claims that their movement is meant to rid the society of corruption.[24]

Several Northern Nigerian politicians have been accused of either sponsoring Boko Haram or sympathizing with the group. Similarly, the present leadership of the Nigerian government is perceived to be in sympathy with militia herdsmen that have been terrorizing and killing people in several farming communities in North-central Nigeria and beyond.[25] These accusations stem from the fact that Nigeria's government authorities seem reluctant to adequately use its power to stop the killings.[26]

Conclusions

Violent conflicts have often shrouded most presentation of the religious history of Northern Nigeria. This skewed presentation of Northern Nigerian religious history is due to the several contemporary religious upheavals that were witnessed in the region, and the continued existence of acts of intolerance in the religious interaction among adherents of the various religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, ATR) in the region. Also, the failure on the part of the government of Nigeria to prevent and contain acts of religiously related

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[23]For additional reading, see Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 60-62.

[24]For additional reading about Boko Haram, see Daniel E. Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram Exist: The Relative Deprivation Perspective," *African Conflict and Peace Building* 3, no. 1 (2013): 144-157, accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africonfpeaccrevi.3.1.144.

[25]Orji Sunday, "An Innocent Beginning: Boko Haram and Religious Freedom in Nigeria," *Liberty*, September/October 2018, 12-15, 30.

[26]Tim Robinson, comp., "Armed Violence Against Farming Communities in Nigeria," *Debate Pack CDP,* November 2018, accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.researchbriefings.files.parliament .uk/documents/CDP-2018.

violence, coupled with a lack of a true knowledge of Northern Nigeria's religious heritage, has further masked the true heritage of religious interaction in Northern Nigeria.

This study reveals among other things that prior to the introduction of Islam in Northern Nigeria in the eleventh century, adherents of the various groups of ATR that existed in the region interacted in a state of relative tolerance,[27] and the interaction between religion and politics during this early period was casual. It was mostly an overlap between religious and civil affairs. There was no intentional fusion of religion and politics as seen in modern day Nigeria. Furthermore, this revelation of the existence of ATR in Northern Nigeria before the introduction of Islam discredits the claim to so-called religious legitimacy often made by Muslim fundamentalists and their sympathizers, who tend to portray Islam as the indigenous religion of Northern Nigeria.

Similarly, the introduction of Islam to the region at Kanem-Borno and its subsequent spread to Hausaland during the eleventh to fourteenth centuries was largely peaceful because of the activities of Islamic clerics and merchants.[28] During this early period (from the 11th to 14th century), as noted in the second chapter of this work, religious interactions among and between adherents of ATR, and Islam were relatively peaceful. And the relationship between religion and civil affairs remained casual. To further support this view, this study argues that the *Mahrams* (grants of privileges) issued by ancient Northern Nigerian rulers in the Kanem-Borno Empire were partly a means of

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[27]See the following, Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*; Mazrui, "Africa and Other Civilizations"; Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria*, 9; Ki-Zerbo, "African Personality and the New African Society," 271.

[28]Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, 28.

securing the religious rights of Muslim minorities living in a society that was largely populated by adherents of ATR.

During this early period (11th to 14th century) of religious interaction in Northern Nigeria, the practices of Islam were mixed in various degrees with customs and practices associated with traditional religions. Adherents of Islam embraced and modified certain old traditional religious practices. This religious practice could be viewed either as syncretism[29] or contextualization.[30] Thus, while Leithart asserts that "West African Islam was syncretic in nature because it retained and adapted preexisting animism,"[31] Timothy Insoll suggest that what is perceived as Islamic syncretism in West Africa was a process of contextualization. He averred that "Islam in Africa is an African religion, [though] derived from outside but then adapted in many ways to suit many *different contexts*."[32] These varying views of the religious interaction between Islam and ATR in Northern Nigeria further raises the question of how and when to determine the limits of contextualization in mission enterprise. This question, though very relevant, is beyond the

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[29]Generally today, "religious syncretism is defined as the blending of different (sometimes contradictory) forms of religious beliefs and practices." See Sanou, "Responding Biblically and Missiologically to the Threat of Religious Syncretism," 95.

[30]Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell define contextualization as "the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content, and praxis of the Christian faith so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural background. The goal is to make the Christian faith as a whole—not only the message but also the means of living the faith out in the local setting." *The Changing Face of World Mission: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 323.

[31]Leithart, "Islamic Syncretism."

[32]Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 34-35.

scope of this study.[33]

Although minor conflicts might have ensued between adherents of Islam and ATR during the early years (11th to 14th century) of the introduction of Islam in Northern Nigeria, these conflicts, however, were minor and short-lived. The major departure from a heritage of relative religious tolerance in the region began in the early nineteenth century. This period (early 19th century) also witnessed a paradigm-shift in the interaction between religion and politics, moving from what had been a casual interaction and overlap between religion and civil affairs to a much more intentional fusion of religion and politics. It was also during this period that various Christian missionary societies renewed interest in the evangelization of the region. But because Islam was firmly consolidated in the region, Christian missionary enterprise became a herculean task.

In addition, when the British colonialist conquered the region in the early twentieth century, the colonial administration introduced certain policies that further limited the scope of Christian missionary enterprise in the region. Although British colonial government had no deliberate intention to limit the spread of Christianity and aid the expansion of Islam, its colonial policies, which were primarily meant to support the smooth administration of its northern colony, resulted in limiting the evangelistic activities of Christian missionaries. At the same time, the British policy strengthened the Islamic religion, particularly through its policy of indirect-rule, whereby Muslim Emirs

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[33]For additional reading on the topic of contextualization in mission enterprise, see Boubakar Sanou, "New Testament Precedents to the Practice of Contextualization in Contemporary Mission," *Current,* no. 2 (2015), 7-9; Gilliland, ed., *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

still maintained a reasonable control of both religious and political authority in the region.

ATR was practically relegated and marginalized and was not recognized as a legitimate religion during British colonial rule. According to Yusuf Turaki, "Pre-colonial inequality did exist between the Muslims and non-Muslim groups, but this social inequality [based upon social and religious differences between the ethnic groups] was institutionalized by the colonial administration."[34] Turaki further argues that colonial authorities placed the minority non-Muslim groups under the political control of the Hausa-Fulani (a predominant Muslim group).

Although Turaki's argument is valid, it is noteworthy to stress that British colonialist did not intentionally support the spread of Islam. Frederick Lugard, who served as the high commissioner of the Southern and Northern Protectorate of Nigeria was cautious not to forcefully place those ethnic groups who had successfully resisted the Islamic Caliphate in Northern Nigeria under Muslim rule.[35]

The argument that British colonialism disrupted the growth or spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria is only partially true if viewed from the standpoint of the implementation of the Islamic law (Shari'ah). Prior to the British conquest, Shari'ah was fully implemented within the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria. This practice however, changed when the British conquered the region. The colonialists imposed certain limitations on the scope and application of Shari'ah, particularly the aspects that dealt with criminal law.[36]

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[34]See Turaki, "The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-Political Role."

[35] See Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 302.

[36]See Sanneh, "Shari'ah Sanctions as Secular Grace?" 235-236.

The limitations set on the practices of Shari'ah by the colonialists did not entirely preclude its practice or development within Northern Nigeria. Muslim Emirs insistently continued to push for the full implementation of Shari'ah, and Muslim judges continued to apply much of the law according to the views and concerns of Muslims. The British colonial policy of indirect rule provided a sort of leeway for the continued development of Shari'ah in Northern Nigeria.[37] These trends partly explain why modern-day Nigeria, though a secular state, is still engrossed in the debate over the implementation of Shari'ah (an Islamic law). The views of Nigerian Muslims and Christians differ over the nature of Nigeria's secularism. These differing views over the secular nature of Nigeria is further complicated by Nigeria's government continued interference in religious affairs. The Nigerian constitutional provision for tolerance and religious freedom is neither fully practiced by adherents of the dominant religions (Islam and Christian), nor adequately enforced or protected by government authorities.

The Christian missionary enterprise, partly contributed to the rise of religious intolerance in Northern Nigeria, in both its often dismissive and negative views of ATR, as well as the conflict it engendered with Islam. The evidence suggests, however, that Protestant Christian missionary activities also contributed to the development of tolerance and religious freedom in the region. The Church Missionary Society was among the various Christian missionary groups that came to Nigeria. Its membership included free-church Protestant Christians from the United States and Canada who held the view of the essential value of all individuals which is connected to the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. A number of historians of church and state have observed that

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[37]See Kenny, "Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria," 340; Anderson, *Islamic Law in Africa*, 184-219.

"this belief emphasized the importance of individual Bible study, leading to personal belief and faith by all. It also ushered in arguments for the separation of church and state . . .," and emphasized the importance of literacy among people of all classes and gender, laying the groundwork for institutions of democracy, the rule of law, and the promotion of human rights.[38]

As documented by Robert Woodberry, such Christian missionary influences provided context and impetus for the religious freedom clause that was included in the Constitution of Nigeria. Protestant missionary views on the relationship between the church and the state, the equality of human dignity, and the need for democratic governments for all people impacted Nigerian elites, many of whom had been educated in Protestant mission schools, who took part in the drafting of the CONSTITUTION of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.[39] As Woodberry had shown, "the concept of human dignity" promoted by dissenting free-church Protestant missionaries, is not only central to modern systems of civil and religious rights in the western world, but the world at large. "The centrality of human dignity to system of rights, as promoted by Protestant and other religious thinkers, was enshrined internationally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948."[40] It was this human rights declaration that was adopted into the Nigerian Constitution.

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[38]Nicholas Miller, 500 Years of Protest and Liberty: From Martin Luther to Modern Civil Rights (Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2017), 59-63.

[39]Robert Woodberry, "The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012): 244-270.

[40]Miller, "The Contributions of Dissenting Protestantism to Western Views of Human Dignity and Freedom," *Fides Et Libertas, The Journal of the International Religious Liberty Association* (2014): 51.

It is also worth stressing that despite the religious inequalities that existed in Northern Nigeria among the three major religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, and ATR), all three religious traditions have the capacity for greater toleration, which aliens with Northern Nigeria religious identity. All three religious traditions at some point demonstrated acts of religious tolerance.

Northern Nigeria had indeed remained the hub of religious conflicts in Nigeria. In most instances the religious conflicts are between Muslims and Christians, and often spread to other parts of the country. Sophie Pedder observed that "[Northern Nigeria] seems to have bred a less tolerant religious strain that could spill over into the rest of the country. At least 3,000 people have been killed in the northern [region] in fighting between Muslims and Christians, or between Muslim sects, over the past five years."[41] In other regions of Nigeria, it is common practice for most Christians to engage in reprisal violent attacks against innocent Muslims minority groups as a form of retaliation for the killings of Christians in religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria.

Recently there has arisen ongoing dialogue between and among adherents of the various religious traditions in Nigeria towards better interfaith relationships.[42] But this study shows that the challenges to religious freedom remain endemic due to the unwillingness on the part of government authorities to allow the law to delineate and

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[41]Sophie Pedder, "The Call of Islam," *Economist* 328 (1993), 12, quoted in Aguwa, "Religious Conflict in Nigeria: Impact on Nation Building," *Dialectical Anthropology* 22, no. 3/44 (December 1997): 337.

[42]Literature involved in this discussion are: Hyacinth Kalu, The Nigerian Nation and Religion: Interfaith Series, vol. 1, and Principles and Practicalities of Interfaith Relationships in Nigeria: Interfaith Series, vol. 3 (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011); Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*. There are also organizations in Nigeria whose purpose is to encourage peaceful co-existence among adherents of the different religions in Nigeria, such as The Nigerian Inter-Religious Council, and Nigerian Inter-Faith Action Association.

prohibit acts of religious intolerance as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This behavior of government officials appears to stem primarily from personal political interest, as politicians from both the Christian and Islamic faiths often appeal to Nigerian citizen's religious differences in order to maintain political loyalty.[43]

Ahmed Yarima emerged as the governor of Zamfara state in the 1999 elections, largely because he successfully appealed to the religious desires of the majority Muslims who had longed for the expansion of the Shari'ah Islamic legal system. One of Yerima's major campaign promises was to introduce Shari'ah if voted in as governor of Zamfara state.[44] "This was also the case with Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano state who belonged to the same political party (APP, All People's Party) with Yerima."[45] Similarly, politicians who adhere to the Christian faith had often appealed to their religious affiliates for political support. During the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the south became very close to Christian religious leaders for the purpose of gaining support and that of their followers. He approached the church for support and mobilization for his political ambition, at a period when many Nigerian Christians were expressing the fear of Muslim dominance.[46]

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[43]See Ibrahim, "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria," 127-135.

[44]Ahmed Yerima became the first governor to introduce the Shari'ah Islamic legal system in Northern Nigeria in 1999.

[45]Hakeem Onapajo, "Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 9 (2012): 51-52, accessed February 12, 2019, https://www .researchgate.net/publication/273998985_Politics_for_God_Religion_Politics_and_Conflict_in_Democrati c_Nigeria.

[46]Onapajo, "Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria," 56.

In Nigeria, generally during political campaigns and elections most Christian and Muslim voters tend to rely heavily on religious sentiments in order to persuade and woo undecided or potential voters to vote for candidates of their choices. This kind of manipulation of religion for political reasons further creates a wide divide along religious lines in political affairs, and thus making it difficult to separate religion from civil affairs. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the ongoing dialogue towards greater tolerance and even religious freedom in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in view of the conclusions drawn from discoveries made in the process of this study:

1. *Efforts should be made in order to include adherents of ATR in the ongoing dialogue between and among adherents of the various religious traditions in Nigeria towards better interfaith relationships*. In present day Nigeria, adherents of ATR are not usually engaged in interfaith dialogues. This is mostly so, because both adherents of Islam and Christianity as well as Nigeria's government authorities, to a large extent, have failed to recognize the legitimacy of ATR. As a result, unlike the persecution of Christians or Muslims, which has been acknowledged, and which has spawned dialogues towards lasting solution, the persecution of adherents of ATR often goes unnoticed. Thus, bringing ATR to interfaith dialogues would create awareness and further educate the Nigerian populace on the need to respect individual's religious preferences.

2. *The secular nature of the Nigerian state needs further elaboration.* Secularism and secular are both connotative terms used here to imply separation of state from religion. Although Nigeria is a secular state, there seems to be divergent views as to the

nature of Nigeria's secularism among and between Muslims and Christians. Very few Nigerian Muslims and Christians seem to understand what it means for a country to be a secular state. Most adherents of Islam only acknowledge Nigeria's secularism only in theory. Islam, generally to a large extent, does not believe in the separation of religion and state.[47] Similarly, most Nigerian Christians advocates of separation of church and state, endorses government interference in religious affairs, especially when such interference benefits the religious group, for instance, like government funding of religious programs such as pilgrimage to Mecca and Jerusalem.

3. *The establishment clause, which is meant to protect the provisions for tolerance and religious freedom in the Nigerian constitution, should be reviewed and strengthened in order to completely eliminate government interference in religious affairs*. Presently, the provision for tolerance and religious freedom in the constitution of Nigeria is either not fully understood or deliberately disregarded by government authorities. The very fact that the Nigerian government still funds religious pilgrimage is problematic. When faith groups benefit from government funding, they are indirectly becoming subservient to government authorities, and a message is sent that groups that do not receive such funding are second-class citizens in society.

4. *Nigerian government authorities should not make any laws that would either directly or indirectly infringe on the religious rights of individuals, such as requiring specific dress code for public schools that would offend the religious sensibilities of any*

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[47]The following sources provide a broader understanding on the relationship between the religion of Islam and secular authority: Carl L. Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); 'Abd Allah Ahmad Naim, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

religious group. There have been instances where government authorities had attempted to make laws that directly conflicts with individual's religious rights. In most of these instances, the pressures on government officials to make such laws usually come from adherents of the most viable religion in the region. Government officials are often pressured to oblige such demands in order to safeguard their political interests. On this note, Agberemi observes, "As the Nigerian experience illustrates, religion can hardly be separated from the state and its politics, in so much as people give consideration to it when confronted with political issues and decisions. Discourses on secularism in Nigeria have been reduced to engagement and/or confrontation between Muslim and Christians."[48]

5. *The Nigerian government authority should set up a special task force with the primary responsibility to identify, arrest, and bring criminal charges against perpetrators of religious violence in the courts of law.* Presently in Nigeria, perpetrators of religious violence often go unpunished. The current practice of letting "religious crimes" go unpunished seems to further encourage participation in acts of religious violence. However, using the rule of law to punish offenders, might serve as deterrent to those who may contemplate religious violence.

Although religious intolerance is not the only factor threatening the survival of Nigeria as a united Federal Republic, it is in my opinion one of the major factors threatening the unity of Nigeria. In Nigeria, religion, not nationality, is the way in which most citizens choose to identify themselves. More so, while many Nigerians across

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[48]HAgberemi, "Nigeria Beyond Secularism and Islamism: Fashioning a Reconsidered Rights Paradigm for a Democratic Multicultural Society," in *Islam and Human Rights: Advocacy for Social Change in Local Context,* ed. M. A. Baderin et al. (New Delhi: Global Media Publication, 2006), 301-374.

different religious divide seem to identify many similar problems facing the country, the solutions they proposed to these problems however, is colored by their religious affiliation. For instance while a large majority of both Muslims and Christians identify corrupt political leadership as a key problem to Nigeria's survival, a majority of Christians (72%) see the solution to this problem in finding political leaders with strong Christian beliefs; similarly, an even larger majority of Muslims (77%), propose a political leadership with strong Islamic beliefs as a solution to Nigeria's corrupt leadership.[49] It is hoped that the above recommendations would help to ameliorate the current religious problems confronting Nigeria.

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[49]Pew Research Center, "Nigeria's Presidential Election: The Christian-Muslim Divide," last modified March 21, 2007, accessed February 11, 2019, http://www.pewforum.org/2007/03/21/nigerias-presidential-election-the-christian-muslim-divide/.

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