EDITED BY
A. CARL
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The Oxford Handbook *of* NIGERIAN POLITICS

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

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Edited by

A. CARL LEVAN

and

PATRICK UKATA

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

First Edition published in 2018

Impression: 1

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018949672

ISBN 978–0–19–880430–7

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

I dedicate this book to Thoreau—that he may possess the curiousity to witness the world's wrongs, the compassion to understand them, and the courage to right them.
A. Carl LeVan

I dedicate this book to my lovely wife, Anne-Kathrin—my rock and my everything.
Patrick Ukata

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support of American University's School of International Service Africa Resarch Cluster for hosting a workshop in November 2016 that enabled many authors to receive feedback on their research. We thank Adrienne LeBas, Rachel Sullivan Robinson, Steve Dalzell, Oladeji Olaore, Jennifer Joel-Obado, Yoonbin Ha, and Ifeoluwa Olawole for their insightful comments. Erin Kelly and Sarah El-Hoss diligently assisted with fact-checking and other preparation details. Megan Snow from the American University Library generously helped with the maps. Carl also wishes to thank Monica, Emerson, and Thoreau for their inspiration.

We also wish to thank three anonymous reviewers for valuable input into the initial design of the book, which helped us identify important gaps that might have been overlooked. Finally, we appreciate the support and guidance of Dominic Byatt and the team at Oxford University Press for their excellent work.

The poem "Silences" by Christopher Okigbo is reprinted in the chapter by Obi Nwakanma with permission from Obiageli Okigbo. Popular music texts and song lyrics in the chapter by Garhie Osiebe are reprinted with permission from the Copyright Society of Nigeria for research and learning purposes.

Contents

List of Figures xv
List of Tables xvii
About the Contributors xix

Introduction 1
A. Carl LeVan and Patrick Ukata

PART I: LOCATING NIGERIA IN AFRICAN HISTORY

1. From Borno to Sokoto: Meaning and Muslim Identities in Northern Nigeria 19
Murray Last

2. State Formation in Precolonial Nigeria 33
Nonso Obikili

3. Precolonial Christianity and Missionary Legacies 47
Shobana Shankar

4. The Atlantic Slave Trade and its Lasting Impact 60
Wasiq N. Khan

5. Colonial Rule 75
Matthew M. Heaton and Toyin Falola

6. The Anticolonial Struggle in Nigeria 89
Rotimi Ajayi

7. Women's Protests in the Struggle for Independence 103
Chiedo Nwankwor

8. The Nigerian Novel and the Anticolonial Imagination 121
Cajetan Iheka

9. Ecologies of Rule: Politics, Political Economy, and Governing the Environment in Nigeria 133
Michael J. Watts

PART II: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

10. The Long Shadow of Nigeria's Military Epochs, 1966–79 and 1983–99 171
Eghosa E. Osaghae

11. Fiscal Federalism, Subnational Politics, and State Creation in Contemporary Nigeria 189
Olufunmbi M. Elemo

12. The Legislatures in the First and Second Republics 207
Joseph Olayinka Fashagba

13. Legislative Development and Decadence in the Fourth Republic National Assembly 221
Rotimi T. Suberu

14. Sharia Politics, the 1999 Constitution, and the Rise of the Fourth Republic 239
Olufemi Vaughan

15. Executive Dominance and Hyper-Presidentialism in Nigeria 257
Yahaya T. Baba

16. Civil Military Affairs and Military Culture in Post-Transition Nigeria 273
Max Siollun

17. Progress and Setbacks in Nigeria's Anticorruption Efforts 288
Daniel Jordan Smith

18. The Judiciary in Nigeria Since 1999 302
Patrick Ukata

19. Elections and Electoral Performance 319
Nkwachukwu Orji

20. Drivers and Dynamics of Electoral Reform, 1999–2015 336
A. Carl LeVan and Abiodun Ajijola

21. The People's Democratic Party: From the 1999 Transition to the 2015 Turnover 351
ADIGUN AGBAJE, ADEOLU AKANDE, AND JIDE OJO

PART III: CIVIL SOCIETY

22. Civil Society in Nigeria 369
DARREN KEW AND CHRIS M. A. KWAJA

23. The Political Struggles of Nigerian Labor 387
JON KRAUS

24. In the Trenches with Fela: Reassessing Protest Political Music Culture before the Fourth Republic 406
GARHE OSIEBE

25. Nigeria's Non-Western Democracy: A Postcolonial Aspiration and Struggle with Opportunity, Conflict, and Transformation 425
RITA KIKI EDOZIE

26. Women's Contemporary Struggles for Rights and Representation 441
CHERYL O'BRIEN

27. Human Rights Status in Nigeria Since Obasanjo's Second Coming 457
IDAYAT HASSAN

28. Revenue and Representation: The Political Economy of Public Participation 473
OLIVER OWEN

PART IV: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS: POLICIES AND PEOPLES

29. Fiscal Policy during Boom and Bust 491
KINGSLEY MOGHALU AND NONSO OBIKILI

30. Nigeria's Petroleum Booms: A Changing Political Economy 502
PETER M. LEWIS

31. The "Resource Curse" and the Constraints on Reforming Nigeria's Oil Sector 520
ZAINAB USMAN

32. Nigeria's Response to the HIV Epidemic 545
Olusoji Adeyi, Oluwole Odutolu, John Idoko, and Phyllis Kanki

PART V: IDENTITY AND INSECURITY

33. Islamic Social Movements and Political Unrest in Nigerian History 567
Abimbola O. Adesoji

34. The Origins of Boko Haram 583
Kyari Mohammed

35. Boko Haram: Indigeneity, Internationalism, and Insurgency 605
Virginia Comolli

36. The Nigerian Civil War and the Biafran Secessionist Revival 620
Obi Nwakanma

37. The Rise and Decline (and Rise) of the Niger Delta Rebellion 636
Omolade Adunbi

38. Crime, Cults, and Informal Security 652
'Kemi Okenyodo

39. Land, Citizenship, and the Laws of Disenfranchisement 664
Victor Adefemi Isumonah

40. Pastoralism, Ethnicity, and Subnational Conflict Resolution in the Middle Belt 679
Laura Thaut Vinson

PART VI: NIGERIA IN THE WORLD

41. Nigeria and the World: War, Nationalism, and Politics, 1914–60 699
Oliver Coates

42. Nigeria and the Commonwealth: Influence by Accident or Design 714
Elizabeth Donnelly and Daragh Neville

43. Faith, Fame, and Fortune: Varieties of Nigerian Worship in Global Christianity 728
Asonzeh Ukah

44. The Pathology of Dependency: Sino-Nigerian Relations as a Case Study 743
IAN TAYLOR

Index 761

List of Figures

9.1	Nigeria's Broad Vegetative Zones	134
9.2	Agroecological Zones	134
9.3	The Model of Neo-Malthusian Environmentalism	143
9.4	Lake Chad in 2015	159
28.1	Graphic Realities: Nigeria's Oil and Non-oil Revenue Profile Over Time	479
28.2	Internally Generated Revenue by State, as of 2011	481
31.1	Average Daily Oil Production (Millions of Barrels) 2004–15	522
31.2	Oil and Gas, and GDP Growth Rates (1999–2015)	523
31.3	Oil and Gas, and Services' share of GDP (1999–2015)	524
31.4	Oil and Gas Share of Exports and Government Revenue (1999–2015)	526
31.5	State Governments' Revenue (%) in descending order of internal revenue, 2013	527
31.6	Sources of Institutional Constraints	532
31.7	Stakeholder Map of Key Oil-Sector Actors	533
32.1	HIV Prevalence by State in Nigeria, 2012	548
32.2	Costs of ART Provision in the Public and Private Sectors	551
32.3	Overall HIV Infection Rate	552
32.4	Aggregate spending on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, 2010–14	554

List of Tables

11.1	Sources of Federal Government Oil Revenue (%)	198
11.2	Vertical Allocation of Federation Account, 1981–present (%)	198
11.3	Horizontal Allocation of Federation Account, 1980–present (%)	199
11.4	Current Income Tax Rates	201
19.1	Nigerian Elections, 1923–2015	321
21.1	Composition of the House of Representatives, by party, 1999–2015	353
21.2	Composition of Senate, by political party, 1999–2015	353
21.3	Composition of governorship seats, by political party, 1999–2015	354
22.1	Four Generations of Nigerian Civil Society	371
23.1	National General Strikes, Strike Threats, and Fuel Subsidy	389
23.2	Strikes, Strikers, and Days Lost, Select Years	392
23.3	Estimated Nigerian Trade Unions and Membership	399
28.1	Share of Resource Revenues Allocated to States on Derivation Principle	478
38.1	Informal Security Actors and their Locations	654
44.1	Composition of Nigerian Exports to China, 2000–15	751
44.2	Product Types of Medium- or High-skills Manufactured Nigerian Exports to China, 2015	752
44.3	Top Twenty Destinations for Nigerian Exports, 2014 (in U.S.$ billions)	753
44.4	Nigeria's Trade with China (in U.S.$ millions)	754

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INTRODUCTION

A. CARL LEVAN AND PATRICK UKATA

The idea of Nigeria sprang from the imperial imagination. The name "is only an English expression which has been made to comprehend a number of natives covering about 500,000 square miles of territory of the world," wrote the wife of its most famous British administrator (Lugard 1906, p. 7). But construction of the Nigerian nation, its resilience in the face of historical and geographical adversity, and its progress following the unexpected traumas of the post-independent era, are enduring testaments to its people and proof of its promise.

The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics introduces readers to the country's complex culture, rich history, and ever-changing politics. It highlights the tragedies and triumphs than animate national narratives, from the implications of not calling oneself "Nigerian" at all in the restless eastern states to the soaring economic optimism that punctuated the decade after the last military regime's exit in 1999. By identifying many of the classic debates in Nigerian politics, the chapters serve as an authoritative introduction to Africa's most populous country. By placing many of the most established scholars alongside a new generation of voices, the chapters also show the most pressing contemporary research questions in a new light, often demonstrating new techniques and data for addressing them. The purpose of this volume is therefore to offer, in broad strokes and across academic disciplines, a comprehensive analysis of the complexities, diversities, and paradoxes of Nigeria's sociopolitical evolution to readers who are either intimately familiar with the country or entirely new to it. The introduction that follows outlines the intellectual rationales for the volume's five sections, situating a succinct summary of each chapter within a shared thematic organization.

Locating Nigeria in African History

The opening section entitled "Locating Nigeria in African History" situates Nigeria temporally, spatially, and thematically in the study of Africa. Authors from history,

economics, geography, and literature help place Africa's most populous country on the continent, in a globalized world at different points of time, and within their respective fields as they relate to African studies broadly construed. In "From Borno to Sokoto: Meaning and Muslim Identities in northern Nigeria," one of the deans of Nigerian history, Murray Last, reflects on the process of Islamization in northern Nigeria and the resistance to it. We meet the ancient political societies of the region, including the social, economic, and political lives of their peoples. Empires such as Kanem-Bornu meet at the intellectual crossroads of the Igbo who developed "radical" ideas of belonging and acephalous governing. Through Nonso Obikili's chapter on "State Formation in Precolonial Nigeria," different perspectives on state building thus emerge: as an indigenous process as well as one subject to ongoing environmental, demographic, and migratory shifts.

Next, readers are introduced to a globalized Nigeria through expansion and migration on the one hand, and through the slave trade, missionary contact, and colonialism on the other. In "Precolonial Christianity and Missionary Legacies," Shobana Shankar untangles the complexities of religious expansion in a globalizing world, arguing that Christianity expanded in part to challenge authority, and thus not simply in response to proselytization by foreigners. More than merely "handmaidens of colonialism," Christian Nigerians shaped the way missions approached their very mission. The legacy of these transformational traditions manifests itself in novel ways today through millions of Nigerians in the diaspora. Religion shaped Nigeria, and through religion, Nigeria shapes the world in ways that often go unnoticed.

In his chapter on "The Atlantic Trade and its Lasting Impact," Wasiq Khan reviews research on the causes, effects, and character of the transatlantic slave trade. At least 15 percent of all transatlantic slave exports originated in what is today southern Nigeria. This had a "profound, though imperfectly understood, impact on Nigeria's political and economic evolution." Despite decades of research and new materials unearthed after the Second World War, many basic questions about the transatlantic trade and its long-term effects on Africa's development remain subject to debate. For example, recent research offers evidence that the slave trade undermined long-term economic development (Nunn 2008). But at a subnational level, this quickly breaks down in Nigeria, where the regions that suffered from slave extraction today include many of the better off ethnic groups. Other questions similarly continue to animate economic historical analysis. How large was the transatlantic trade? How efficient and productive was slave labor relative to free labor? What impact did the trade have on the Industrial Revolution in England? Why did Africa, as opposed to many other potential source regions, become the New World's primary provider of slave labor?

One type of crime against humanity was soon replaced by another with colonialism's onset. The operational modalities of colonialism are explained and bluntly critiqued in a chapter by Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton. They situate the strategy of "indirect rule," whereby British colonial officers ruled clumsily and—more often than is typically acknowledged—violently. Nigeria has a central place in the broader project of European imperialism, and in the gruesome transatlantic trade that preceded the era

of "high colonialism." Three chapters then explore different but complementary aspects of European imperialism's great undoing: (1) nationalists from Nnamadi Azikiwe in the east, Ahmadu Bello in the north, and Obafemi Awolowo in the west, articulated an alternative political and social vision of the future; (2) these great men of the era, often stood on the shoulders of women's mass mobilization but then marginalized women once this future was realized with independence; and (3) an emergent literary tradition decolonized the canon and provided the ingredients for the cultural consciousness of nation building while grappling with the pain of memory and the hardships of transition. Rotimi Ajayi takes on the first task, describing how anticolonialists not only had to push Britain out, they had to generate new attachments to a nation divided by religion, language, and difficult geography. His chapter also analyzes the continental influences of pan-Africanism from Kwame Nkrumah and other great voices of the postcolonial project. Chichi Nwankwor in her chapter argues that women's voices were drowned out in the transition to independence. This contributed to a historical neglect of the role of women's associations and social movements in anticolonial resistance. Such rebellions went beyond well-known outbursts such as the Aba Tax Revolt, and provided a broader mobilizational basis for advancing the nationalist agenda. After achieving political independence from Britain, women were confronted with a difficult new struggle, involving a new ruling class that instrumentalized their oppression in order to maintain power. Women's frustrations as well as the new-found possibilities for the postcolonial generation's future, found expression through fictional constructions. Chinua Achebe and a new generation of creative forces reshaped how the world understood the meaning and legacies of colonialism, and their imaginaries left indelible imprints on the national construction of Nigeria's self-image in the post-independence era. Cajetan Iheka in "The Nigerian Novel in the Anti-Colonial Imagination" argues that Achebe's *Arrow of God* "foregrounds the epistemic violence of the colonial edifice and the patriarchy of the indigenous communities." But it was Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* that rewrote the anticolonial text by linking women's condition to the infrastructure and the scripts of the colonial enterprise.

Finally, Michael Watts, the leading scholar on the political geography of Nigeria, explores the country as a physical place where the environment has shaped its past and is challenging its future. In "Environmental Change in Nigeria: Ecological Stress and Political Structure," he explores the relations among ecology, environmental governance, and political economy. Deforestation offers one compelling example of the political economy of Nigeria's ecological challenges. The chapter then historicizes such environmental problems, showing how an appreciation of the intersectionalities of nature, culture, and politics can help identify critical junctures in a "narrative of secular environmental decline." Setting the stage for the two chapters later in the volume that focus on oil, Watts also explores the heterogeneity of state capability in Nigeria; the rise of the petro-state has impacted governance disastrously but also unevenly. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the oil-producing Niger Delta and Boko Haram in the drought-prone northeast dramatize the complex and calamitous political ecology of contemporary Nigeria. These insurgencies highlight how

access to resources and control over the environment are at the crux of violent politics and governance failures.

Political Institutions

The second section of the book, on political institutions, begins with the First Republic, the government inaugurated at independence. The chapters situate modern Nigeria's political regimes within a broader understanding of postcolonial Africa, explaining the rationales for popular democratic disappointments, causes of the country's numerous coups, the political economy of authoritarianism, and the promise of lasting institutional reform. The successful 1998/9 transition ended a long string of dictators who grappled with structural adjustment, clamped down on political freedom, and seemed to destroy hope for accountable governance and sustainable development. With the historic defeat of an incumbent political party in 2015, has Nigeria finally buried its authoritarian atavisms? Why have the institutions of the Fourth Republic proved resilient, and what have been the popular and elite levers for promoting reforms? How have social transformation and structural shifts in the economy shaped institutional performance?

The contributors offer probing answers to these questions from historical, constitutional, and comparative perspectives, placing Nigeria at the center of a new narrative of African political institutions. Nigeria was a paradigmatic case of military rule that was a defining element of politics in the developing countries between the 1960s and early 1990s, and Eghosa Osaghae's chapter opening the section on political institutions explains how the long arm of dictatorship soon replaced (or exposed) the long shadow of colonialism. Institutional questions were at the heart of these setbacks. "Politically," wrote one of the planners of the 1966 coup that toppled the First Republic, "we believed that our immediate step would be to correct the worst anomaly of the 1957 constitution, by breaking down the country into smaller units or states" (Ademoyega 1981, p. 33). Yet rather than deepening federalism and enhancing state capacity, military rule centralized power and increased state fragility, which provided ostensible grounds for more coups and self-appointed corrective agendas of successive military governments. The partisan character of coups and governments, as well as the narrow political ambitions of military rulers, inhibited any potential developmental or nation-building benefits of dictatorship. As detailed by Olufunbi Elemo's chapter, lasting effects of Nigeria's two long stretches of authoritarianism—from 1966 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1999—include an impulse to create new subnational units in response to demands for representation, and an infrastructure for patronage facilitated by the fiscal federalism of oil rents.

Olufemi Vaughn's chapter analyzes the stubborn question of Islam in Nigeria's numerous constitutional reform exercises since independence. The Fourth Republic has faced an especially stark challenge to constitutional compromises for secular political authority after twelve northern state legislatures passed sharia law only months after the 1999 transition. "Northern Muslim political leaders effectively mobilized the masses of

local people under the political-religious platform of expanded sharia that defined the essence of the Northern Ummah," referring to the community of believers. In effect, support for sharia helped fill the vacuum left by neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s. "A new generation of Northern Muslim elite thus provided an alternative vision for the governance of emirate society."

Joseph Olayinka Fashagba's chapter dissects legislative politics in the First (1960–6) and Second (1979–83) Republics, the two attempts at democracy that preceded each of these long stretches of dictatorship. The "euphoria" that accompanied independence gave way to elite rivalry and interethnic tensions that a weak party system was unable to manage or moderate. A constitutional reform process from 1976 and 1979 placed hopes in a switch from a parliamentary system with a figurehead president to a model emulating American presidentialism and federalism. "The main argument of the Constitution Drafting Committee against ceremonial presidency and in favour of executive presidency was that the former involved division between real authority and formal authority," writes Ojo, "while the latter concentrated all the powers in one person thereby making for effective government" (Ojo 1987, p. 153). Barely four years later, that institutional experiment also collapsed. Since both models of executive selection failed, Fashagba hints at the limits of institutional analysis for understanding the contentious politics that led to Nigeria's deep democratic failures. Rotimi Suberu's chapter also focuses on legislative politics, and in shifting our attention to the National Assembly since the 1999 transition, he highlights an ongoing paradox of institutional performance: in contrast to the assemblies analyzed by Fashagba, the National Assembly in the Fourth Republic has amended the constitution, passed significant electoral reforms, reined in the executive, and mediated interethnic tensions. However, the Assembly has also been a hothouse for corruption and waste, with its members neglecting oversight, representation, and constituency engagement. Drawing upon the "prebendal" model of politics popularized by Richard Joseph (1987), Suberu concludes that "the pervasive and entrenched nature of prebendal structures are likely to make legislative ambivalence a long-term feature of Nigerian governance and politics."

In "Executive Dominance and Hyper-Presidentialism," Yahaya Baba considers the nature of executive power across Nigeria's three democratic regimes, pinpointing the roots of modern presidential excesses in the "command system" of military governments. Such models seemed helpful for promoting national integration and economic development, but the "subordination" of the legislature and the judiciary, often through informal mechanisms, has profoundly undermined democracy. Next, Max Siollun specifies how civil–military relations continue to suffer in post-transition Nigeria, with grave consequences for human rights, rule of law, and effective military action in the face of threats such as Boko Haram and corruption prosecutions.

Daniel Jordan Smith, author of the classic work, *A Culture of Corruption* (Smith 2007), assesses the record of such prosecutions. In particular, he analyzes the causes of "progress and setbacks in anticorruption efforts," focusing on the period since 1999. President Olusegun Obasanjo, who served two terms until 2007, seemed to break from historical patterns of ineffective or even "disingenuous" efforts by the government to fight

corruption. Nuhu Ribadu, the chairman of the newly formed Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) came to symbolize these renewed hopes, but a detailed analysis of institutional performance then exposes the deep disappointments. Patrick Ukata's chapter entitled "The Judiciary in Nigeria Since 1999" similarly examines how the Nigerian judiciary has increasingly been called upon to play a more critical role in interpreting the constitution, ensuring the enforcement of the rule of law, and the protection of civil liberties since 1999. Ukata contends that, even while confronting "serious problems of its own, including corruption amongst some of its judges," the judiciary has remarkably been able to play an important role in resolving a number of significant disputes having to do with federalism in Nigeria's unfolding democratic experience.

Three remaining chapters in the section explore the origins and assess the performance of elections and parties as core democratic institutions. Many British colonies had less experience with elections compared to French colonies (Widner 1994), and Nwachukwu Orji traces Nigeria's flawed electoral record to its colonial history. His analysis of elections leads him to the conclusion that most electoral processes in Nigeria have been unstable, a problem he attributes as being largely due to "the nature of the issues involved, the amount of power at stake, links between electoral struggle and communal tensions, lack of trust in election management bodies, and failure of law enforcement and impunity for electoral offences." He also outlines various electoral reform efforts over time. Carl LeVan and Abiodun Ajijola also examine electoral reform, but concentrate their attention on the Electoral Act passed in 2010. If the 2011 presidential contest set a new standard for electoral integrity (relative to previous experiences and certainly in comparison to the disaster of 2007), it also set the stage for the 2015 defeat of the ruling party. LeVan and Ajijola ask *why* important reforms pertaining to party primaries, transparency of results, and autonomy of electoral administration passed. They point to a coalition for democratic reform that emerged during presidential leadership crises in 2006 and 2010, which linked liberals in the National Assembly with emergent civil society voices for electoral accountability. These reforms set the stage for the defeat of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 2015. Furthermore, a chapter on the history of the PDP concludes the section on political institutions. Adigun Agbaje, Adeolu Akande, and Jide Ojo trace the PDP from its origins at the dawn of the transition in 1998 to its unprecedented status as opposition party in 2015. They argue that when the decline in the party's vision, structure, coherence, performance, and reputation aligned with the consolidation of opposition parties under the banner of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the PDP met its match. Rigging democratic institutions for undemocratic rule means planting the seeds of your own electoral destruction.

Civil Society

The third set of chapters in the volume on civil society are premised on empirical particularities and theoretical richness. For example, Nigerians exercise some of the

highest rates of religious participation on the continent, alongside intense attachment to ethnicities. What is the best way to understand these varied sources of community? Nigeria's voluntary associations have alternately driven democratic reform or collaborated in authoritarian penetrations of civic life. Civil society organizations have slipped into militancy, just as "hometown associations" have militantly avoided political life and devoted themselves to local development (LeVan 2011). Market associations generate powerful repertoires of belonging and, according to a classic study of the First Republic, contributed to social mobilization ever since at least the decades of decolonization. And just as the volume's early chapters include literature in Nigeria's historical and intellectual place, music as a cultural force for politicization, passion, and protest cannot be denied.

Darren Kew, the author of a massive new study of civil society (Kew 2016), and Chris Kwaja, provide us with a framework for grappling with this expansive view of civil society by organizing a modern history around several themes. First, grassroots associations experienced an awakening, politicization, and the expansion of transnational linkages during the years of dictatorship and structural adjustment. Many prodemocracy groups had to "retool" after the transition to democracy, and some of the leading human rights organizations disappeared entirely even though state violence continued unabated. A second theme considers new forms of participation, such as social media, and revitalized interest in issues such as women's rights and electoral reform. Cultural bonds transcending urban/rural, formal/informal, and state/society constitute a third theme. "These varieties of associational life generate intricate practices of belonging and participation that often defy conventional conceptual understandings of a civil society autonomous from the state," conclude Kew and Kwaja. More importantly, civil society remains susceptible to "predatory political elites" without improvements on internal democracy and more independent funding.

In his chapter analyzing Nigeria's "labor regimes," Jon Kraus captures how unions faced this dilemma between political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency. The government and the private sector alike faced nearly continuous challenges from trade unions starting in the late 1970s, as he documents with new data on general strikes and strike threats. Meanwhile, the military regimes faced their own set of dilemmas. For example the labor regime implemented by the Obasanjo government in 1978 unintentionally expanded union membership and capabilities. Union agitation typically enjoys popular support, as evidenced by widespread participation in strikes against the removal of fuel subsidies during the Fourth Republic. Kraus concludes that despite market liberalization and the repeal of statist laws supporting labor, "unions retain significant leverage." Music has generated powerful and uncompromising cultural tropes for workers, students, and human rights activists in Nigeria's civil society struggles. Fela Anikulapo Kuti referred to soldiers as "zombies," sang about foreign corporate corruption in "I.T.T.," and refused the cease and desist even after the military raided his home and threw his mother out a window. But Garhe Osiebe in his chapter shows how Fela's legend obscures equally important musical outlets for protest between independence and the inauguration of the Fourth Republic. In addition to Fela's well-known

Afrobeat, reggae and Highlife should be included on Nigeria's playlist of political resistance. Musicians took dilemmas of political participation by the horns, disregarding any expectations of compromise or concession to state power.

Rita Kiki Edozie pivots from her earlier work on the role of civil society agitation in Nigeria's democratization (Edozie 2002) to challenge and provoke Western notions of democracy in the comparative politics of democratization. In particular, she identifies three distinct "non-Western" democratic features which she argues have helped Nigeria to deal with some of its sociopolitical and sociocultural challenges. These mechanisms are, namely, the rotation of eligibility for the presidency, quotas implemented through the "federal character" principle, and electoral law requiring the winner of the presidential election to obtain a geographical distribution of support. She concedes that even these democratic mechanisms have not prevented Nigeria from having to deal with "sustained conflict, violence, and division." We also would probe her on the extent to which Nigeria's democratic model (or any other country's) is truly non-Western, given the robust experimentation around the world in the institutional features she studies.

Cheryl O'Brien, in her chapter entitled "Women's Contemporary Struggles for Rights and Representation," suggests that, contrary to the popular expectation "that democratic transitions lead to improvements in women's rights based on citizens' access to democratic policy processes, meaningful policy changes to improve Nigerian women's daily lives and representation have not been forthcoming or adequate." She attributes this lack of significant improvement in women's rights to an unfavorable interpretation of Nigeria's "federal principle" which has enabled ethno-religious claims to trump gender and women's rights claims "despite a new constitution that prohibits discrimination based on sex."

After several decades of excessive human rights abuses by successive military regimes, the transition to democracy in 1999 brought with it a renewed optimism and expectation that Nigerians were going to witness a restoration and protection of human rights. However, in "Human Rights in Nigeria since Obasanjo's Second Coming," Idayat Hassan argues that, regrettably, human rights violations remain very prevalent, particularly among the security agencies. According to Hassan, what is even more worrisome is the fact that "the justice sector has not effectively addressed the issue largely due to disregard of lawful processes and orders by the Nigerian state and its machinery."

Economic and Social Sectors: Policies and Peoples

Few countries characterize the pitfalls of plenty as well as Nigeria. From the oil boom in the 1970s that ushered in a currency collapse and exploded its infrastructure of corruption, to the mountains of debt accumulated in the 1980s and again in the 2010s, Nigeria

seems to exemplify economic challenges such as "Dutch disease" and the "resource curse." Its attempts to avoid the hazards of a monocultural economy through planning commissions, currency controls, and import substitution are also typical of postcolonial models of state-led development. At a conference in 2017, former President Obasanjo commented that independence-era leaders often prioritized development over the politics of unity (Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation 2017). This had grave consequences for political stability and inclusive, sustainable development. The chapters in this section introduce readers to broad economic and social trends, with a view of the policymaking process as well as grassroots efforts that compensate for governance failures or, increasingly, attempt to shape government strategies. This includes an integrated study of oil's role in macroeconomic and fiscal performance alongside its complex relationship with human capital investment.

Oliver Owen's closing chapter on "Revenue and Representation," argues that taxes and revenue are important not only for identifying incentives for predation or opportunities for economic development, they also inform the way ordinary people understand governance. He traces revenue and representation from colonialism, through agricultural boom and bust, and to the modern petrostate that prefaced the emergence of the Fourth Republic. As federal, state, and local governments search for new sources of revenue to insure against oil price shocks, they end up "provoking new negotiations of the social contracts between government and citizens." The chapter offers an implicit transition from the previous section, because he effectively provides an analysis of the structural conditions influencing the call to collective organizing.

Next, in "Fiscal Policy during Boom and Bust," Kingsley Moghalu, former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and his co-author Nonso Obikili, examine fiscal policy since independence. They document the rise of oil as a revenue source, the consequences of price fluctuations, and the limited success of fiscal strategies designed to mitigate the risks of such shocks. To avoid future fiscal crises, they recommend a price rule that limits the effects of volatility, and more systematic efforts to diversify the sources of government revenue in order to increase resilience against economic downturns. Oil helped grow the Nigerian economy to the largest in Africa in 2014. *The Economist* magazine noted that a statistical recalibration added 89 percent to its GDP, exceeding South Africa's net worth. The editorial added that "the GDP revision is not mere trickery" though since key economic growth sectors had been undervalued ("Africa's New Number One" 2014). To be sure, a new generation of entrepreneurs now command indigenous capital and market to a large middle class. But reinforcing the hazards of cyclical growth that Moghalu and Obikili caution against, Nigeria had already lost its standing as the biggest economy by 2016.

Two chapters focus on oil specifically. Turning from fiscal policy to political economy, Peter Lewis explains how oil has distorted policy, reinforcing faith in elaborate government planning commissions, and amplifying unreasonable popular expectations. Top-down investment often enables spectacular corruption in a country rife with poverty. For example, a widely circulated government study found that poverty actually increased during the peak years of the oil boom under Presidents Umaru Yar'Adua and

Goodluck Jonathan (National Bureau of Statistics 2012). Other obstacles include high business start-up costs due to irregular power supply, poor infrastructure, and stiff competition from foreign imports. Recent government bans on imports have stimulated a flourishing black market for certain popular commodities; textile industries once thriving in the north's commercial hub of Kano lie dormant today. Zainab Usman's chapter then examines the "resource curse" thesis with a critical eye, suggesting that it leads to "commodity determinism." The task for the oil sector since 1999, she claims, is viewing it with a holistic political economy approach that identifies underlying bottlenecks to sectoral reform. According to her, a "political settlements" framework shows how horizontal-elite, vertical-societal, and external constraints on ruling elites generate suboptimal policy choices for the oil industry in Nigeria.

The intersection of domestic innovation and constructive donor engagement has helped make possible progress in key sectors, including health, education, and telecommunications. Olusoji Adeyi, Ayodeji Odutolu, and Phyllis Kanki show how donors, policymakers, civil society, and health professionals worked together to arrest the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Nigeria and to intercept Ebola before it spread. According to them, further "progress in Nigeria's response to HIV/AIDS requires improvements in the effective coverage of services along the spectrum of prevention, treatment, care, and support for those infected."

Identity and Insecurity

The next series of chapters, focusing on "identity and insecurity," explore the polity's major fault lines as well as the institutional and social sources of conflict resolution. These are issues of pressing importance and likely to challenge Nigeria well in to the future. The southeast gave rise to one of Africa's bloodiest wars of secession in 1967, and today the northeast is home to one of the most violent terrorist groups in the world: Boko Haram. The nationalist Obafemi Awolowo famously described Nigeria as a "mere geographical expression" (Awolowo 1966). So what makes such a fragile colonial construction continue to cohere, especially in the face of such violent and persistent agitation? The authors historicize this question, placing contemporary unrest and extremism in its historical, social, and global contexts. Chapters examine the origins of armed rebellion in the oil-producing Niger Delta, the violent extremism of Boko Haram, recurring tensions in the "Middle Belt" states linked to migration and discriminatory land laws, and farmer–pastoralist tensions, which are traced to environmental stress and struggling agrarian lifestyles. Migration today includes both ongoing urban–rural shifts alongside significant displacement from communal conflict, natural disasters, and terrorism. By mid-2017, the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe had at least 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons, according to the International Organization for Migration while 8.5 million people there urgently required humanitarian assistance, according to the United Nations (U.S. Agency for International Development 2017). The

analyses highlight the complex causes of conflict alongside avenues to potentially enduring resolutions.

Abimbola Adesoji kicks off three chapters focusing on northern Nigeria with his analysis of the origin, ideas, and impacts of different Islamic movements. Drawing upon the social movements literature, he contrasts those with local roots and those with deep global connections. Doctrinal teachings, cross-border movement, and desire for external religious affiliations have all influenced the growth and impact of these Islamic movements. He argues that the social and political space available to earlier movements shapes the likelihood of latter movements drifting toward extremism. The legacies of unrest and fundamentalism are inescapable. Boko Haram could easily fit this description, but Kyari Mohammed cautions against oversimplifying its origins and its path to terrorism. In his chapter, he states there is no question that it has "metamorphosed from a local insurgency to a highly sophisticated fighting force capable of challenging the Nigerian military." Boko Haram was responsible for at least 16,488 lives lost between May 2011 and September 2017 (at least another 7,151 deaths during the same period can be attributed to government security forces) attracting the world's attention (Council on Foreign Relations 2017). Despite this attention though, Mohammed explains how Boko Haram's local dynamics, unorthodox beliefs, and resilience are not well understood. Starting from its beginnings in 2002, he shows how Boko Haram has adapted its tactics and strategies in the face of a hostile local community, a brutal Nigerian military, and regional allies determined to defeat terrorism. Virginia Comolli, author of one of the first book-length studies of Boko Haram (Comolli 2015), elaborates on this intersection of indigeneity and internationalism. As the insurgency escalated under the Yar'Adua and Jonathan administrations, the government often sought to portray Boko Haram as the product of global jihadism or driven by unholy alliance with al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). However, Comolli shows that "opportunism and the pursuit of its domestic agenda had been at the core of Boko Haram's interaction with AQIM first and the pledge of allegiance to ISIS later."

In "The Nigerian Civil War and the Biafran Secessionist Revival," Obi Nwakanma writes that the way in which the civil war was fought, and the "manner by which it was concluded merely papered over the profound fissures of the nation, and left unresolved the issues that led to war in the first place, which continue to haunt Nigeria as a postcolonial nation." He further argues that the origins of the new Biafran revivalist movement can be traced back to many of these unresolved issues. Whereas Zainab Usman's earlier chapter describes the political economy of oil, the next chapter by Omolade Adunbi gives us a highly original ethnography of rebellion in the Niger Delta, the oil-producing region that generates up to 95 percent of the country's export earnings. Adunbi argues that multinational corporations collaborate with the state to centralize control over oil resources, generating claims that clash with local community histories and mythologies. In response to marginalization and environmental devastation in the oil-producing communities, Niger Deltans adapt and assert communal control of land and resources. The first defining moment of political claim-making came with an uprising led by Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro in the 1960s, shortly after oil exports took off. The political organizing

by Ken Saro-Wiwa on behalf of the Ogoni people, whose hanging by Sani Abacha's junta in 1995 horrified the world, marked a second moment. The third moment is under way, with armed insurgency and community invocation of an iconic past. These political moments arose in practices that privilege the state and multinational corporations over local communities. Building on his earlier research on insurgency (Adunbi 2015), Adunbi says this privileging aids a form of political claim-making that is embedded in notions of ownership centered on communal landholding and ancestral promise of wealth. The rise of newer rebel groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers highlights the weaknesses of a government amnesty program and various other top-down efforts that ignore these deeply embedded communal narratives.

'Kemi Okenyodo's chapter looks at the evolution of informal security actors, their scope of operations, and how they are changing the face of security architecture. With the rise of Boko Haram, criminal organizations hybridizing with some Niger Delta rebels, and other security challenges, she points to an expanding space of operations, largely in response to the ineffectiveness of—and deep mistrust in—the police and the military. Donors and state actors often underestimate the subtle cultural roots that legitimate "vigilantes" and collective community responses to insecurity. Yet the formal and informal security actors often develop a syncretic relationship. Security sector reform, the creation of state police, and several other possibilities are explored as potential avenues for reform and harmonization.

Victor Adefemi Isumonah's chapter, "Land, Citizenship, and the Laws of Disenfranchisement," explores how the concept of indigeneity amplifies the status of culture in citizenship determination. As a result, cultural nationalism retains independence and supremacy over political economy in determining citizenship. Citizenship is, on the one hand, cast as ethnic justice based on the equation of individual rights with group rights, and as a social justice claim in a distributive system in which the individual is the principal unit. The power of culture in citizenship determination finds expression in partial and inclusive concepts of indigeneity: the partial concept disenfranchises on a small scale in local and smaller constituencies, while the inclusive concept disenfranchises on a bigger scale by denying several groups access to presidential office, effectively watering down Nigeria's constitutional status as a republic.

Perhaps in no region of the country has indigeneity caused as many problems as in the Middle Belt, the subject of Laura Thaut Vinson's chapter. She explores how clashes between pastoralists and farmers, ethnic violence that sometimes overlaps with religious affiliations, and communal tensions create a complex cocktail of intergroup relations in these pluralistic states bordering the north. As explained in her groundbreaking book on local power-sharing in the region (Vinson 2017), the federal government, states, and local governments and communities have experimented with innovative conflict resolution strategies. However, each tier of government faces barriers to addressing the root causes of conflict. In practice, this means that numerous actors politically benefit from the conflict, or face few incentives for constructive conflict resolution and peacebuilding. She concludes that creating a more peaceful Middle Belt requires careful

attention to patterns of inclusion and exclusion as well as the allocation of rights and resources at both the state and local government levels.

Nigeria in the World

The volume's concluding chapters argue across disciplines for Nigeria's indispensable influence in Africa and its expanding interactions with the wider world. Religious linkages, foreign policy leadership, diasporic nationalism, economic growth, and philosophical adaptation all constitute its global character. Authors examine the complexities of its status in global traditions of Islam and Christianity, as well as its developmental partnership of convenience with Chinese capital. The opening chapter, by Oliver Coates, analyzes the decades following the amalgamation of the north and south in 1914, which entailed the rapid expansion of contacts between Nigerians and a globalizing world. This includes the impact of the global depression of the 1930s on Nigeria, the domestic slump during the two World Wars, and drivers of anticolonial nationalism after 1945. This chapter demonstrates the broader social and political effects of the connections that Nigerians established through overseas travel in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and elsewhere in Africa. These international links provided a vital conduit for new ideas, languages, and relationships that shaped nationalism, economic entrepreneurship, and religious scholarship. Coates shows how a new generation was influenced by African-American intellectuals in the United States, politicized diaspora communities in the United Kingdom, the experience of the hajj, and new-found labor power. Nationalist elites, for example, carefully cultivated alliances with a growing trade union movement, galvanized by a general strike in 1945.

A focus on international organizations highlights Nigeria's critical leadership in peacekeeping and with the African Union, historical leadership against apartheid, as well as its ongoing significance in the British Commonwealth. In their chapter on the subject, Elizabeth Donnelly and Daragh Neville examine the trajectory of Nigeria's engagement with the Commonwealth since independence. They trace how domestic politics, foreign policy priorities, and shifting international politics have shaped Nigeria's influence through the Commonwealth, and how the Commonwealth in turn has influenced Nigeria. Some of the domestic trials had little-noticed, unintentional effects. For example, the Civil War deepened Nigeria's Commonwealth ties. "The huge increase in the size and capabilities of its armed forces, its newly battle-hardened troops and the country's new-found oil wealth meant that the emboldened federal government was well placed to cement its status as agitator-in-chief at the Commonwealth for the political emancipation in southern Africa." Subsequent dictatorships and other challenges at home have prevented it from playing a consistently influential role in the Commonwealth, and it faces increasing competition from other African regional powers. Nevertheless, Nigeria is unquestionably important in the Commonwealth,

especially since its return to civilian rule in 1999, which aligned it with Commonwealth principles.

In his chapter entitled "Faith, Fame, and Fortune: Varieties of Nigerian Worship in Global Christianity," Asonzeh Ukah chronicles the journey of Christianity in Nigeria, including the variety of worship styles and communities, and he concludes that the most socially visible of all the Christian faiths in Nigeria are unarguably the Pentecostal–Charismatic formations. According to Ukah, some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Pentecostal–Charismatic movements include an emphasis "on the power of the Holy Spirit to produce a new, empowered person mandated to live victoriously, vibrant and emotionally charged worship style, new desire to dominate, and the appropriation of scriptural texts to produce miracles and material well-being." He goes on to say that some of these unique features have enabled the Pentecostal churches to "preach prosperity doctrines, exhibit wealth, and also engage in commercial practices that blur the boundary between worship organizations and commercial corporations."

Next, in "The Pathology of Dependency: Sino–Nigeria Relations as a Case Study," Ian Taylor explains Nigeria's relationship with China, arguing that the relationship has been progressively accelerating since 2000, and that this coincides with China's emergence as a global power. According to Taylor, the "structural nature of Nigeria's dependent relations with China is becoming ever more apparent; Nigeria's trade profile with China is characterized by a lopsided dependence on the export of raw materials, and the import of manufactured goods."

In conclusion, the attempt to foster a much deeper understanding of Nigeria's sociopolitical evolution and experience is at the heart of this undertaking. And in this regard, we hope that readers will find the chapters that follow illuminating, stimulating, and provocative in ways that deepen the reader's understanding of Africa's most important country. While we were unable to cover the evolution of donor engagement over the last two decades, industrial innovation in the north, and the transformation of Nigerian media with the explosion of social media, we hope the reader will forgive us for our sins of omission. That said, we do sincerely hope that readers will enjoy the entire gamut of issues that we have covered in this volume.

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PART I

LOCATING NIGERIA IN AFRICAN HISTORY

CHAPTER 1

FROM BORNO TO SOKOTO

Meaning and Muslim Identities in Northern Nigeria

MURRAY LAST

Introduction

For over two millennia northern Nigeria has been politically, commercially, and intellectually on the outer fringes of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Routes through the Sahara linked Coptic-speaking Egypt, Phoenician Carthage, and the Roman Empire to peoples around Lake Chad and on the great plains to the west and the east of the lake. Once the dromedary (single-humped) camel became available, transport across the desert became easier, with more goods to sell and more provisions to enable travel from oasis to oasis. By the eleventh century the language of trade and literature had become Arabic, replacing Coptic; the Arabic script used was that from Qairouan, and by *c*.1392 the elegant epistolary style used in a letter from Borno merited inclusion in an Egyptian textbook on fine letter-writing. Muslims were Sunni (though possibly some Shi'a refugees came from Egypt to Kanem) and the Islamic law used came from the Maliki school. There may have been other external links into Borno—from the Judeo–Himyaritic regime in Yemen perhaps—and other new styles in matters such as water taxation or brick-making, which suggest routes in from the Nile Valley. Ibadi influence from central/southern Algeria affected both trade and, it seems, the architecture of the new minarets being built in the course of Islamization.

Trading Links

It was not until the mid-sixteenth century that the first few Europeans came to northern Nigeria, as merchants and missionaries, mainly to Kano from such cities as Ragusa (then under Venetian/Ottoman rule). But the occasional English coin got through, as had a

few Roman coins much earlier (one assumes). By the 1560s newly Protestant England was turning to Morocco and the Ottomans for allies in its conflict with Catholic Spain, so rare news of sub-Saharan events is referenced in contemporary plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe, for example. And European traders in Benin City far to the south of northern Nigeria heard news of a ruler near Lake Chad (Mandara), which suggests that northern Nigerian polities had some commercial links toward the Atlantic coast.

Whether any Nigerian travelers went, in very early times, north to Tripoli and Cairo or beyond, let alone returned to Nigeria after time abroad, we do not know. We do know that Muslim students had their own special quarters in Cairo (set up by the Mai of Borno; some northern Nigerian scholars stayed to teach in Cairo), but other northern Nigerians will have traveled north across the desert as caravan men, as traders on their own account, or as slaves (and some as eunuchs). Over the centuries, the numbers of slaves who set off northwards were huge, but how many of these died en route we do not know. Many captives were also sent south to the Atlantic coast, but Muslim rulers tended to prefer to send their prisoners to other Muslims and not southwards for eventual sale to Christians.

Politically, the dominant suzerain for the period 1500 to 1800 was the Mai (ruler) of Borno, with his capital at Birni Ngazargamu. Having moved from Kanem east of Lake Chad in *c.*1392, he and his successors had to overcome the existing So (or Sa'o, Sago) trading and political network which had already developed outposts in Zaria and beyond toward the Benue Valley. The Mai's sixteenth-century wars were recorded in Arabic prose, celebrating his campaigns in some detail. The Mai was given the title of caliph by the Ottoman authorities *c.*1500, so we need to speak of the "Borno Caliphate" rather than the Borno Empire (or, even worse, "Kanem–Borno," a neologism used mainly by modern foreign analysts). What lured so many merchants to Borno were the ample supplies of gold (brought in from areas such as Kwangoma), but other high-value goods were available, including mercury (for gold processing) and excellent skins tough enough and light enough to make prized shields. And there were people to export—Borno was skilled in castrating young boys and ensuring they recovered. Later on, Borno scholars and their students specialized in calligraphy, exporting fine copies of the Holy Koran to North Africa and beyond: the copies were not only beautiful but notably accurate—and inexpensive to buy.

The Hausa-speaking trading cities of the Sahel plains west of Borno were effectively "ports" for the caravan trade across the Saharan sand "sea" ("Sahel" in Arabic means "shore"): they recognized the caliph in Borno as the senior authority in the land, sending annual payments as a courtesy, thus recognizing his suzerainty. But as political regimes they were autonomous, selecting their own kings or emirs, and liable to fight each other over territory. The leading polities were Kano, Daura, and Katsina, Gobir, Zamfara, and Kebbi; each had fortified cities with long 30-foot high walls made of clay and fortified gates and, within, a fortified palace, defended by a large staff of loyal slaves who served (and still serve today) as the ruler's personal bodyguard. Armies were raised ad hoc, with senior officials and territorial lords bringing in their men when summoned to the common encampment outside the city. Campaigns might not last long, as every man

carried his own food supplies for the campaign. The elite were on horseback, with both men and horses armored against poisoned arrows; the rank-and-file walked, often starting very early in the cool of the morning. Horses were in short supply: the fastest ones came from Borno but horses could not be used in woodland or on rocky ground (where ponies were the mount of choice); and camels were problematic as mounts in mixed armies. Rarely were any guns used: lances and spears, bows, sticks, and axes were the weapons of choice. Autumn and spring were the best seasons for campaigning, disrupting the enemy's farms and food supplies. Flooding or deep rivers inhibited rainy season campaigns—there were no bridges.

Trading to and from these Hausa cities was a trade network that rivaled that of Borno and was based in the great Mali and Songhai states to the west. This network, the Wangara (or Wangarawa, elsewhere known as Dyula), was partly river-borne, using the River Niger as the great highway as far south as the Yoruba-speaking lands of southern Nigeria. In Hausaland it was based initially in Katsina, from where it spread its influence over most of northern Nigeria, not least with its control over the luxury kola trade from Gonja and Ashanti. Though merchants, they were also Islamic scholars in the classical Islamic tradition, so were both deeply involved in education and engaged as advisors by the Muslim rulers of the Hausa states, thus rivaling the political influence of Borno (its scholars nonetheless still monopolized advanced Koranic studies). The peak period for the political role of Muslim scholar-merchants seems to have been the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By the seventeenth century, coups took place with military men taking power in several Hausa states (and in Timbuktu a Moroccan force seized power). The shift in the eighteenth century to military values over scholarly ones saw a rise in campaigns and interstate warfare, with captives being taken for export to the Atlantic and to the Mediterranean. Sufism, possibly aided by the newly introduced availability of tobacco, became widely popular amongst young and old, with a major brotherhood such as the Qadiriiya being introduced to bring order (and to train shaikhs) to the experience of Sufism. A certain radicalism developed among young Muslims, while conversion to Islam (and wearing a turban) in itself offered a degree of security from enslavement.

The Sokoto Caliphate

In this late eighteenth-century somewhat radical milieu, one rural Qadiri shaikh in particular was able to attract followers. 'Uthman dan Fodio came from a very learned Fulani clan of Islamic shaikhs—over thirty of his kinsmen were scholars—with access to a wide range of classical Arabic texts and teachers with a range of expertise. He was primarily a populist preacher, though he was invited to tutor the sons of Gobir's Muslim ruler, but he was not initially interested in jihad. Nonetheless his success alarmed the Gobiri authorities, who sought to negotiate with him. Eventually the Emir of Gobir sent an army against him but it was defeated; after four years of war (1804–8), the

capital of Gobir was captured. Other great Hausa cities were also taken over (their emirs evacuating before a siege started). Even the capital of Borno was captured and its Mai forced to escape eastwards and re-establish a capital closer to Lake Chad. The new radically Muslim polity, which we now call the Sokoto Caliphate, was not an empire but a set of some fifteen to twenty emirates of varying size and wealth under the ultimate leadership of the Caliph at Sokoto. The caliphate as a whole was much the largest polity in precolonial Africa, extending four months' journey west to east and two months' journey north to south. Its territory was far larger than today's northern Nigeria; in the west it extended as far as Dori and Liptako (in Burkina) and in the east far into what is now Cameroon (Rei Buba, Tibati).

The Sokoto Caliphate from the outset was run from two capitals, the western and southern segments were ruled from Gwandu where the emir (*al-Amir*) was in charge, and the eastern and northern segments from Sokoto (where the caliph or *Amir al-mu'minin* was in charge) The eastern segment was the largest and richest, and became the core of northern Nigeria when the British conquered it in 1903 and they ran it with the collaboration of some of the existing caliphal personnel. Before the conquest, the Sokoto Caliphate was administered by a secretariat under the vizier (*Waziri*) and by a group of senior councilors who supervised those few emirates who were not under the vizier. The vizier spent much of his year traveling, visiting the emirates for whom he was responsible, and investing new emirs with the turban and cloak of office. Justice was mainly done by the emirs, their subordinate officials, and village heads; formally appointed judges advised these emirs and officials on the proper sharia law. Only the caliph could sanction the execution of a Muslim.

Some Nigerian historians, as did colonial British writers, regard the caliphate as an "empire" run by "Fulani": the term "Fulani empire" was commonly used before "Sokoto Caliphate" was accepted (*c.*1964) as the correct nomenclature. The assumption was that an "empire" was a political system in which one "race," "nationality," or "tribe" ruled over all others, and excluded all other groups from dominant positions in government. Though in the Sokoto Caliphate all but one of the new emirs were indeed Fulfulde speakers (i.e. "Fulani," but of different clans), they were chosen not on the basis of speaking Fulfulde but on their quality and piety as Muslim scholars: as such, they might be expected to provide good Islamic government. They were not military leaders; scholars traditionally do not fight in battle, though they may lead an army into battle and pray for its victory. The charisma of the shaikh and then of his appointees and successors was such that the opponents of the jihad found it hard to resist the commitment of the Muslim jihadists arrayed, in smaller numbers, against them. For many, the world's end was nigh—even the jihad's leaders thought their rule would last just a century, at the end of which the Mahdi would come. Thus when some British *Nasara* ("Christians") came leading a Hausa army in 1903, for many northern Nigerians it did seem that the process leading to the end of the world had indeed started. Therefore, many thousands headed off east towards Mecca; others stayed behind to look after the elderly and disabled, as well as those kin who simply couldn't travel that far on foot: it was well into the dry season and water en route would be very scarce.

The Sokoto Caliphate had been prosperous, not least because it cut down internal warfare and the wider market in foodstuffs meant famines became rare, at least for its first fifty years. The much-increased labor force—the result of raids capturing people and relocating them as farm labourers on estates—and a bigger market for luxury goods such as cloth, both at home and abroad, expanded the economy. The cowrie currency was supplemented by coins from Europe (especially Maria Theresa thalers), and credit was possible: merchants wrote their names and addresses on the brown paper that wrapped their export goods, so the goods could be returned if found to be imperfect on delivery. A few British and German visitors wrote accounts of what they saw and whom they met in the Sokoto Caliphate; some died there but their journals were preserved. Local historians wrote detailed accounts of the jihad and other events, but the bulk of the writing is on religious themes useful for scholars and students; over 300 manuscript books in Arabic are preserved with a mass of poetry in Fulfulde and Hausa as well as Arabic and the most prolific authors were the Shaikh 'Uthman, his younger brother 'Abdullahi, and 'Uthman's son Muhammad Bello. Consequently it is their perspective on the jihad and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate that is best known. But Muhammad Bello did preserve in one of his books the letters of complaint from the ruler of Borno and his successor, in which they argued that the jihad against Borno was unIslamic.

Though with the loss of its capital at Birni Ngazargamu (*c*.1807) the Borno state re-established itself, in the course of the nineteenth century its political system gradually changed from a caliphate to a state heavily dependent on slave officials, even in the countryside. The old aristocracy suffered a further blow when Rabih, a professional slave trader from the Sudan, captured Borno and in 1894 slaughtered its ruler, known as the Shehu, and many others. Soon after, a French force killed Rabih and Borno was divided between the French and the British. Although a new Shehu was installed in the British part of Borno, it was no longer the center of trade and power it once was. Its scholarship remained excellent and its reputation for Koranic studies drew students from across northern Nigeria, but some of its politicians preferred to stride the wider Nigerian stage as development largely bypassed the region. A new railway line (opened in 1964) and an international airport, however, and recent agrarian development around Lake Chad, were a boost. Above all, Kanuri remained the lingua franca both for Borno and for the wider area, but increasingly Hausa was becoming the everyday language of commerce and upward mobility.

The Colonial Period

Throughout Borno and the Sokoto Caliphate, the British invaders in 1903 were met with some military resistance but intellectual resistance persisted throughout the sixty years of colonial rule. The vast majority of northern Nigerians, especially those in the countryside rarely saw a British official—sometimes not for ten or more years (in one place

near Zaria, not for twenty-four years). The key institution that kept order, raised taxes, and ran services was the "Native Authority," a bureaucracy in each emirate headed by the emir and his court, and supervised by a British "resident" and a "senior district officer." The judicial system was in two parts: modified sharia law was upheld in sharia courts presided over by local qadis (*alkalai*) in cities and smaller towns, with colonial magistrates' courts in cities hearing cases along the lines of British law, presided over by colonial judges. A Native Authority police force (and intelligence branch) ran alongside the colonial police force: in most major cities there was an army barracks with British officers and Hausa-speaking rank-and-file. In an emergency, troops could be moved at relative speed, by a railway line that linked a few key cities (Makurdi, Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Gusau; later Maiduguri). Narrow roads served vehicle transport, but with many unsurfaced roads, transport in the rainy season could be impossible even as late as the 1950s and 1960s. Industries were limited to Kano (textiles, oil mills), Kaduna (textiles), and Jos (tin mines), with major export crops being groundnuts (peanuts) and cotton. By and large, the country in this colonial period was self-sufficient in food, though famines could hit specific areas.

In northern Nigeria, Christian missions were only allowed into areas that had traditionally been "pagan"; mission churches, schools, and hospitals attracted converts and developed a new non-Muslim elite. The notion of a "Middle Belt" then developed in which those living in the non-emirate areas to the south of Hausaland and Borno saw themselves as a distinct political and cultural unit, despite a variety of languages and practices. Many spoke Hausa as a lingua franca, but often resented the dominance of Hausa as a language of administration and of trade: the colonial bureaucrats often appointed Hausa staff to govern on their behalf in the Middle Belt even where local memories of caliphal raids and exploitation remained vivid. Politically, then, the Middle Belt was part of the Northern Region but its very Christianity gave it links to southern Nigeria, with English the lingua franca of the educated. At times, the distrust of the alien northern elite evolved into armed conflict, as with the Tiv in 1960 and 1964 as they fought for autonomy from the Northern Regional Government in Kaduna (but were put down). Much of the Nigerian army had always been recruited from the Middle Belt and Borno, thus ordinary Hausa parents usually disapproved of military careers for their sons, physical violence being seen as deeply crude.

Self-Government

The arrival first of self-government (1956) and then of national independence in 1960 initiated a period of development and investment for the entire Northern Region, with improved roads and new access roads, with wider education at all levels (including universities and medical schools) and health facilities (both as local dispensaries and hospitals). The enthusiasm and self-confidence—as well as pride—among ordinary people was very marked in my experience. The term "Sokoto Caliphate" replaced

colonial notions of a "Fulani Empire," and was seen as the basis for a new state identity that embraced both Muslims and Christians. There was increased conversion from traditional identities and religions, and a sharper sense of a modern, national identity as Nigerians alongside a broader commonality in using Hausa as a language for all. The coup on January 15, 1966 threw all this into confusion: one reaction among northern Nigerians was to become stricter Muslims (as their parents and grandparents had done after 1903); another reaction, especially among students, was relief that politicians had gone. This relief was to be replaced by growing anger over the next three months that it was Igbos in the north who were benefiting from the coup, in markets, in transport vehicle parks, in the potential allocation of jobs and farmland. Tasteless jokes were being made about the murdered premier, some of which were published and widely read. The new military regime was insecure. With much of the army unhappy at what had happened in January, rioting and murdering of Igbos (civilians and military officers) broke out over almost all of northern Nigeria. A desperate exodus of Igbos took place, to be followed by the declaration of Biafran independence on May 30, 1967 and three years of ensuing civil war. The effect of the civil war was to transform the structures of the Nigerian state (by multiplying states), and in northern Nigeria to bring about the eventual end of the Native Administrations and Alkali courts. Local taxation ceased. Traditional rulers were subordinated to bureaucrats as military regimes held onto power both at the center and in their majestic state houses, each with a governor and his motorcade. In effect, the "Sokoto Caliphate" that the colonial British had partially preserved was no more. Modernity and globalization were slowly creating a new world, in which cities grew into huge conurbations, attracting the young from the countryside, where cheap motorbikes replaced the bicycle, tin roofs replaced thatch, round rooms became rectangular, with cement floors. The cities offered better jobs, more entertainment—and freedom from parental control.

Identities

Though the name "Nigeria" dates only to January 8, 1897 (in a letter by Flora Shaw to *The Times*, London), it would be a mistake to assume (as many do) that the nation we know as Nigeria was arbitrarily carved out by colonial Britain. The peoples of the Niger–Benue basin, as Professor Bawuro Barkindo has recently reminded us, have formed an interactive whole for millennia, with exchanges in trade, raids, marriage, vocabularies, and much else in matters of culture. Both individuals and communities over the last two millennia have been mobile, splitting off and changing locations, yet often retaining names and memories of their original site. However, some groups have retained both their site and their names—the oldest I know of are the Ngizim, whose king is mentioned by the Roman Julius Maternus AD *c.*70; people of that name are still there.

Given this complexity, many Nigerians speak more than one language—their own "domestic" tongue and at least one lingua franca, a language they share with neighbors

and visitors. Today, English (with regional variations known as Pidgin) is one such lingua franca but in northern Nigeria the main widely shared languages are Hausa, Kanuri, and Fulfulde. These are the languages that people of smaller groups also speak, for use, say, in markets or with visitors or when away from home. These widely shared languages have regional variations in vocabulary and pronunciation—and "native" speakers, of course, speak them with greater fluency, subtlety, and range of vocabulary than do those using them as a second language. Thus the ethnic labels or identities used in Nigeria often refer to the native or domestic language that a person and his family speak when together; these broad ethnic labels, however, ignore the regional variants that may matter much to locals.

It would be wrong, however, to equate language use with identity: it is but one of several identities an individual may use or be given. Within a very broad label such as "Hausa" are innumerable relatively small identities such as "Agalawa," "Maguzawa," "Katukawa," and "Jalutawa," which refer to historic origins and/or religious practice or even occupational specialty; other identities include Muslim sectarian practice, such as "Salihawa," "Digawa." Even the very label "Hausa," it has been suggested, derives from about the eleventh century and the needs of Islamic trading practice to denote those people (in the specific parts of the West African sahel) whom North African caravan men could legitimately (under Maliki law) buy goods from for sale on the North African market. The term "Hausa" became more generalized and then associated with a specific area by the early seventeenth century with Muslims who should not be enslaved. But the neighbors to the east of these "Hausa" referred to them as *Afnu*. What exactly the peoples labeled "Hausa" or "Afnu" called themselves is not known, but it is probable they identified themselves by names that referred to their immediate locales such as Kanawa or Katsinawa (from the areas known as Kano or Katsina). These two names do not refer to the current *cities* of Kano and Katsina but to zones; both cities had earlier names—Dalla for Kano, Zaye for Katsina. But modern usage now speaks of "Hausa–Fulani" as an ethnic label—first used, I think, by American political scientists in the 1950s to denote in effect a political class within northern Nigeria, it is *not* regularly used by ordinary northern Nigerians who recognize subtler differences; for them, one is either Hausa or Fulani, usually by parentage (*asali; iri*) or other affiliation. In short, identities can often be invented by others, to serve *their* analyses, to reflect their (mis-)understandings.

Changes in Identity

Identities can also, of course, be changed, for political reasons especially. The most notable change in the twentieth century was to relabel some English-speaking Europeans who entered northern Nigeria as soldiers armed with the intention of becoming its rulers. These Europeans were initially identified by their religion—as *Nasara*, or Christians. When these Europeans failed to leave (as some expected) but instead

claimed command of the region, it meant that the existing Muslim caliphate was now under *Christian* overrule, and that was unacceptable to the Muslim elite—an elite who were now expected to collaborate with these Christians in establishing a British polity to be known as "Nigeria." To make the presence of Christian "rulers" more palatable to pious Muslims, the identity of—and the name for—these newcomers was changed to *Turawa*, a Hausa term normally used for traders from the Middle East. The name *Nasara* was dropped from everyday speech; only in the neighboring French-ruled state of Niger did *Nasara* remain the ordinary (and apparently unobjectionable) term for the intrusive Europeans. Quite who decided on the linguistic switch in identity and how the new usage was enforced within northern Nigeria—let alone whether there were penalties for mis-speaking—we do not know (yet). My assumption is that it was quietly agreed between the new Sarkin Musulmi or Sultan at Sokoto *c*.1906 and the senior British occupiers (known as Residents in the Indian imperial manner), and enforced throughout the new "Native Administrations." Only very occasionally have I been addressed as *Nasara*—and it was meant hostilely.

Some labels of identity are indeed hostile or derogatory, yet are used by academics (usually from abroad) who ought to know better. An example is the term *Habe* (sing. *Kado*) for the rulers of the pre-jihadi states of Hausaland. It is a Fulfulde term used by the Fulfulde-speaking leaders of the Sokoto jihad (1804–8); it helped them justify among themselves their waging war on fellow (but Hausa-speaking) Muslims whom they were criticizing for being unjust rulers ignorant of a proper Islam. In Fulfulde it is used for "pagans" (*kuffar*) and for "blacks" (*al-Sudan*, in Arabic; Fulbe did *not* classify themselves as *Sudan*). Though the term is largely out of current use in Fulfulde, foreign academics writing the histories of the Hausa-speaking states adopted the victors' term of abuse for the pre-jihad rulers. There are other derogatory terms used occasionally in northern Nigeria—for example, the one for Igbos is more like an abusive nickname, *Inyamerei*—while other labels have become generic. For example, *ba-Gwari*, (plural: *Gwarawa*) refers generally to a non-Hausa, non-Muslim south of Hausaland, and is only tangentially referring to a people today called the Gbagyi whom the British colonial literature tended to call Gwari. Non-Muslim Hausa-speakers may be called *Maguzawa* rather than *arna*, which is derogatory whereas *Maguzawa* has connotations of pre-Muslim indigeneity.

The changes in identity, therefore, can be hard to specify historically. A major set of new ethnic labels, often with ancient historical allusions, were introduced around the fourteenth century to denote different non-Muslim groups among whom the Muslim traders from Mali and Songhai traded. These labels, of which *Maguzawa* (from *Majus*, a Persian) is the most widely used today, pick up identities from the Middle East such as Byzantine (*Rumawa*), Palestinian (*Jalutawa*), Khazars (*Gazarawa*), Copts (*Kibdawa*), and ancient peoples from what is now southern Saudi (*Adawa; Samodawa*). Different local groups were identified by these names, and some are still used elsewhere in northern Nigeria: for example, Rumawa are now in north-eastern Kaduna State. At the same time, many myths of origin for local rulers spelled out the rulers' descent from a famous Middle Eastern ruler—the most popular being Chosroes (*Kisra*), another is

Nimrod (*Lamarudu*). This ennobling of royal lineages by giving them a smart origin abroad is widespread across West Africa. It seems to be part of an Islamization of historical thinking that made contemporary rulers conveniently quite distinct from "pagan" heroes, magicians, or tyrants. It underlined the huge superiority of the royals over their subjects or citizens—whose only claim to fame was their indigeneity, unless, of course, they too had been reformatted with Middle Eastern names (the meaning of which, in my experience of Maguzawa, they did not fathom).

Group Identities

Indeed it seems that many of the smaller linguistic communities in northern Nigeria, especially those on the Jos Plateau but also perhaps those around Biu Plateau and the Mandara Mountains in Adamawa, are relatively new, that is, dating to the period when slavery was commonplace within northern Nigeria. It seems that runaway slaves set up "maroon"-type settlements and developed over time their own new lingua franca and a new amalgamated culture. These new independent identities had to fight to retain their autonomy as well as their separate identity, with carefully maintained internal differences within the new grouping. By contrast, some once relatively small groups have grown and grown—a notable example being the Tiv, who during the twentieth century have welcomed and absorbed large numbers of immigrants within ever-expanding ways of life. More generally, the popularity, or simply the monetary value, of an ethnic identity can fluctuate quite markedly over time. For example, the number of people identifying themselves as "Hausa" grew hugely in the early 1960s, only to decline in recent decades as "certificates of indigeneity" became the key to accessing local services. It became a disadvantage in some locales to continue to be "Hausa," whereas in the early 1960s an inclusive sense of belonging to the semi-autonomous Northern Region's new society was shown by being "Hausa". Even Christians shed their previous differences by dressing, naming themselves, and speaking like a Hausa. "Hausa-ness" occluded even religious difference.

It is not biological but social "reproduction" that enabled the growth of a particular "tribe," which stands in contrast to the many other groups who have seen their numbers dwindle, some to zero, so that their separate identity has now died out. We sometimes know the names of these "dead" identities, or simply identify them with some of the unusual place names that still survive. Names of hills and rivers are the obvious markers of a distinct identity now long gone from an area. Much of the area we now know as Hausaland has old place names that reflect the languages of the earlier inhabitants. Often their biological descendants may still be in place, but they have changed their social identity: they became Muslims, for example, and over time used the lingua franca at home instead of their grandparents' language. Their kinsmen moved away southwards and kept their culture and their tongue, and remembered their origins. Thus many of the groups now identified with Kaduna State claim an origin much further north.

It is important to recognize that there is a widespread habit of *willingly* moving home. Once a generation of old men and women has died, the young can jointly decide to build a new house, a new farmstead, a new village. It may be an epidemic or some disaster that prompted the initial decision to start again elsewhere, but often not far away. Historically, even emirs and kings have rebuilt their cities on new, "better" sites: some we know abandoned a huge, well-established city under threat of attack and evacuated, with the sense that the "old world" was over, with all their people to found a new emirate. Famous examples are the Emir of Zazzau in December 1808 who abandoned Birnin Zazzau (Zaria) to set up a new state at Abuja; or the Emir of Kano Alwali who decided to start again in the south (but was killed). But abandoned farmsteads (*kufai*), abandoned villages, and even old town sites can be located, with the new identities known. Places can confer an identity, but not for ever. Perhaps the biggest emigration occurred at the start of the twentieth century when thousands decided, with *Nasara* now seemingly in control, that it was time to start again, in Mecca preferably, or somewhere else closer to Mecca than northern Nigeria.

Personal Identities

In the immediately preceding precolonial period, the most traumatic changes of identity came about when communities and/or individuals were taken prisoner, in war or a raid, or merely through kidnapping. In such conflicts, there was no value in killing your prisoner, so "genocide" was rare: prisoners could be easily monetized as slaves. Thus a prisoner—woman or man or child—if not ransomed first, could be quickly sold off to a slave trader who would then sell the prisoner in a slave market. For anyone who was once a slave, however briefly, that identity of having been once a slave remains, even if for decades that person has been free. Many a senior politician or rich merchant had once been a slave but quickly ransomed or set free. For those slaves who were settled in their own hamlets (*rumada*; sing. *rinji)* on large farm estates, there was a new identity: marriage and childrearing happened within the slave community—even today a *rinji* is recognizable and its residents remembered as former slaves (and so not readily married by a free person). But I have known of ex-slaves who preferred to stay where they were rather than return home to their free kin. Certain notably "unclean" tasks such as butchery are done only by men of slave "caste"—thus such men can be very rich, but their slave status remains, if only in gossip or when joking.

It seems to have been the everyday risk of capture that made it wise for parents to have a barber engrave on their young children's faces marks that would identify the groupings from which they came. The identity indicated may be a sub-branch of this or that larger group; or it may be associated with a zone or even an occupation. A kidnapped child might be very hard to track down, and the child could forget exactly where he came from. And such face marks add to the beauty of a face (unless a keloid scar develops). Other body parts can be marked, such as the stomach (especially among Tiv) or the

upper chest (on girls), and these add elegance, but also serve as an indelible identifier for those who love her.

Personal names, of course, can identify an individual, but unlike a face mark they can be changed at will; indeed many young people acquire a set of names, from nicknames to school names to formal Islamic names parents give their children at the naming ceremony. Usually a father's identity is more often cited than the mother's, but hers is usually known, especially if her kinsmen are politically or socially important. Which exact name an individual is known by on certificates or other official records may often originate in the first school he or she entered, in which case a child's last name is often that of the pupil's village or town. But changing one's name is commonplace. Many non-Muslims who converted to Islam had to take up a formal Muslim name but often it is their old, traditional name that persists—those traditional names often reflect the circumstances of the individual's birth: which day he or she was born on, or whether other siblings before him died, or simply his/her nickname among other children in the neighborhood (such as *Sarki* ("king") or *Riski* ("risk-taker"). Sometimes size or skin color is at issue—*Dogo* ("tall," but I have known it given to an exceptionally short man), or *Jatau* ("red"); jokes are common.

In colonial times, the various European officials were also given nicknames, not all of them respectful: so too, various vehicles and trucks were similarly labeled because of some special peculiarity (or failing—such as poor brakes, insufficient power) each make had. Most notable things and landmarks had identities—names as well as nicknames—and these latter may be in the language of the people who "first" occupied the site (that is, very early residents who were non-Hausa speakers). Significant too can be the rationale for a name—for example, the part of the wall where someone was entombed—or a graveyard associated with a notable Muslim scholar. Sometimes such places are sites of great fear, to be avoided even today: the landscape is "social" and not just natural, so that key trees or ponds have their own special identity (and troublesome spirit residents). Crossroads have a danger of their own associated with them—they are good for rubbish that has in it a certain potency and danger; so too the west side of a slaughter-slab or a meat market. Here the underlying idea is that spirits (*iskoki; aljannu*) move daily from east to west across the landscape and they can bring trouble to anyone who lingers in their path. A wise person does not have a window or a door facing east in case spirits come in, and a careful farmer avoids owning fields that might lie on the routes spirits take each day. Obviously one can protect oneself (with Islamic prayers) against such harm, but it is better simply to avoid all such hazards.

Knowing all these "hotspots" is part of one's identity as an indigene, a local who is streetwise. Now with so many migrants coming into the big cities there is developing almost a hierarchy of indigeneity, of alien-ness: for example, were you born within the city? Were you born in one of the suburbs? Though a resident of the town, do you holiday back "home" or send money home? Many areas of a big city are now occupied by professionals who have come from elsewhere—they are not "indigenes" though they are Hausa. The identity markers of indigeneity within a metropolis change over time; behavior matters, but local gangs pick on the cars or other symbols of those they see as

usurpers, especially the wealthy. Much of this is, in my experience, new: more common post-2000 than ever it was in, say, the 1960s. Today, it matters which Friday mosque you choose to attend—there are so many today—and which preacher you go to hear, and which crowd of worshippers you will go on chatting to once the evening prayer is done. In this way you slowly build up your local identity: some worshippers are especially generous (even milling the grain they give out to the poor), other houses put out a line of evening bowls of food for anyone to eat. And some are known for not having a good cook at home and giving out only soiled leftovers. A merchant may have built a mosque as part of his compound, only for cynical neighbors to label it as "Allah, here's your share" (*Allah, ga naka*). Similarly a wife can show she has been to Mecca by having two gold teeth—so she smiles now as never before, in order to show them off (women normally do *not* show their teeth in public). But it is men who can show off their style—by choosing the right gown (*riga*) and the right cap (*hula*): an elegant man can own dozens of gowns and fifty different caps, and he can choose the right oil-based perfume for his gown (male perfumes are not for the body. Nor are women meant to wear perfume, it is traditionally a man's luxury for ensuring he is well regarded in a social setting, a public place). In short, the Hausa public looks out for all the little details that shape a man's identity. An elder must fulfill his role as a *dattijo*, a gentleman—and not talk too loudly, too long, or too often. He must not argue or shout, let alone lose his temper: that's what young men do (and politicians on the make: politicians remain "youths," no matter how old they are). Nor should he roam about, go to market: he should be in his room at home, ready to listen, advise, mediate. It is interesting to watch how a young man *becomes* a proper elder, how a distinguished active man *becomes* a proper emir: those around him comment and criticize, they shape him into the role, the identity he has been allocated by the community. One's character is not necessarily one's own: it is acquired, like one's identity, in the way the community requires. Historically, of course, there have been evil emirs and wicked heads of houses: they have breached the norm and are remembered in histories with evident distaste.

Conclusion

In short, the world of *personal* identity in northern Nigeria is very complex and (up to a point) idiosyncratic today; so, too, are the immediate identities of everything and everyone around one. This world of identities may be personal yet is shaped by the community around each individual. In northern Nigeria the "common sense" of the community remains dominant; individuals are rarely free of it. It is this "common sense" that gives particular strength to identity on a *political* level. Whereas in other parts of Nigeria the individual has more intense responsibility for fulfilling his/her destiny, in the north of Nigeria the historical dimension of identities has a persistent resonance that gives strength to communities *as communities*: conversion out of one's community (of, say, Muslims, or as a Tijani) is deeply problematic for both the individual and his/her kin.

For most northern Nigerians, identities ultimately should not change; they are yours to develop, but not really yours to swap.

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CHAPTER 2

STATE FORMATION IN PRECOLONIAL NIGERIA

NONSO OBIKILI

Introduction

Governance has been shown to be very important for development and the improvement in the quality of life of people. From the organization of security to the provision of public goods, the importance of governance cannot be understated. The question of governance is not one that has only recently become relevant, but one that has been relevant as far back as we know.

The question of governance has often been linked to the idea of state formation and centralization, and historically, the development of empires. States and empires, whatever forms they take, have been instrumental in the story of development around the world. In this chapter I discuss the history of empire and state centralization in modern-day Nigeria, from here on referred to as Nigeria, prior to the onset of colonization by the British Empire. I discuss the varying ways in which states emerge and groups of people interact and organize themselves. The story of state formation in Nigeria has been shaped by a variety of factors from ecological factors to trade, and from access to water to the introduction of military technologies and ideologies. This chapter will explore the various factors that have influenced state formation, using examples from different states.

The history of state formation in Africa is, of course, a difficult one to discuss. As with most discussions of history, the absence of detailed information proves a challenge to describing historic societies and the ways in which they were organized. The scarcity of information does not imply that there were no interesting societies or that there were no debates and challenges to state building. It is, however, important to understand the limitations this scarcity of information places on describing historical states. In this context, it is wise to discuss the topics with a certain nuance, accepting that parts of the story

are probably unknown. Fortunately, pieces of information allow us to build a plausible record or description of societies as they were and how they have evolved over time.

This chapter is structured as follows: the first section, "The Transition to Agriculture and the Nok Culture" explores the history of agriculture in Nigeria and relates that to the earliest state for which we have evidence. The second section, "The Decentralized States," discusses different ideas on what states are, specifically focusing on decentralized states and the state of the South East. The third section entitled "The Centralized State in Precolonial Nigeria" discusses the Hausa states as examples of the transition from decentralized states to city states. The fourth section, "Trade: the Trans-Saharan Trade Routes and the Kanem–Bornu Empire," discusses the role of trade, specifically the trans-Saharan trade routes, and examples of trade-based states. The fifth section, "Horses and Military Warfare: the Rise and Fall of the Oyo Yoruba Kingdom," looks at the introduction of new military technology, specifically horses, and its influence on changing the political dynamics behind states at the time. The sixth section, "Jihad in the Sahel: the Transition from Hausa States to Fulani Empire," explores the story of the Sokoto Caliphate and the confluence of factors which allowed it to expand. The seventh section, "The Kingdom of Benin: the Death of States and the Rise of the Colony," uses the experience of Benin as an example of the end of precolonial states and the transition to a colonial territory of the Biritsh Empire. The eighth section concludes this chapter.

The Transition to Agriculture and the Nok Culture

The history of states, not just in Nigeria but around the world, is often linked to the development of agriculture. In many parts of the world, formal states tended to have emerged where plants and animals were first domesticated and where agriculture had become prevalent. The typical examples are the states that emerged in Mesopotamia and the Indus River Valley. The logic is straightforward, agriculture implies that more surplus food can be produced. Surplus food means that some members of the community can engage in occupations other than agriculture. Places with agriculture and surplus food were therefore more likely to have militaries and artisans and the like, occupations which are associated with state formation. The development of agriculture is also frequently associated with sedentary lifestyles. The need to constantly work on and manage particular strips of land and the storage requirements for crops meant that agriculturalists were more likely to be sedentary. Being sedentary is also frequently associated with state formation. Explaining the history of agriculture in particular places is therefore key to explaining the evolution of states in those areas.

The literature is generally in agreement that Africa was one of the last places to take up farming. However, why that is the case is the source of debate, with some authors arguing that food abundance implied there were fewer incentives to transition to

agriculture and more sedentary societies. There is, however, agreement that the first evidence for domesticated crops in the Sahel were pearl millet, estimated to have been domesticated at least before 1800 BC and sorghum which appears in the record in the first century AD. These crops are thought to have been domesticated in the Sahel region of West Africa.

Archeological records are easier to uncover in the Sahel where artifacts and other evidence can be preserved for long periods of time. Preparation methods for grains also left many artifacts which usually contain traces of grains. Archeologists sometimes use these items, such as clay pots and grinding stones, to get a sense of when these grains were consumed. However, once one moves further south into the tropical region, things become a bit more difficult. In tropical regions, due to ecological conditions, grains are much less likely to have been grown and tubers and fruits are more likely candidates for agriculture. These tubers are more difficult to uncover in archeological records but it is likely that tropical crops, such as yams, were domesticated as well. The same dynamics can be seen in the domestication of animals. Expectedly, domestication patterns change once one moves south from the Sahel into the tropical regions. Regardless of the information problems, the earliest evidence for organized society in Nigeria is associated with a sedentary and agricultural lifestyle. These people are commonly referred to as the Nok culture.

The Nok culture or Nok "civilization" is perhaps the oldest state on record in West Africa. The Nok culture, according to archeologists, appeared in what is today northern Nigeria from around 100 BC and vanished under unknown circumstances around AD 500, with the decline starting around AD 200. The Nok are signified as more than just a random set of hunters and gatherers but appear to have been sedentary. The Nok culture was identified based on various artifacts uncovered in different parts of modern-day Nigeria—items such as clay figurines, iron tools, stone axes, and ornaments have been unearthed and dated back to that period. The discovery of these types of artifacts is important because they imply the Nok were sedentary. Clay pots with evidence of food processing, specifically of pearl millet, point to the sedentary nature of the people. The presence of these artifacts also suggests that the society was relatively sophisticated with wealth and food surpluses allowing for specialization in non-agricultural activities, such as those that would produce the terracotta sculptures associated with the Nok.

Although artifacts from the Nok culture have been discovered over large areas of modern-day Nigeria, there appears to be little evidence that the Nok were ordered into a politically centralized state. Some of the artifacts show such similarity that some authors claim it could be the result of some central authority or some type of centralized production, though others suggest these similarities could also be simply due to common beliefs and practices. Although there may not be enough information to say one way or the other, it may not be far-fetched to categorize the Nok as a decentralized state, with a common language, common cultural practices, and similar technological advancements, but without a central authority. Indeed, such patterns feature regularly in early state formation in modern-day Nigeria.

The Decentralized States

The Nok are perhaps the earliest example of a decentralized state in early Nigeria. They were a collection of people with common practices, norms, and interactions, but seemingly without a strict hierarchical political structure governing all. They are, however, not the only example of a decentralized state. At the beginning of the colonial conquest by the British, large swathes of Nigeria were still occupied by what can only be described as decentralized states. The states are typified by groups in the areas south and east of the rivers Benue and Niger respectively.

The area southeast of the rivers Niger and Benue are partly populated by what could mostly be described as decentralized states. Although there were probably other decentralized states across early Nigeria, this area is well studied perhaps because the decentralized nature remained until the colonial era and still remains in some contexts today. The Igala, Igbo, and Ibibio typify these decentralized states. These were collections of people with similar language, culture, and a relatively high level of complexity, but without formal political centralization.

These stateless societies do not appear to be small either. In some cases, they had populations large enough to rival other centralized societies. The stateless societies are also not to be confused with hunter-gather societies who were also generally stateless. Just like the Nok discussed earlier, these decentralized societies were agriculturally based and not nomadic. They also showed complexities similar to their more centralized neighbors.

These societies also appear to have been around for a long time. There have been discoveries of artifacts dating back hundreds of years and demonstrating that the complex societies go far back. The most popular of these are the Igbo–Ukwu artifacts which were initially accidentally discovered by Isiah Anozie in 1939 while digging a well in his compound, with sites excavated further in 1959 and 1964 by archeologist Thurston Shaw. Over 700 copper, bronze, and iron artifacts were excavated as well as many glass and stone beads. Some of these artifacts were dated back to the ninth century AD. Similar artifacts have been found not only in Igboland but also in the neighboring Ekoi–Ibibio area in the Cross River Valley (Anozie 1993; Ibeanu 1989; Ogundiran 2005)

The archeological findings also demonstrated that trading was probably taking place between various groups in the area and perhaps beyond. Archeometallurgical analysis of the artifacts revealed that the raw materials could have come from deposits near Abakaliki or as far as the Benue Trough.

Decentralized states are not limited to southeastern Nigeria, but are present in other parts of the country, and in other parts of Africa (Osafo-Kwaako and Robinson 2013). In general, it has been established that states in Africa are more likely to not be centralized compared to other continents. The decentralized nature of these states and their seeming long existence leads one to question why these states never became centralized. They also highlight an often-ignored distinction between political centralization and

governance. Indeed, the evidence from these decentralized states shows that governance and cooperation amongst groups can exist without centralized political authority. It is perhaps important to distinguish between the two.

State Centralization in Precolonial Nigeria

The distinction between governance and centralized states is important; however, there were many instances of more classic centralized states. Many authors have written on what seems to be a common feature, not just in early Nigeria, but in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In general, sub-Saharan Africa appeared to develop centralized states later than most of the rest of the world. Although centralized states existed, with quite a few emerging in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many parts were characterized as stateless societies for a long time, at least a lot longer than in most of the rest of the world (Bockstette, Chanda, and Putterman 2002). The question then is why state centralization was delayed in sub-Saharan Africa in general, and in Nigeria in particular.

To answer this puzzle, various authors have proposed different explanations. Some argue that the conditions which promoted state centralization in other parts of the world were absent in Africa. They argue that a set of geographical and ecological factors explains the differences observed in state formation across regions (Diamond 1998). Others argue that relatively low population density and land abundance implied that the cost of state formation were prohibitive (Herbst 2000). This ties into theories that center on the inability of groups to exercise a monopoly of violence, which leads to the relatively lower likelihood of state formation (Bates 2001).

More recently, some authors have tested specific parts of these theories. One such part concerns the impact of the tsetse fly (Alsan 2014). Alsan showed that in Africa, areas with a higher incidence of tsetse flies were less likely to be centralized. The argument goes that tsetse flies increase the mortality of domesticated animals such as cattle and horses, animals which were very useful in different ways for state formation. Places with a larger incidence of tsetse flies were less likely to have cattle and horses and therefore less likely to develop centralized states. This argument is echoed by others who show that ecological diversity promoted states by increasing the potential for trade (Fenske 2014). Ecological diversity implies different areas producing different products, making trade more likely. The increased likelihood of trade increases the probability of building a centralized state.

Finally conditions conducive to certain crop choices may have contributed to centralization. Areas with the capacity to grow grains might have been more likely to have centralized states as grains are typically more useful as a means of taxation, the foundation for most early centralized states. Grains have to be harvested when due, can be easily processed, and can be stored for a relatively long time. On the other hand, tubers,

such as yams, are not as useful as taxation crops. They do not have to be harvested when due and can be left in the soil for a reasonable period of time. Upon harvesting, they cannot be stored for very long and are relatively more difficult to process and transport. All things being equal, one would guess that centralized states are more likely in places with grains as a food source as opposed to tubers. The incentives for expropriation and accumulation of wealth—in this case grains—would have been more feasible where the food could actually be expropriated and accumulated. Increased potential for wealth accumulation is likely to increase the odds of states emerging.

These theories of state formation are not universally accepted, with dissent coming from various viewpoints (McIntosh 2005). The major argument critique is that geographical and ecological factors do not imply the absence of state formation. Instead, it means that state formation looks very different from European and Asian experiences. In this context, the decentralized states can be seen, not as failures of state centralization, but as a different kind of social organization creating different patterns of complexity, a distinction that highlights the difference between governance and state centralization. Regardless, the various theories of state formation do explain some of the different trajectories in state formation and structure within modern-day Nigeria. A good example is the Hausa states.

The Hausa States

The Hausa states perhaps encapsulate the transition from decentralized societies towards centralized states. The Hausa states can be described as a collection of politically independent city states which, that depended on each other. It is not exactly clear when the Hausa states emerged. Some sources say that gradual formation started between the seventh and the nineth centuries AD, citing Arab geographer Ibn Said's description of states between the Niger bend and the Kingdom of Kanem (Hopkins and Levtzion 2000). The Kano Chronicles, a list of the rulers of Kano, one of the Hausa states, dates the first Hausa king to AD 999.

At their peak the Hausa states consisted of seven main city states—Gobir, Rano, Biriam, Daura, Kano, Katsina, and Zaria—although their influence likely extended further. Various sources cite minor states such as Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri, Gwari, Kwararafa, Nupe, and Ilorin, which although they cannot all be described as part of the Hausa states, were probably influenced by them in various ways. The relative importance of the city states were not cast in stone but likely varied over time. Gobir, for instance, is considered one of the first Hausa states to emerge, while Kano emerges as a dominant player in later centuries.

The Hausa states were likely sustained by agriculture. Despite their description as city states, the expansion of Hausaland was seen as a largely rural process. The Hausa states and their rural territories were associated with the clearing of forests for the development of agricultural land. It is documented that as far back as AD 1194, kings in Kano demanded one-eighth of crops as tribute, a practice which was sustained for centuries

(Sutton 1979). Trade and iron smelting were also important parts of industry in the Hausa states, and iron smelting is woven into the history of some of the states. Finally, certain states also became prominent as endpoints for the trans-Saharan trade routes.

The Hausa states were not static throughout their history but evolved as with other West African states. Gobir and Rano were the first states to emerge. In the fifteenth century, the eastern states of Kano and Katsina rose to prominence, along with neighboring states Songhai, Oyo, and Agades. The Hausa states were, however, unable to coalesce into a larger unified state under one central authority. The area would remain a collection of city states until the Fulani Jihad in 1804.

The question of why these city states emerged in the Hausaland and not southeast of the rivers Benue and Niger can perhaps be attributed to crop choices, partly due to ecological reasons. Grains, such as millet and sorghum, could be grown in the Sahel whereas they could not be grown in the tropical areas, except withgreat difficulty. Agriculture and tribute were essential to the function of the states in Hausaland but that would have been less likely further south. Although various other factors probably influenced the emergence of states, all things being equal, centralized states were much more likely to emerge in the Sahel and not in the tropics. This remained the case as long as agriculture remained the major driver of state expansion.

Trade: The Trans-Saharan Trade Routes and the Kanem–Bornu Empire

As discussed earlier, states take on different forms, with their emergence typically attributed to some specific factors. Most of the groups discussed so far have been based mostly on agriculture. The Kanem–Bornu Empire is, however, unique in the sense that it relied largely on trade for its sustenance as a state.

On the southern fringes of the Sahara Desert and northeast of the Niger–Benue confluence lies Lake Chad, a relatively large, shallow freshwater lake which is fed mostly by the Chari River and partially by the Yobe River. Its position as a source of fresh water on the fringes of the rough and dry Sahara Desert positions it as an ideal destination for traders on the trans-Saharan trade route, a trade route linking people in the Niger–Benue confluence and beyond, to the Sudan and Egypt. Given the importance of water, the relatively arid conditions north of the lake and the suitability as a trading point between West Africa and the Sudan and Egypt, it is perhaps not surprising that states emerged here. Some of the challenges to state formation, such as low population density, land abundance, and difficulty of collecting and enforcing tribute across distances, would be somewhat irrelevant. A state would not need to expand and conquer to survive, but would just need to control the water source and extract a toll from traders.

As with most historical subjects, the exact nature of the emergence of the Kanem and Bornu states is subject to debate. The Kanem Empire, just north of Lake Chad, is said to

have arisen around AD 700. However, by AD 1068, Kanem had begun to be influenced by Islam and had begun appearing in Arab texts. One of the more notable references was to the king of Kanem sending a giraffe as a gift to the Hafsid Caliph al-Mustansir in AD 1257 (Khaldūn and Casanova 1968). By the thirteenth century, Kanem's sphere of influence had extended to the area west of Lake Chad, in the Bornu territory and further south. Due to a series of internal conflicts and attacks from neighboring groups, the empire moved its capital from Njimi, which was north of Lake Chad to the Bornu heartland, west of the lake (Smith 1971, p. 179; Lange 1984, p. 234; Barkindo 1985, p. 245–6), merging into what is commonly referred to as the Kanem–Bornu Empire. The empire peaked around the fifteenth century and was sustained by the trans-Saharan trade route, where it effectively levied duties on trade through the route. The access to what was the most important trade route in the region at the time meant it had access to most technology and knowledge throughout the almost 1,000-year period of its existence. It had access to horses and camels, guns and slaves, cloth and gold, and, most importantly, knowledge.

Regardless of its advantages, the empire began a slow decline from the fifteenth century. Although it was still strong enough to withstand the advances of the Sokoto Caliphate to the west, largely thanks to the maneuvering of Muhammed al-Amin al-Kanemi (r. 1809–37). The traditional rule of the Mai, until then the longest-running dynasty, was eventually destroyed in a civil war, with the Mai replaced by a new title of Shehu.

The Kanem–Bornu Empire fits the patterns of a state that emerged and expanded largely due to its ideal location as a bridge between peoples of the Niger–Benue confluence to its west, and the Sudanic and Egyptian empires to the east. It is perhaps not unexpected that its decline roughly coincided with the transition of trade from the trans-Saharan routes to the Atlantic Ocean.

Horses and Military Warfare: The Rise and Fall of the Oyo Yoruba Kingdom

One of the popular theories of state formation stresses the importance of the military and warfare in state formation. The theory can be summarized in the words of Charles Tilly, "the state makes war and war makes the state" (Tilly 2002). As the theory goes, groups always have incentives to dominate other groups for tribute or other benefits. These incentives lead groups to use violence and warfare to achieve their goals. However, groups, knowing these threats of violence and warfare from other groups, also develop their own systems of violence and warfare. Over time, and given the right conditions, groups with superior systems of warfare dominate other groups, collecting tribute or taxes as the benefits of that conquest, and states are formed or expand.

This theory does not apply in all cases, of course. For example, as discussed earlier, the Hausa states, despite centuries of warfare, were not able to coalesce into a single

centralized entity. The decentralized states, which probably had skirmishes of their own, didn't evolve into centralized states until the colonial era. However, military, warfare, and military technology do play a part in some cases. One such case is the story of the Oyo Empire, whose use of horses as a technology contributed to its rise and fall.

The founding of the Oyo Empire is one draped in mythology. As the story goes, the empire was founded by Oranyan or Oranmiyan, who went north from Ife on a punitive expedition against his northern neighbors who had allegedly insulted his father, sometime in the fourteenth century. Horses cannot be said to have been relevant to life in Ife, given that it was situated in the forests which were not suitable for horses. Excavations from Ife do not include any representations of horses (Flight 1973, p. 549). However, it should be noted that Oranmiyan is traditionally associated with horses. In the mythology of the founding of Oyo, Oranmiyan is given a horse, and Sango, one of the sons of Oranmiyan, is also frequently associated with horses. There are disputes regarding the role of horses in the foundation of the Oyo Empire, with some claiming that they were not that crucial. What is not debated, however, is that by the sixteenth century, horses and cavalry had become an important part of Oyo military interactions over its sphere of influence (Johnson 2010, p. ii). The Oyo Empire would eventually become known for the effectiveness of its cavalry. Snelgrave's accounts of the wars between the Oyo and Dahomey in the 1720s, for instance, stress the importance of the Oyo cavalry (Snelgrave 1971).

The history of horses in Nigeria is a complex one. As discussed earlier, large swathes of the country proved unsuitable for livestock in general, including horses, partly due to tsetse flies. However, horses were eventually domesticated in parts of the country. There were two distinct breeds of horses, the first, and earliest, was the small trypano-tolerant pony. This horse was typically about 3 feet tall and not suitable for warfare, although there are records of mounted marsh-dwelling Bedde raiders causing havoc in the Bornu area with these horses. It is not clear when the much larger horses, more suited to warfare, were introduced into Nigeria. Some authors record the use of horses in Kawkaw and in Kanem in the eleventh century, although those might have been the smaller breeds (Law 1976). Regardless of when they were introduced, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, new larger breeds and equestrian techniques were developed. Records have horses being imported into Kanem from the 1340s. It is likely that the introduction of horses and the development of equestrian techniques changed the political dynamics in areas where horses could survive. As horses were important tools for military warfare, the use of cavalry surely played a role in the consolidation of some states.

Oyo was not self-sufficient in horses and had to import most of its horses from the north. This was largely due to the tsetse flies which made horse breeding difficult. Keeping horses alive also proved a bit difficult, with horses rarely surviving for more than two years (Webster and Boahen 1992, p. 92). Still, horses and the cavalry played an important part in the expansion and conquest of the Oyo Empire, particularly in the raiding of slaves which was an important source of wealth for the empire. The maintenance of cavalry, however, placed a serious economic burden on the empire given that they could not adequately breed their own horses.

If the cavalry played an important role in the rise and expansion of the Oyo then it played a role in its eventual demise as well. The empire had been in decline since the 1790s according to some, with a series of internal conflicts creating political frictions within. By 1823 Ilorin, a major town in the northern parts of the empire, was seized by the Fulani and in 1836 the Oyo were effectively defeated by the Fulani and evacuated the capital.

The decline of the empire was accompanied by a decline in the strength of its cavalry. Some say that the revolution in Sokoto, a major source of horses for the Oyo, made the purchase of horses much more difficult. There was even talk of an embargo on the sale of horses to Ilorin (Ajayi 1974) and hostility from other northern markets, which no doubt influenced the capacity of the Oyo to sustain the strength of their cavalry. Internal tensions driven by the large number of slaves from northern groups who previously served as groomsmen for the horses made things even more difficult.

After the fall of the capital, the Oyo attempted to regroup further south. They were not able to regain their past glory, no doubt partly due to the inability to recreate the strength of their cavalry in the dense forest areas where horses typically did not thrive. Although many other factors played a role in the emergence, expansion, and decline of the Oyo Empire, it serves as an important example of how the dynamics of state formation are shaped by warfare and the introduction of new military technology, in this case, horses.

Jihad in the Sahel: The Transition from Hausa States to Fulani Empire

Perhaps the most recent example of state formation in precolonial Nigeria is the formation of the Sokoto Caliphate, an Islamic state whose sphere of influence extended across large parts of northern Nigeria, and survived until colonization by the British. The Sokoto Caliphate has its beginnings in one of the Hausa states, Gobir. The conditions which led to the emergence of the Sokoto Caliphate had all the hallmarks of a revolution. Authors write that there was general dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in many of the Hausa city states. There was excessive taxation on farmers, herdsmen, and other artisans. There was a seemingly non-stop series of dynastic disputes within many of the Hausa states. The Hausa states were particularly known for their oppressive and extortionist policies in order to maintain control, as one would expect in typical monarchical autocratic states.

By the early 1800s an Islamic scholar and ethnic Fulani, Usman dan Fodio, built up a relatively large following, preaching about the problems of the times. However, a new *sarkin* (Hausa word for "king"), Yunfa, who happened to be a former student of dan Fodio, ascended the throne and proceeded to exile dan Fodio. Unfortunately, due to his popularity, a large number of dan Fodio's followers opted to go into exile with him. This action apparently upset Yunfa and led him to declare war on dan Fodio and

his followers. In the ensuing wars, dan Fodio and his followers, although not without casualties, began to take over not just Gobir, but large swathes of Hausaland. Dan Fodio declared a caliphate in Gudu at the beginning of the wars and by 1808 had taken over the majority of Hausa states including Daura, Katsina, Kano, and Gobir (Maishanu and Maishanu 1999). The caliphate continued to expand through the mid-1830s annexing areas to the east up to the fringes of the Kanem–Bornu Empire to the south, including parts of Yoruba land such as Ilorin, north up to the fringes of the Sahara Desert, and west to modern-day Burkina Faso.

In terms of tools for state formation, the Sokoto Caliphate emerged at an ideal time. Horses, one of the most important tools for state formation, were available and were bred in the region. Not coincidentally, the vast majority of areas which the caliphate annexed were places where horses could survive. They had access to more modern firearms, weapons significantly more sophisticated than the traditional bows and arrows. They had access to a great many slaves during a period when the slave trade was relatively lucrative. Finally, in Islam, they had a unifying ideology which could rally disaffected groups in many of the communities. It is difficult to know if the caliphate would have been feasible, in terms of state centralization over such a large area, if these other factors had been available. However, the factors were available and the state emerged. The Sokoto Caliphate remained relatively vibrant until the start of the colonial conquest when, like all empires and states in the region, it was annexed by the British Empire.

The Kingdom of Benin: The Death of States and the Rise of the Colony

As with most other old states in Nigeria, it is not certain when Benin emerged. Oral tradition puts its emergence around AD 1180. The kingdom, then known as Igodomigodo, witnessed many struggles for power and when faced with impending collapse reached out to nearby Ife for guidance. As the story goes, the king of Ife sent his son, Oranmiyan, to restore order and he installed his son, Eweka, as the first Oba of Benin. In the mid-1440s a new Oba, Ewuare, built up a significant army and starting winning land, a pattern that would continue with other Obas until about 1600 when the kingdom reached its peak in terms of geographic spread.

The economic conditions that allowed for the emergence of Benin are also not very certain. Unlike the Oyo Empire, Benin did not have the luxury of horses or other transport animals which could have aided its expansion. Benin is located far south of the Niger–Benue confluence, deep in the rainforests where horses typically do not survive for very long. There is also no evidence that agricultural productivity in the region changed dramatically in the fifteenth century. The most likely economic drivers of the Benin expansion was new trade routes that opened up at the coast. In the 1480s Portuguese traders reached Benin opening up new trade routes between the area and

Europe. As was the case in the Kanem–Bornu Empire, control of trade probably served as a source of taxation and wealth through which the empire could finance its expansion.

The civil wars and the political developments help explain the importance of trade and the changes which occurred. In 1640 Benin was centrally governed by the Oba, with the assistance of royally appointed administrators. However, trade with Europeans, which increasingly became dominated by the trade in slaves, created opportunities for wealth accumulation outside the control of the Oba. As has been documented, the casual nature of the slave trade implied that any group with the means could organize raiding parties and capture slaves, creating wealth for themselves in the process (Obikili 2016). This distribution of power likely created the means by which various parties could contest the power of the Oba, especially during periods of succession. The distribution of power also pitted the Oba against his administrators who presumably wanted more control over the state. The civil wars weakened the position of the Obas and transformed Benin from a centrally governed state to a more collectively governed one (Girshick and Thornton 2001).

The demise of Benin is perhaps symptomatic of the demise of states across modern Nigeria in the build-up to the colonial era. In the 1850s a stronger, more belligerent Britain sought to carve out trade routes all over the country and approached Benin. Numerous attempts were made to sign treaties with Benin and in 1892 the controversial Gallwey Treaty was signed. The treaty was controversial partly because the terms greatly disfavored the Benin hierarchy by opening up direct access to the British. There were also disagreements over whether the Oba actually signed the agreement due to it allegedly being signed during the Igue festival when foreigners were typically not allowed in the kingdom. In the ensuing drama, eight British emissaries were killed. This led to a punitive expedition by the British forces, destroying Benin and bringing a formal end to the long-standing state.

On the face of it the demise of the Kingdom of Benin might seem like a unique set of circumstances. However, the patterns repeated themselves across almost all of precolonial Nigeria. In a broad sense, it was a case of a new power with superior military technology and wealth overpowering and eventually dominating all other powers in that space, sometimes through the use of force, but sometimes through other means. From the independent coastal states of the Ijaw to the Sokoto Caliphate and Kanem–Bornu Empire, by 1906 effectively all states in Nigeria were under British control and an era, commonly referred to as the precolonial era, had come to an end.

Conclusion

The story of state formation and development in precolonial Nigeria is an interesting mosaic of different types of states rising and falling at different points in time, with different geographic and ecological influences, and characteristics. The diversity of states in Nigeria implies that many of the theories of state formation can in some way be applied

to the emergence or demise of some state or the another. No doubt many gaps still exist in the studies of the emergence and collapse of some of these states. Understanding the dynamics of these precolonial states can perhaps provide some guidance on improving the effectiveness of the current one.

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CHAPTER 3

PRECOLONIAL CHRISTIANITY AND MISSIONARY LEGACIES

SHOBANA SHANKAR

Introduction

The pioneering church historian Ogbu Uke Kalu likened Christian missions in Africa to raindrops: "when the water of the rain falls on the earth life springs forth. What springs forth depends on the receiving soil and the seed in the womb of the earth" (Kalu, Wariboko, and Falola 2010). Focusing only on foreign missions, as his scholarship showed, yields an incomplete picture, and ignoring African Christianity is a glaring error. Missionary and post-missionary Christianity reveals African independence of thought and practice—not only in religion but also in academic scholarship such as Kalu's—that rejects Euro-American power over the continent. Indeed, it is possible to argue that African churches have been hotbeds of rebellion and autonomy when government houses were not or could not be.

Nigerian church history, and scholars writing about it, have transformed the way global missions and their legacies have been understood. This chapter relies on the approaches of Kalu, Ajayi, Ayandele, Peel, Tasie, and others who view missions as much more complex than handmaidens of colonialism and Nigerian Christianity as much more layered than a simple reaction to foreign influences. The focus here is on the history of Nigerian Christian initiatives, beginning roughly with the fifteenth-century missions that came as part of the Atlantic trade, through to the twentieth century and tracing the varieties of Nigerian Christianity as global and local politics. At its root, Nigerian Christianity grew as a challenge to, and reassertion of, authority of different sorts. Some initiatives countered foreign missionary and government control, while others were outcomes of power struggles amongst Nigerians, sometimes swirling around theological differences and at other times brewing in battles over political succession and regime change. Through the lenses of dissent, reform, and renewal, we see

the priorities and practices that have made Nigerian Christianity uniquely durable, vibrant, and politically relevant into the present age.

Indeed, since 1960, when Nigeria became an independent nation (Africa's wealthiest and most populous), religious dynamics have constituted an extremely important factor in Nigeria's major social, cultural, and political transformations (Vaughan 2017). The growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches has had a profound impact on relations between Christians of different denominations and with Muslims—while Christian–Muslim interaction has been occurring for nearly two centuries in Nigeria, strong reformist blocs of both religions have created an intense focus on personal and communal behaviors and a burden, it may be said, on government authorities to mediate between different communities and ensure the rights of all. Since Nigeria's democratic transition, the implementation of sharia (Islamic) law in the northern states has received wide international attention, as well as the rise of the terrorist group Boko Haram pitted against a government it sees as corrupt and anti-Islamic, but other religious changes have presented challenges to the Nigerian government too. For instance, religious media, including television stations and radio programs, have proliferated and provoked government efforts to curtail media power, spurring fears over freedom of speech (Ukah 2017; see also Hackett and Soares 2014). Nigeria is not alone in navigating questions of religion in the public sphere and Christian and Muslim reformism, as Western liberal democracies, contend with similar concerns. As millions of Nigerians make up the diaspora in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, they are, in fact, part of the tremendous religious changes occurring in host societies. As Afe Adogame contends, Christianity is cultural capital for Nigerian migrants (and other Africans on the move); the "reverse mission" to evangelize in countries that once sent missionaries to Africa can be considered an act of the marginalized to challenge their marginalization (Adogame and Shankar). As this chapter traces, from missions of earlier centuries to their reversal today, Christianity is a fundamental aspect of Nigeria's global presence.

Atlantic Christian Movements, 1600–1800s

Perhaps the earliest Christian root in Nigeria was planted in the Kingdom of Benin in the fifteenth century. When the Oba Ozolua died, his sons became embroiled in a succession dispute. Seizing upon this weakness, the enemy forces of the Igala invaded. Esigie, one of Ozolua's warring sons, brought Benin out of this chaos and into a period of ascendance. He converted to Christianity at the urging of Portuguese traders and missionaries, who promised access to arms that allowed Esigie to defeat his brother to end the Kingdom of Benin's civil war and conquer the Igala. Yet Christianity, in Benin's rich royal historical tradition, represents just one source of mystical power. The *iyoba* or queen mother, who Esigie enshrined in a court position created in honor of

his mother, and Oduduwa, the Yoruba deity and founder of Benin, are also venerated. Esigie himself is depicted as a spiritual authority in the ceremonial tusks and other art commissioned by his successors in later centuries. He appears dressed in European clothes with the iron hammer and cross, symbols of his multivalent powers that later kings sought to inherit; more than the riches Europeans brought to his reign, his literacy in Portuguese and other knowledge succored later obas. Like Esigie, the first converts became ancestors of *ohensa*, priests to the high god Osanobua and keepers of shrines built on the sites of old Portuguese churches.

Benin's Christianity did not find a permanent foothold, but its embedment in royal art, oral tradition, and gender concepts such as the royal mother suggests an impact on cultural authority that is complex and mutable. This shape-shifting is precisely Christianity's impact observable in many places and times in Nigeria. It would be a mistake to attribute this transformation to European influence or even just Nigerian machinations to exploit foreign elements. Rather, as Lamin Sanneh suggests, Christianity's inherent translatability and the vernacularization processes of African societies have combined to make the continent the center, with Nigeria as a critical example, of modern Christian revitalization. In Atlantic Nigeria, particularly, the missionary as a symbol of new knowledge and the religion itself became quickly localized or indigenized. This location entailed reworking Christian and indigenous religious beliefs.

Perhaps for this reason, the strength of indigenous concepts, Christian conversions in Benin were not lasting, but the Portuguese were able to establish a Christian mission in the fledgling Warri state by provision of firearms to allow them to compete with other Atlantic states. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, Augustinian Bishop Gaspar Çao sent monks to the capital of Warri, Ode Itsekiri, which was christened Santo Agostinho. The Portuguese renamed African cities in the Niger Delta and further down the western coast in Kongo with Christian names as a kind of mass baptism of the resident population.

Urbanization and religious communion were tied to the strengthening of monarchical power, as in Benin. Augustinian Father Francisco a Mater Dei performed another mass ritual in Warri in the latter sixteenth century, though not a sacrament. He reportedly gathered a crowd of Itsekiri observers around a sacred tree where "charms" were often made and dispensed and destroyed it. When he met no harm from doing so, the story goes that he began to gain more converts. One of these new followers of Christ was the son of the olu or king, who did not himself accept Christianity. His son was christened Sebastian and became olu some time before 1597.

The fledgling Christian community in Warri was left on its own; Sebastian, the convert-king, could not keep resident clergy to perform sacraments for, and teach, the young Christian community. On the advice of the Augustinian bishop at Sao Tomé, King Philip II of Spain (1527–98) ordered that trading ships seeking ivory in Warri had to carry on board a missionary who would remain until the ship's cargo was complete, a process lasting about three months. Because the Warri king did not have the means to support a European churchman, the Spanish king also agreed to allow the visiting

missionaries to buy slaves in Warri slave markets to be sold in any Portuguese territory and pay small duties for the privilege. Thus, the slave trade provided the lifeblood of the Church.

Sebastian's son, Domingos, spent nearly a decade in Portugal, where he received a religious education, married a Portuguese noblewoman, and made petitions to the crown to continue to invest in trade relations with Warri. Yet, upon his return and assumption of the throne, Domingos (r. 1625–43) became increasingly hostile toward the Portuguese. Was this in response to the escalating trade in humans and the Church's involvement in this trade? There are few sources for this period, but they make clear the existence of tensions in Warri–Portuguese relations and continuing problems with the growth of Christianity itself. The Bishop of Santo Agostinho complained that few Itsekiri were true Christians. According to him, most still carried on their "idolatrous" pre-Christian practices. Many refused to bring their children for baptism out of fear the youngsters would die shortly thereafter, and very few married within the Church. The constant shortage of priests, despite support from the Sao Tomé and Portuguese churches, was surely a factor in the apparent "disinterest" in rites, but the Portuguese clergy took the Itsekiri focus on other rites such as circumcision as signs of their steadfast commitment to "superstition and sorcery."

Many gaps in evidence make a continuous history impossible, but Warri maintained its reputation as the sole Catholic outpost on the Guinea Coast running from Elmina to Kongo through the seventeenth century, due to the sheer will of its kings and subjects. In fact, Europeans' own conflicts undermined the cause of Christianity; internecine conflicts between Catholic European powers and challenges to them from the Protestant Dutch and English left the Itsekiri on their own, but perhaps more able to shape their own practices. From 1634, when a visiting French priest requested support from Rome to Warri directly, the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation Fide provided more regular missions. The mission at Warri also then received invitations to evangelize from the rulers of Bonny and Calabar. Even with this growing interest in Catholicism, an anti-Christian king, as Warri had in the 1730s, led to the cessation of services and the destruction of Catholic idols. Yet support from Sao Tomé, Rome, and increasingly from Brazil revived the mission. Most importantly, "black Portuguese missionaries," described by English sea captain John Adams (Ryder 1960, p. 22) writing at the end of the eighteenth century, carried on performing "mysteries" in a special building. Whether these black Church leaders were Brazilian, Itsekiri, or Sao Tomé transplants, sources do not say, but their role as early Nigerian Catholics is clear. The relationship of these missionaries to the Warri and other kings is unclear, but it is significant that their presence, more than royal patronage, signified Warri's reputation globally as a Catholic center.

Parallel to a black Atlantic Catholic consciousness, Protestant missions and indigenous churches in Nigeria were also linked to a wider regional and global context in which black missionaries from the Americas were also central. The founding of Freetown in Sierra Leone in 1792 by white Anglican abolitionists brought freed slaves from Nova Scotia and Jamaica, but once British patrols began to bring "liberated" Africans taken off slave ships, the presence in Freetown of Yoruba peoples taken as slaves from the Nigerian

hinterland and liberated increased in the 1820s. As Magbaily Fyle writes, many Yoruba were Muslims but, disallowed by the Freetown authorities from wearing Muslim dress or practicing Islam, they became "indoctrinated" by a fervent missionary Christianity. As they left from Sierra Leone to Nigerian cities such as Lagos and Badagry, which had already seen the opening of mission stations by the Anglican Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Mission, these black Christians put pressure on the Anglican Church Missionary Society to open a mission at Abeokuta. It has been argued that the desire of the *sodeke* of Abeokuta for arms was the main reason. Whichever rationale prevailed, the fact is that black Christians now had support from a powerful Yoruba ruler.

One of the most famous among these liberated slaves was Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1801–91), who was thirteen when a British navy boat brought him to Freetown. Among the first class of pupils at the Fourah Bay Institute founded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to train Africans for Christian service, he excelled in language studies, which was one of the reasons he accompanied Thomas Buxton's exhibition to navigate the Niger River in 1841. Crowther attended the CMS college in London to become ordained in 1843 and worked with two white missionaries to establish the Abeokuta CMS mission. For the Anglicans, Crowther, who was an Egba from the region, represented a new direction in the planting of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating missions in Africa, a vision outlined by Henry Venn, CMS secretary, but impossible without African Christians such as the Sierra Leonians. Indeed, Crowther opened a new mission station on the Niger in 1857 with an entirely African staff. Crowther was appointed as Bishop of the Countries of Western Africa beyond Queen Victoria's dominions in 1864. His contributions in this position were as much political as they were religious. He was engaged in diplomatic and preaching outreach to Muslims living on the upper Niger and missionaries under his watch negotiated for and established stations and congregations in Igboland.

The work of these black Anglicans among the Igbo is noteworthy for Christianity's rather halting entry into Igboland. The CMS found Igbo listeners but few converts; Felix Ekechi (1996) has argued that the disorder caused by the British Aro expedition in the early twentieth century created a mass movement towards Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. At root, he argues, was an institutional authority that could provide shelter from British colonial exactions. Moreover, the competition between different missions for converts, a veritable "scramble," expanded educational and other social opportunities that attracted many young men and women. Elizabeth Isichei (1970), while acknowledging the intellectual dimension of the surprising mass conversion of Igbo after 1900, interprets the thought process of Igbo converts through the essential eclecticism of Igbo cosmology, which allowed a community in crisis to choose particular paths at the moment of crisis. Yet missionaries increasingly insisted that Igbo and other Nigerians dispense with their eclecticism and decide for Christ.

This insistence had been presaged about two decades earlier, in the 1880s, when the highly skilled and educated black CMS missionaries came under attack. Bishop Crowther's son Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther (1844–1938), who had brought massive numbers of converts into the Church while also contending with attacks on

Christians, and other black Church leaders faced increasing criticism from white missionaries questioning their moral fitness and that of their flocks. Bishop Crowther was already quite elderly and he and his successors found themselves in a precarious position with growing numbers of white missionaries whose vision did not align with Venn's. In this charged atmosphere, with European missionaries attempting to take over the Niger Mission, Dandeson Crowther launched the Niger Delta Pastorate as a revolt against white Church control. The revolt only lasted six years, although the Delta Pastorate continued.

The replacement of Samuel Crowther and other black missionaries with European Anglicans coincided with the European scramble for Africa and Europeans thus seeking to bolster their imperial aims against one another. It is really in this era that missions had to contend with the shadow of empire, whether they supported it fully or occasionally for their own benefit, or rejected it to promote African independence. Where precolonial Christianity was present, it was not dominant. Just as the black Anglicans were poised to become autonomous, the white CMS backlash grew strong, emboldened by the impending British conquest. This convergence of missionary and secular European quest for domination in Nigeria empowered missionaries in a new way, with a kind of authority to negotiate with political figures in ways that Nigerian rulers had merely tolerated.

Colonial Power and Christian Politics, 1900–60

In 1916, several international newspapers and journals wrote about a "native fanatic" who believed himself to be a prophet—more specifically, Elijah II. The Liverpool newspaper, *African Mail*, claimed that the Nigerian had chosen his moment carefully, when Britain was preoccupied with the war in Europe. The paper worried about "ignorant" minds being swayed to reject the "good government" of the British in Nigeria. The British District Commissioner in charge of the Niger Delta region, where this prophet movement had reportedly claimed a million followers, feared it would destabilize traditional culture, and, by extension, British indirect rule through the local authorities. He feared for the entire colonial system.

The man in question was Garrick Sokari Braide (*c.*1882–1918), who was a member of the Niger Delta Pastorate founded in 1892, but he left, taking his followers with him, when Assistant Bishop (an African) James Johnson refused to accept his prophecy. Johnson also rejected other practices that Braide embraced—faith healing and mass baptism, in particular. Within a short time, the Braideists made clear their opposition to the established order, religious and secular. They mocked Johnson, the memory of Crowther, and the loyal Anglican congregants who were ostracized and prevented from trading in the market and using public latrines. Braideist bush schools were

established to encourage removal from government and mission schools; members of the movement were discouraged from working for the government in any capacity. The authorities were truly terrified as would-be prophets cropped up all over, a phenomenon that Braide seemed to encourage by saying that impostors would be unmasked in God's time. In 1916, a group of young men who wished to allow polygamy and require open confession split off from the Braide movement to form the Christ Army Church. Within two years, this new church had absorbed much of the older movement, seceded from the Church of England, and established its own structure of authority. Braide was imprisoned and released just before his death during the influenza pandemic of 1918.

The importance of the Braide movement cannot be underestimated. The political authorities clearly understood it as a grave threat, and scholarly interpretations have focused on a range of factors: Braideism being a form of political dissent; a spiritual revival; a response to foreign domination not only by whites but also by Sierra Leonians; and a reaction to the economic crisis with the falling price of palm oil. The movement itself changed within a short time, Frieder Ludwig (1993) notes, as Braide's very message shifted until 1917–18, likely as a reflection of the volatile circumstances all around.

Kalu sees it as a key turning point between Ethiopianism, begun in the nineteenth century, that was sensitive to the African experience of slavery and hardship and a sense of dignity which connected Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, and a new and very public African Christian spirituality (Kalu 2008, p. 33). "The returnees [to West Africa] and the black ideologues in the diaspora were the first to foster Ethiopianism." The Braide movement showed continuities but also "the new charismatic spirituality" that came to characterize Pentecostalism.

Indeed, many Christian revivals were occurring around this time throughout Nigeria. In Yorubaland, a prayer group named the Precious Stone Society, formed within the Anglican community to provide healing for victims of the 1918 pandemic, left the parent church four years later over a dispute over child baptism. The group joined Faith Tabernacle, which baptized adults by immersion and promoted faith healing. The Tabernacle, American in origin, had come to Nigeria through literature that transatlantic Lagosians brought to the city and through working literate men in southwestern, northern, and eastern Nigeria. In 1925, another offshoot of the Anglican Church emerged in the form of the Eternal Order of Cherubim and Seraphim. Its founder, Moses Orimolade Tunolashe (1879–1933) was known as a prayer healer and called Baba Aladura ("father owner of prayer"), and this spawned the Aladura movement that took off in the 1930s.

These movements were expressions of theological disagreements, which led to reforms that scholars agree were the beginnings of charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity as distinct departures from "mainline" or older forms of mission Christinity. Yet it is clear that within Nigeria, even in regions such as the predominantly Muslim north where Christian missions were relatively new and powerless, indigenous Christian initiative came quickly. For example, the British disallowed Christian missions from certain areas of northern Nigeria in the early 1900s, citing religious toleration and the need to maintain Islam as the basis of indirect rule. Yet, in 1916, the North American Sudan Interior

Mission station at Pategi on the Niger River documented the itinerant preaching of an indigenous evangelist named Inusa Samaila (d. 1972). The British authorities at Sokoto detained and imprisoned Inusa for preaching about Jesus's second coming, a matter of great interest to Muslims known as Mahdists (Shankar 2014). As with Braide and other religious activists, the British colonialists perceived a grave threat with Inusa. The political authorities looked to white missionaries to control this sort of Christian independence that might disturb or even destabilize Muslim emirs. For their part, the missionaries working for Sudan Interior Mission tried in the meeting with the British official to minimize Inusa's activism.

In northeastern Nigeria, specifically Adamawa, the lack of missionary response to the request for assistance of the Mbula people in the 1920s actually led to the rise of a prophet who merged Muslim, Christian, and indigenous religious elements. In 1926, ten young men were struck ill and died in the village of Dilli. Unable to discover the cause of death, the villagers asked Protestant missionaries from a nearby mission to investigate and determine the cause. The missionaries could provide no answer nor did they settle amongst the Mbula residents of Dilli. The villagers turned next to a prophet named Kulibwui (born *c.*1901), a noted medicine man. He had also worked for Christian missionaries as a carrier and thus held a kind of ambiguous status. His stature rose when he suffered a seizure, perhaps epileptic, and died, but rose to life when he was about to be buried. After this, his prophecy seemed sealed. He also began to preach against traditional religion and even incorporated the Muslim Friday prayer, *salat*, into his prescriptions to his followers. He instructed them to give alms and in 1930 called himself *Allah*. The reportage of his changing message came from Christian missionaries and colonial authorities who launched an investigation into his activities. After 1930, Kulibwi and the Mbula became much more committed to Christianity, and missionaries and then political authorities seemed to lose interest in him. Niels Kastfelt (1976) has called the movement a transitional one for the Mbula people on their path towards Christianity.

Though indigenous prophets and revivals appeared in different parts of Nigeria during the first part of the colonial period, a clear difference existed between southern and northern Christianity. The independent movements in the south often led to the establishment of new churches, with organizational structures that provided legitimacy and continued functioning. In the north, these popular uprisings were subsumed by Christian missionaries, who, under British colonial authority, had to tread carefully in order to defuse any problems that might have led to their ejection from Muslim northern Nigeria, which happened on occasion. The significance of these starkly different tendencies for the Christian Church generally in southern Nigeria was that new denominations and Christian leadership proliferated; worshipers had an enormous range of options. Christianity was a highly visible public force, one that regularly conveyed dissent often with the goal of Africanizing the leadership. In the north, however, white missionaries, intentionally and sometimes out of pure political expediency, silenced indigenous Christians. The tradition of dissent was lacking or quashed to some degree in northern Nigerian Christianity, a missing element that empowered

missionaries, British colonial authorities, and indigenous Muslim rulers alike. In the end, when the foreigners departed, organizing for self-representation as a Christian minority came slowly to northern Nigerian Christians.

Legacies

Based on this comparison of Christianity in colonial southern and northern Nigeria, it might be argued that the Church decolonized before government, at least in some areas. Yet Ogbu Kalu believed just the opposite happened. "Missionaries always perceived their mission as different from the colonial governments, and assumed that they were more successful than the latter and that the weight of moral rectitude planted them deeper in the interior of the colonized's psyche" (Kalu 2000, p. 1). Missionaries talked about African independence, but rarely did they prepare for it, he argues. Indeed, it is a question how much they supported African nationalism. A recent study of Catholic missions in Nigeria and other African countries shows the expansion in the number of missionaries sent from the U.S. and other rich nations after 1955 (Wall 2015).

The decolonization of the Church in Nigeria was no doubt complicated by the fact that it had been riven by divisions, mostly for the purpose of more effective rule. Politically, of course, the divisions were broadly regional—north, southwest, and southeast (and later more broken down)—which corresponded to Muslim majority, religiously mixed, and predominantly Christian (respectively). On top of this, the Protestants, for nearly a hundred years, had established spheres of influence in order to avoid working against each other or in competition. Only later did they band together, in 1934, to form the Christian Council of Nigeria to confront the growth of Catholicism.

The independency of Christian churches in the south and southeast might have been understood as a positive move towards Nigerian Christian self-actualization, but instead, starting from the 1940s, missions worried about African nationalism, the weakness of churches given the lack of trained leadership, and the resilience of African indigenous religions which were deemed a threat to Christianity, as seen in earlier times. Just as they were facing such insecurities, the missions actually began to receive some support from the British colonial development schemes in order to support education and medical work, which had been woefully lacking in many Nigerian locations. Thus, missions could control more tightly the content of their messages. Nicholas Omenka (1989) has argued that Catholic schools in Igboland primarily served as tools of evangelization, thus leaving serious gaps in learning at the moment when Africans were poised to take the reins of their own country. From the Anglican missions to the Catholics, Kalu (1996) traced the missionary hold on leadership tightening and the censorship on learning heightening.

In the 1950s, a common theme in missionary discourse was the unpreparedness of Africans for independence. In Calabar, for example, Christian missionaries used public debates, drama, and lectures to warn Christians to seek the Kingdom of God before

politics. Northern Christians came together in 1949 to found the Non-Muslim League, which then became the Middle Zone League. The group split over the decision to ally with Muslim elites or push for a separate administrative region. Missionaries warned Christians that politics was corrupting, while the British administration, through Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith (1899–1983), made clear their view that peoples of the Middle Belt were inferior to other Nigerians and needed further "civilization" to be welcomed into the club negotiating independence (Barnes 2007). There seemed to be a collective agreement that certain characteristics befit a people ready for self-rule. The Moral Rearmament Group which was active throughout Africa, tried to inculcated Christian morality for nation building. Kalu (2000) noted that the political context was fluid, as were missionary views. "Generally, institutional attitude was dominated by apprehension and anger at the ingratitude of African elite." He also recognized the fighting spirit of home associations or ethnic improvement organizations that had formed throughout Nigeria—north and south—and had acted as a counterweight to a heavily censored Christian politics. Yet a question remains whether the missions' ambivalence about Nigerian independence actually exacerbated ethnic rivalries, which became so violent, leading up to the civil war (1967–70).

The Nigerian Civil War (also known as the Biafran War) created a dilemma for missionaries that can be considered a wider analogy for humanitarian interventionists in Africa. Many missionaries had to leave Nigeria during the war, and after; many who remained were perceived to be either mercenaries or collaborators with the Biafrans. Kalu (2000) wrote of the story of Dr. E. H. Johnson, the Secretary of the Board of World Mission, Presbyterian Church of Canada, who was one of the founders of the Canair Relief Programme. After the war, he and other Canadian missionaries were denied visas, which required a petition directly to the president, General Yakubu Gowon, whose father was an Anglican lay reader, to overrule the denial of visas.

By the 1960s, the global Protestant and Catholic communities had to recognize the independence of many African states, as well as the violence with which colonial regimes continued to hold in places such as Southern Africa. Yet once again, it was Africans themselves who forced this reckoning with the best. Kalu (2000) argued that, in the decade between 1965 and 1975, Africans doubted the "missionary version of indigenization" of Christianity, suggesting their rejection that Euro–Americans should dictate how the African Church should develop. In 1966, the World Council of Churches affirmed support for human liberation and freedom, while opening the debate on scientific developments. Pope Paul VI (1897–1978) called for a new society in Christ and issued *Africae Terrarum* in November 1967, which proffered respect for African heritage and recognition of the realization of Catholic faith in Africa. The pope's acknowledgment of African civilizations was a kind of parallel to secular academic scholarship also burgeoning in the field of African studies, an admission of guilt of omission of African knowledge and religions for so many centuries.

In Nigeria, missionaries worried less about the "truth" of African conversion. They increasingly took on the role of supervising development projects and training of African clergy was fast tracked. Yet problems remained with the Eurocentric

theology and other foreign elements within Christian education. The liturgical movement, which involved the translation of religious music and psalms into Nigerian vernaculars, was one response to the urge to revise the Christian curriculum. African cooperation, across new nations, was another strategy to achieve a more African-centric Christianity.

Nigerian strategies to reform Christianity have not, however, been wholly political but instead fundamentally social and cultural. For one, Nigerian experiences of migration have critically shaped Christianity; many scholars such as Nwando Achebe, Afe Adogame, Ebenezer Obadare, and Wale Adebanwi have shown how religion is operationalized throughout the process of migration, from getting visas while still in Nigeria to finding networks in far-flung outposts. Adogame (2013) shows how religion in the diaspora has changed. The earliest Nigerian missions to England started in the 1920s when Nigerians such as Daniels G. Ekarte from Calabar, influenced by Scottish missionary reformer Mary Slessor, founded the African Churches Mission in the slums of Liverpool to ease the suffering of the poor. Over the next several decades, Nigerian immigrants gravitated towards African-instituted churches, mostly Pentecostal, as the lack of religiosity and racial segregation in mainline churches were off-putting. Within decades, the zeal of Nigerian Christians attracted people of all races and religions to churches such as the Pentecostal and charismatic.

Redeemed Church of God, Deeper Christian Life, and Living Faith, whose members number in the tens of thousands, are united by a strong belief that religious membership can bring prosperity. The "prosperity gospel" popularized by Nigerians at home and abroad has many attributes that are practical—trust, volunteerism, and family and other networks—that are the lived realities of church membership.

By some Euro-American standards, certain Nigerian-Christian perspectives are too conservative to mesh with liberal democratic ideals. Gender and sexual norms, specifically, have been a critical bone of contention. The Christian south of Nigeria, from where most diasporic Nigerians hail, has decidedly more open hostility to homosexuality than the Muslim north, in part fueled by the public nature of cultural identities that Pentecostal Christians expect (Gaudio 2014). Conservative American Presbyterians sided with and deferred to Nigerian Episcopal Archbishop Peter Akinola. Yet, on another issue of gender, more specifically related to women's roles in the Church, it remains to be seen if cross-cultural alliances will solidify. It is estimated that nearly half of all Nigerian migrants are women, and many of them "exercise critical ritual functions" in new forms of Christianity (Adogame 2013; Kalu 2008). As Adogame (2013) argues, women:

> occupied significant religious roles within many indigenous religious worlds prior to the introduction of missionary Christianity. Missionary Christianity seems to have hijacked these roles and stripped women of most of their ritual functions by privileging the strand of Pauline injunctions that was disadvantageous to women. Thus, the leadership and ritual role reversal witnessed in some new forms of African Christianity needs to be historically and contextually understood.

Nigerian women have become popular preachers around the world, and, as Kalu noted, many transnational missionaries within Africa are women. Yet he went further to note the intriguing position of African women in scripture itself.

> Africans or black people are able to tap into the ancestry of the early Jewish patriarchs because Abraham and Moses married black women. Many Pentecostals watch videos and read books by John Hagee's ministry that unabashedly support Israel and subscribe to a magazine produced by a Zionist group, *Israel My Glory*. It should be stressed that this ideology itself is not outsourced from America but, rather, is validated and reinforced by American sources. The Yoruba and Igbo claim that they are the lost tribes of Israel. Within this perspective, Pentecostals imagine the introduction of the sharia as a component of an insidious project to Islamize Nigeria and declare the Maghrib as being Arab instead of part of Africa. Pentecostals are reclaiming the force of "Ethiopianism" and African religious and cultural nationalism of the nineteenth century to weave a black theology of engagement. (Kalu 2008)

Women thus provide legitimacy for the story of Ethiopia that places Africa at the center of religious history. Nigerian ethno-religious communities are said to be born from these ancestral women. Would such a scriptural interpretation hold in the U.S.?

Adogame and Kalu agree that the role of women in Nigerian Christianity is unique and indigenous. To read this solely as Christian conservatism, through an American political or social lens, would make one miss the significance of Christianity's gendered and historical dimensions in Nigeria. The politics of Christianity in Nigeria must be understood not from outside but from within the fertile ground of Nigeria itself, to conclude with Kalu's words where we began.

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