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Southern Kaduna: Democracy and the struggle for identity and Independence by Non-Muslim Communities in Northern Nigeria 1999-2011

ABSTRACT

Many non-Muslim communities were compelled to live under Muslim administration in both the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial era in Nigeria. While colonialism brought with it Christianity and western education, both of which were employed by the non-Muslims in their struggle for a new identity and independence, the exigencies of colonial administration and post-independence struggle made it difficult for non-Muslim communities to fully assert their independence. However, Nigeria's new democratic dispensation (i.e. Nigeria's third republic 1999-to 2011) provided great opportunities and marked a turning point in the fortune of Southern Kaduna: first, in his 2003-2007 tenure, Governor Makarfi created chiefdoms (in Southern Kaduna) which are fully controlled by the non-Muslim communities themselves as a means of guaranteeing political independence and strengthening of social-political identity of the non-Muslim communities, and secondly, the death of President 'Yar'adua led to the emergence and subsequent election of Governor Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa in April 2011 as the first non-Muslim civilian Governor of Kaduna State. How has democracy brought a radical change in the power equation of Kaduna state in 2011?

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, heterogeneous and culturally diverse people and regions were amalgamated and brought together into one nation known as Nigeria by the British colonial power. In the next three years or so therefore, i.e., in 2014, the Nigerian nation will be one hundred years old. The political history of Nigeria since then has been a checkered one. The nation has since its creation been haunted by its history, heterogeneity and cultural diversity. One of the major challenges in the public domain has remained that of national integration and political stability, a challenge that is also reflected in various degrees, at local government, state and regional levels.

Since political independence from the British colonial power in 1960, there have been at different times various attempts to establish democratic governments as an effective instrument that would guarantee national integration, political stability and economic development. This democratic experiment has been experiencing a lot of instability occasioned by ethnic and communal crises, religious intolerance and regional competition for power as well as violence at different levels in the country. The Federal Military government of Nigeria was compelled to fight a civil war from 1967 to 1970 as a major effort to prevent the secession of the Eastern region of the country and therefore preserve the unity of Nigeria. In virtually all parts of the country, there are different types of crisis – religious, ethnic, communal and so on

that not only challenges the stability of the federation but also the corporate existence of the nation as a whole¹.

It is against the above background that I have in this paper studied the struggle for identity and independence by the non-Muslim ethnic groups and communities of Southern Kaduna, Kaduna state of Nigeria in the context of Nigeria's democratic experiment from 1999-2011. This is essentially an ethno-religious struggle.

I argue here that poverty is one of the major causes of this struggle by non-Muslim minority ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna. I also argue that the elites of the non-Muslim ethnic groups are exploiting the ethno-religious divide as a means of gaining access to power and influence in the immediate and wider society. This paper further sees the April 2011 post-election violence in Southern Kaduna as a continuation of the struggle against what has been presented, and is being seen, as 'Hausa-Fulani hegemony' (a mere perception).

Perhaps, I need to state that I have chosen Kaduna State out of the thirty six states of Nigeria because of its peculiar situation-historically, politically and strategically-in the history of Northern Nigeria. More importantly and interestingly too, a non-Muslim was elected governor in a state with a Muslim majority of over 70% despite the massive massacre of Muslims in the Southern part of the state. It is also the only state where post election violence led to the massacre of hundreds of innocent people and the displacement of thousands of people, some of whom are still residing in refugee camps in Kaduna, the state's capital. My approach is a historical one because of the need for the issues to be understood in their historical context but even then, I rely heavily on memos written by the Southern Kaduna people themselves.

Southern Kaduna

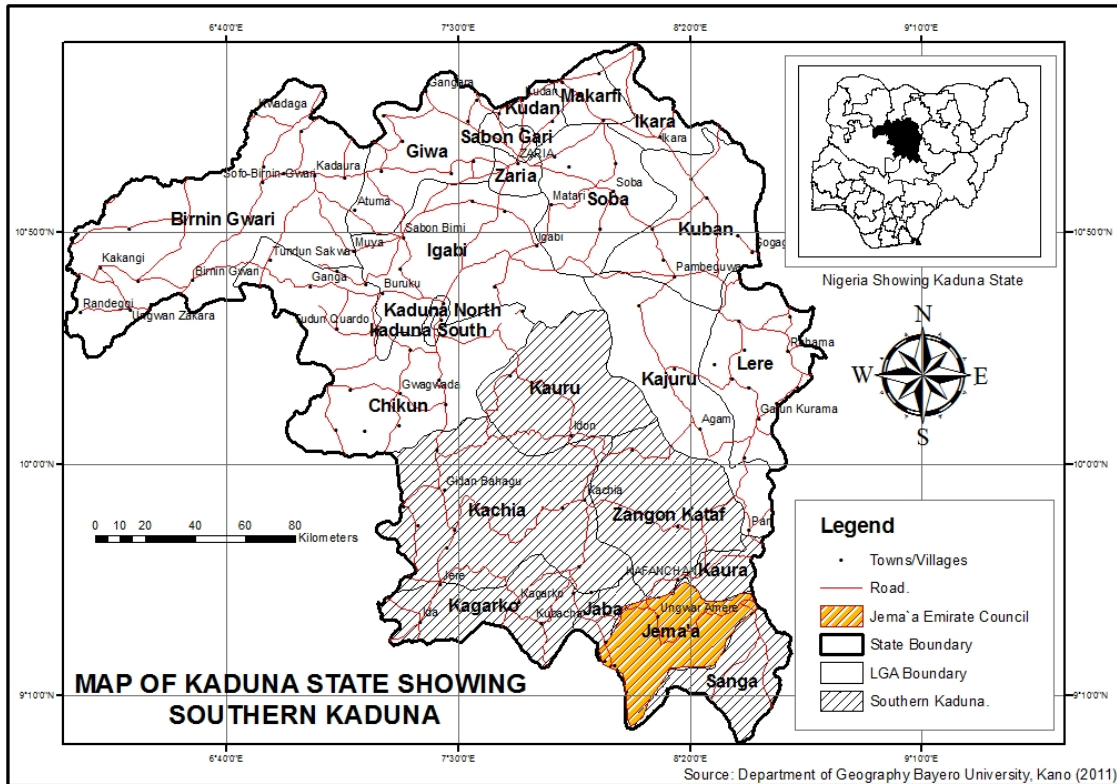
Kaduna State has twenty three Local Government areas out of which Southern Kaduna has eight, while northern Kaduna has fifteen. Southern Kaduna refers to the area located to the south of Kaduna city, the capital of the state. The area shares common boundary to the north AND EAST with the Jos Plateau and Bauchi and to the south, with the Federal Capital Territory. Today, the eight local government areas of Southern Kaduna, namely, Jaba, Jema,a, Kachia, Kagarko, Kaura, Kuru, Sanga and Zangon Kataf constitute one senatorial district out of the three senatorial districts of the state. Southern Kaduna is multi-ethnic and pre-dominantly occupied by largely non-Muslim ethnic groups: Jaba, Ninzom, Atyap, Nindem, Kagoma,

¹ E.E. Okafor, Sociological Implications of Communal and Ethno-religious Clashes in New Democratic Nigeria Stud. Tribes Tribal 5(1) 2007 huji.academia.edu (accessed 1/11/11); L. Olu-Adeyemi, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts And The Travails of National Integration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" 2007,dawodu.com/adeyemi3.htm (accessed 11/9/11); A. N. Shenge, "Indigene" and "Settler Status and Identity Politics in Nigeria: Lessons from the Jukun-Tiv Crisis and the Role of the Media" in Duro Oni, et al., **Nigeria and Globalization: Discourses on Identity Politics and Social Conflicts**. Lagos, CBBAC, 2004

Kaninkingon, Kagoro, Fanstwan, Numana, Mada, Moroa, Attakar, Ayu, Kataf, Baju, Sanga, Numbu, Dagam, Kibo, Karshi., Ningwam, Gwandara, Yeskwa and so on.²

The remaining fifteen local government areas constitute central and northern Kaduna senatorial zones and these are predominantly occupied by Hausa-Fulani Muslims who form a majority population in the state.

MAP OF KADUNA STATE SHOWING SOUTHERN KADUNA



According to the 2006 National Population Census result, Kaduna state has a population of 6,792,169. The eight local governments of Southern Kaduna put together have a population of 1,792,169, i.e., less than 30% of the state's population³.

Due to good weather and climate, Southern Kaduna witnessed an influx of several ethnic groups into the area from about the sixteenth century. The issue of who arrived in the area first among the various ethnic groups is understandably a subject of dispute among the people. So

² Gun, H.D., **Pagan Peoples of the Central Area of Northern Nigeria**, Frank Cass, London 1956.; A. D. Yahaya, **The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria**, Zaria, ABU Press, 1980:15

³ . National Population Commission of Nigeria (NPC): 2006 Population and Housing Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Kaduna State Priority Tables, Vol.1,

is the question of the origin of the various people. What is certain however is that most of the non-Muslim minority ethnic groups began to migrate and settle in the area from the first decade of the 16th century through the 18th century. Another important point to note is that although the ethnic groups are different and independent of each other, they share some characteristics in language and culture.

In the pre-colonial period, each of the non-Muslim ethnic groups lived in fragmented and scattered small independent communities and villages. Their population per settlement, ranged from slightly over 300 to less than 100,000 as was established in the 1963 National Population Census. In all these largely non-Muslim ethnic groups, the family heads and village elders were the only authorities. It is important to re-iterate that in the pre-colonial period, these non-Muslim ethnic groups not only lived independently of each other but also had no single power or centralized authority even at the village level that could administer their affairs collectively.⁴

The Emergence of Muslim Communities in Southern Kaduna: The Jema'a Emirate

There are two Muslim groups that are historically associated with Southern Kaduna, namely, the Fulani and the Hausa people, both of whom have politically and socially blended into one people, generally referred to as Hausa/Fulani in Northern Nigeria by virtue of common religion, culture, historical affinity and integration. From the seventeenth century, the Fulani moved into Southern Kaduna area for the purpose of grazing their cattle in its rich and hospitable vegetation. They lived in small organized groups with their overall leader known as *Ardo*. It was these Fulani groups, led by Muslim scholars that established the sub-Emirates of Jema'a and Lere.

It was one Muslim scholar called Malam Usman, that established Jema'a Emirate in Southern Kaduna in 1810 following the outbreak of the Sokoto Jihad in 1804. From the sixteenth century up to the establishment of Jema'a Emirate in the nineteenth century, Southern Kaduna area had generally witnessed a contest or competition for the control of land, and resources by the different people in the area. This competition brought them into conflict with each other. The various Fulani pastoralist groups who had moved into the area and settled for the purpose of grazing their cattle in the midst of multi-ethnic groups had to be organized for the purpose of defence, and the sharing of information concerning the health and grazing potentialities of their physical and social environment. They remained organized under one leadership, paving the way to the emergence of a Muslim polity later in the nineteenth century.

Jema'a Emirate emerged as a vassal state of Zazzau Emirate, one of the major emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate. It subdued and/ or entered into a clientele relationship with a number of non-Muslim ethnic groups such as Kaje, Kagoro, Yeskwa, Ayu, Sanga, and Ninzam. As a vassal state, Jema'a Emirate became the strongest and most organized polity in the whole of Southern Kaduna area. From its establishment in 1810 to the British conquest of the emirate in 1903, Jema'a Emirate was successively and successfully ruled by six Emirs over a period of almost one

⁴ Yahaya, 1980:15

hundred years. It should be pointed out however, that in the pre-colonial period, Zazzau and Jema'a Emirates, exercised control over significant number of the non-Muslim ethnic groups of southern Kaduna, but neither Zazzau nor Jema'a Emirate sought to fully integrate the non-Muslim ethnic groups into the larger emirate system or culture which is largely Islamic. In spite of the political subjugation or subordination of non-Muslim ethnic groups, the two emirates allowed them to maintain their cultural identities, and this is what has enabled them to preserve their distinctiveness from the Hausa-Fulani Muslim groups and to pursue their interest on the basis of such differences.⁵ However as a vassal state of Zazzau Emirate, Jema'a had to pay tributes to Zazzau in the form of slaves, farm produce and industrial products. The non-Muslim ethnic groups in southern Kaduna were the source of the tributes. Jema'a emirate had to maintain slave villages-(Rumada) and carry out periodic raids on antagonistic communities as strategies for keeping its obligations to the Emirate of Zazzau. In this regard therefore, the relationship between it and several non-Muslim ethnic groups was hostile, determined by war, conquest and conflict.

The Hausa

The Hausa in Southern Kaduna were largely long distance traders and farmers who found it convenient to settle (as traders or farmers) in the area. It is this group of people that established settlements along their trade routes such as Zangon Kataf, a transit camp for long distance traders which later became a prosperous and important town in the area.⁶

While the Fulani were able to establish Jema'a and Lere sub-Emirates, the Hausa established Kauru, all three vassal states of Zazzau in the midst of a highly fragmented multi-ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna. It should be pointed out also that the Hausa were traders- big time and petty traders (Hausa: *fatake* and *'yan koli*), combing the nooks and cranny of the area with their goods and services as traders, suppliers and distributors of goods, raw material, dealers, agents, etc, in a booming indigenous economy. The Hausa linked the ethnic groups with the outside world, culture and civilization of the time.⁷ In a nutshell, it could be said that while the Fulani had political power, the Hausa had economic power in the area. The activities of the Hausa traders at the grassroots in the area over a couple of centuries led to the understanding and spread of Hausa language as the *lingua franca* of the non-Muslim multi-ethnic groups of Southern Kaduna. The Hausa language has from pre-colonial times remained the medium of communication and social interaction between the non-Muslim multi-ethnic groups of Southern Kaduna

While the presence of the Fulani and Hausa Muslims, a culturally distinct group in Southern Kaduna, created a big dichotomy in the demographic character of the area, colonial conquest of the non-Muslim ethnic groups of Southern Kaduna by the British only further re-enforced the

⁵ Yahaya, 1980:15-16

⁶ . Kadarko Yakubu, **The Administration of Zangon Kataf**, B.A. (Hons.) History Dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, 1999:5; Ahmed M. Garba, **Hausa in Kwoi**, B.A. (Hons.) History Dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, 1992:29-30.

⁷ Garba, 1992:15

dichotomy between the two groups. By 1910, Southern Kaduna people had been conquered by the British and brought under what became known as the Northern Protectorate. One of the consequences of the colonial conquest was that the non-Muslim ethnic groups later largely abandoned their traditional religions and embraced Christianity as a result of the intensive proselytizing activities of the Christian Missionaries (Sudan Interior Mission, Church Missionary Society, Roman Catholic Mission, etc) who were allowed to operate freely by the colonial government in non-Muslim areas throughout Northern Nigeria.⁸ The Hausa language helped in the spread of Christianity among the non-Muslim ethnic groups in the area. Instead of addressing the people in their various languages which would have been difficult, the people were made to use the translated Hausa bible and other gospels in the churches and for religious worship. In fact, Hausa language was used as the medium of instruction in schools by all Christian Missionaries.⁹ Within a very short time, the multi- ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna came to widely accept and convert into Christianity. As stated by Kukah, 1999, "In fact, for the tribes in the Middle Belt, conversion to Christianity was a way of protesting against Islam, with which they experienced war and desolation. Conversion to Christianity was for them the assertion of their freedom and access to western education, the entry point to power."¹⁰

While in the pre-colonial period it was a relationship between Muslims and animists, in colonial times, it became a relationship between Muslims and Christians. It must be stressed that Christianity not only provided its converts with a religion, but also a world outlook through access to Western education. Armed with a new religion and Western education which also gave them new identity and dignity, the Southern Kaduna multi-ethnic groups were well equipped to fight an old order. They were no longer *arna* (Hausa: animists) but *kiristochi* (Christians) who could articulate their grievances in writing. Subsequently, as some people would argue, 'the Christian Missionaries and colonialists did help in sharpening the boundaries of prejudices which have now come to dominate our landscape.'¹¹

INDIRECT RULE: The Native Authorities

One of the major actions of British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria was the introduction of what was known as Indirect Rule through the machinery of Native Authorities, headed either by the emir or chief as the case may be. Throughout the Northern Region, the Native Authority became the unit of local administration. In Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria, the Emirate structure was used as a framework for the Native Authority administration. In some places where there were no centralized authorities such as in non-Muslim areas of Southern Kaduna, Chiefs were appointed and made to administer their people through the Native Authority in similar ways as the emirates. Yet in many other places as in Jema'a and

⁸ See E. P.T. Crampton, **Christianity in Northern Nigeria**, second edition, Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation, 1976.

⁹ A. O. M. Ashafa, **A History of the Jema'a Emirate C. 1800-1967**, B.A. (Hons.) History Dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, June 1991:100-101

¹⁰ M. H. Kukah, **Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria**, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd., 1999:100

¹¹ Kukah: 97

Zazzau Emirates, due to the exigencies of colonial rule and administration and since there was no traditional political structure or power to rely upon in building and consolidating colonial rule among the non-Muslim ethnic groups, the colonial power brought them under Muslim traditional rulers of the emirates. Initial resistance and protests by these non-Muslim groups were brutally suppressed by the British colonial power. Physical attacks and murder of Hausa/Fulani people by the ethnic groups attracted punitive military operation or death penalty against perpetrators or masterminds of such attacks.¹²

Under the Native Authorities, districts were created and headed by the District Heads. There were also village councils, headed by village heads. In Northern Nigeria therefore, colonial administration was carried out by the old traditional leaders and ruling class who are mainly Hausa-Fulani Muslims. This meant that tax assessment and collection, administration of forced labour and the general enforcement of colonial policies and order were to be carried out by Muslims in non-Muslim areas. The Emirate and its Native Authority structure became synonymous with colonialism and the traditional rulers were seen as exploiters and oppressors by the generality of colonial subjects in the region. This situation was particularly ugly or odd in Southern Kaduna since the Hausa/Fulani Muslims are a minority and the emirate system was not in tune with the diverse cultures of the people of the area. Understandably therefore, the people never liked colonial rule, the Hausa/Fulani agents/rulers and the political system symbolized by the emirate political structure foisted over them. This is aptly captured in the following statement by the Commission of inquiry that was set up by the Kaduna state

As the name implies, Jema'a Emirate is multi-tribal and multi-religious. The evidence showed that the predominant tribes are Christians and the minority Hausa/Fulani are Moslems. Their mode of worship and culture are diverse. The majority see the Emirate system as an imposition and alien to their cultural and religious values. The minority Hausa/Fulani want the status quo to be maintained.¹³

Protests against colonial rule by the local people were directed at officials of the Native Authorities-the emirs, chiefs, district and village heads. It should be pointed out that the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy (emirs, chiefs and district heads) in Northern Nigeria which the British colonial government met, put in place and/ or worked with were as much victims of colonialism as their colonial subjects-both Muslims and non-Muslims across the protectorate. Several emirs and chiefs were deposed and exiled by the British colonial power while scores of district heads were relieved of their positions across the northern region of Nigeria during colonial rule.¹⁴

¹² Memorandum Submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the Jema'a Emirate Emirship Staff of Office Riots by the Kaningkon Development Association (KADA) 1/6/99 , Kaduna, Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)

¹³ Kaduna State Government of Nigeria, White Paper on the Report of the Jema'a Emirship Staff of Office Riots Judicial Commission of Inquiry, 9th August, 1999:26.

¹⁴ M.D. Suleiman, **The Hausa in Lokoja 1860-1966: A Study of the Evolution of a Migrant Community in the Niger-Benue Confluence**, Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation, 2001:37-39

The Nature of the Struggle The struggle for identity and independence by the people of Southern Kaduna has been pursued in various ways. The colonial power was able to use force to suppress the people and subordinate them to the Hausa/Fulani rule for the realization of colonial objectives. In 1949, an organization known as Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League was formed by the semi-educated group of Southern Kaduna. It attracted large following and sympathy because of its anti-Hausa/Fulani campaign. In 1950, it transformed into a political association known as Middle Zone League (M.Z.L) which the lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria Sir Bryan Sharwood –Smith (1952-57) described as “an untidy complex of non-Muslim tribal unions.”¹⁵ It was led by evangelists and school teachers who were largely trained and employed by the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M.). The League spearheaded the fight against forced labour and other forms of colonial exploitation carried out by the Native Authorities in the area. It also demanded the involvement and participation of the non-Muslim ethnic groups, especially the Western educated class among them in the running of the Native Authorities. In 1953 when a political party known as the United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C) was formed, the M.Z.L merged with it in order to effectively pursue its course. However opposition to the old order waned, when the educated class became sufficiently recruited into the Native Authority administration through the district and village group councils:...”The indigenous village heads were among those who adopted the mannerisms, the style of life and the general respect for *Sarauta*, that could be easily identified with the Hausa/Fulani village head. Even the educated group was socialized into accepting the superior organizational competence of the Hausa/Fulani”¹⁶

After independence, the elites among the non-Muslim ethnic groups were absorbed into the ruling class of northern Nigeria by the Hausa/Fulani leadership under Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Northern Region in the First Republic. Up to 1987, the struggle was pursued through:

- Petitions to government agencies, tribunals, panels and the public through the mass media
- The use of youth, women, community and political associations/organizations.
- The use of churches, cultural festivals, political and intellectual fora to campaign for emancipation against ‘Hausa/Fulani domination.’¹⁷

The struggle took a violent dimension in the following occasions:

- 1987, with the outbreak of what is generally called religious violence in Kafanchan.
- 1992, there was the Zangon –kataf crisis.
- 1999 Jema’a Emirship Staff of Office Riot
- 2000, the Shari’a’ Riot
- 2011 Post Election Violence.¹⁸

¹⁵ S.S. Bryan, **But Always As Friends**, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1969:217

¹⁶ Yahaya, 1980:164; Also see Yakubu, 1999:29-30, on the activities of the M.Z.L, B.A. (Hons.) History Dissertation, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

¹⁷ See Memorandum by the Hausa/Fulani, submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the Kafanchan Communal Clash, 1996:6, Kaduna, Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU).

In all the instances of the crisis listed above, there was violent attack on Hausa/Fulani in Southern Kaduna: farms, markets and properties were destroyed and several lives lost and the Hausa/Fulani displaced. At this juncture, it is important to point out that the violent nature of the crisis as from 1987 could not have been accidental. It could be the result of the implementation of the structural adjustment programme (SAP), of the then Federal Military government under General Babangida. The program generally deepened poverty level and unemployment in the country and the economic hardship became more unbearable to the masses in general.

Majority of the army personnel serving (or retired) in the Nigerian Army who are from Southern Kaduna are from the non-Muslim ethnic groups. With idleness, frustration and poverty reinforced by the poor pension condition of military retirees in Nigeria, it is not surprising that the struggle has taken more violent dimensions. Retired military personnel are deeply involved in the violent crisis that destabilized Southern Kaduna. The 1992 Zangon-Kataf crisis was led by one retired Major General Zamani Lekwot. It led to the killing of about 1,536 Hausa inhabitants of the town and the destruction of property worth N30, 000,000.¹⁹ General Lekwot was later found guilty of active participation in the genocide by a Judicial Commission of inquiry set up by the Military regime. Although he was sentenced to death, the Babangida regime converted the death sentence to a prison term.

Understanding the reasons for the ethnic and religious rivalry and competition in Southern Kaduna requires a probe, not only into the history of inter-ethnic relations in the area, but the dynamics of Nigeria's modern development-the issues of education, employment and unemployment, development of towns and villages and industrialization. Youth unemployment, poor infrastructural development and rural poverty are some of the factors that propel and promote social instability in Southern Kaduna. In 1999, a Commission of Inquiry which was set up by the Kaduna State government to probe the Jema'a Emirship Staff of Office Riots reported that "The Commission finds that massive unemployment is becoming a menace in the area resulting in the easy mobilization of idle youths to foment violence in the society...The problem is more pronounced in Jema'a Local Government Area. There are also inadequate infrastructural facilities."²⁰

The Demands of the non-Muslims

The demands of the people of Southern Kaduna are very clear. They are:

¹⁸ See Memorandum, Submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the Jema'a Emirship Staff of Office Riots by the Bajju Development Association.22/6/99:13-14

¹⁹ Abubakar Momoh, "The Pathology of Citizenship in Nigeria." in Ibrahim Muazzam, **The Citizenship Question in Nigeria**, Kano, CRD, 2009, p.64

²⁰ 20. White Paper, 1999: 29

- I. Self-determination (ethnic governance and territory- meaning that Chiefdoms/districts/ be created for ethnic communities independent of the Hausa/Fulani Emirate political structure ,
- II. Chiefs and District Heads be appointed, ruling houses be established, king makers appointed and succession methods be put in place by government.
- III. A change of status and restructuring of Jema'a Emirate
- IV. Abolition of the Emirate System.
- V. The Hausa/Fulani Muslims in the area be regarded as non-indigenes or settlers.
- VI. Southern Kaduna and Plateau form a large 'pagan' (Christian) state.²¹

While on the one hand the non-Muslim elites of Southern Kaduna want the Jema'a Emirate scrapped, they also advocate the creation of smaller Chiefdoms/Districts whose territories will be determined largely by ethnic and religious factors. Thus non-Muslim elites are appointed by government as Chiefs to 'govern' their people at the local levels. Palaces are built for such chiefs, king makers are appointed, and succession methods put in place by government even though the whole traditional political institutions have no place or role in Nigeria's constitution and local government structure.²²

The struggle for the abolition of Jema'a Emirate in Southern Kaduna is basically a struggle for power, relevance and influence by an elite group within the non-Muslim groups of the region. The pursuit of class interest "involve to an important degree the emphasizing of ethnic symbols and boundaries in the struggle for wealth and power."²³ The Emirate system died as a result of the political transformation which Nigeria passed through over the decades. In 1976, following the Local Government reform, District and village councils that had been in operation as organs of the Native Administration since the colonial period were abolished and a single-tier Local Government system was established throughout the country. In this period, still as a part of the transition to democracy, traditional rulers (emirs, chiefs, district and village heads) who were hitherto part of local administration in the N.A., were banned from participating in partisan politics as well as handling administrative responsibilities. Instead, the local governments became democratized and elections on the platforms of political parties became the means of securing power at the local government levels. Consequently from the 1979 Nigerian constitution to that of 1999 currently in operation all traditional local authorities with or without historical antecedents or foundation, have ceased to have any constitutional role and relevance in the governance of the people at all levels: village, districts, local government and state.

All traditional authorities and hitherto rulers in the country have become mere symbols of traditional heritage, ceremonial and religious leaders without even an advisory role in

²¹ See White paper; Memoranda by Bajju, Ninzam, Kaningkon, Fanstwam and Koro Development Associations..

²² Kaduna State of Nigeria, Gazette NO 16 Vol.39, 23rd June, 2005

²³ Richard A. Joseph, **Democracy and prebendal Politics in Nigeria: Rise and Fall of the Second Republic**, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987:5

governance or mention in the country's constitution. Traditional political structures across the country have become constitutionally superfluous and irrelevant in public administration.

In the period 1967-1987, there were only two Local Government areas namely, Jema'a and Kachia in Southern Kaduna. In 1992 the number of local governments was increased to 8 which constituted the Southern Kaduna senatorial zone. In the year 2000, Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna state created 22 chiefdoms and 217 districts in Southern Kaduna as much as possible in line with ethnic boundaries. This was the result of agitation and crisis in Southern Kaduna.²⁴

The creation of Chiefdoms and districts and the consequent appointment of chiefs and district heads by Kaduna State Government does not in fact translate into decentralization of power.. Instead, it is simply an expansion of state structure and an act to the satisfaction of an articulate elite group that seeks political relevance- power, wealth and influence through ethnic and religious agitation for change in an already transformed political and social environment.

Democracy in Nigeria 1999-2011

The struggle for democracy and independence which was started by Nigerian nationalists compelled the British colonial power to put the country on the path of democracy and independence. However Nigeria's first republic lasted only six years- 1960-1966 when the first military coup took place. Since then, violent takeover of government by the Nigerian Military at different times had disrupted the progress of democracy in Nigeria. The Military had governed the country for a total of twenty eight years. Each time the Military took over the reign of government in Nigeria, the civil society never relented in its struggle for the restoration of democracy and democratically elected governments in the country. In 1999, the Military regime of General Abacha came to an end with the transfer of power to a democratically elected government by General Abdusalam Abubakar to General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd) who was elected by Nigerians on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This marked the birth of Nigeria's fourth republic and the beginning of another democratic experiment in Nigeria which now happens to be the longest in the history of the country 1999-2011, a period of twelve years.

In opting for democracy in place of Military rule, Nigerians have generally accepted or recognized the need for good governance and "the inadequacy of other available claims to the legitimate exercise of power in the contemporary world. And such a measure of legitimacy is not an abstract notion that has been inherited from Western liberalism: it continues to make and break governments."²⁵ legitimacy question is the common factor between the Military and Civilian regimes in Nigeria. While it is very clear *ab initio* that the Military lacks legitimacy in governance because its road to power is via coup d'état, the civilian governments in Nigeria

²⁴ . Kaduna State of Nigeria, Gazette NO 27 Vol.34, 28 December, 2000; Kaduna State in Perspective 2008; See Henrick Angerbrandt, Political decentralization and Conflict: The Sharia criss in Kaduna, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 29:1, 15-31

²⁵ Joseph 1987:5

often face the same (political legitimacy) problem because it is often accused of coming to power through rigged or fraudulent elections.

Religion, ethnicity and regionalism in Nigerian politics became more entrenched during the Military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida 1985—1993 and Sani Abacha 1993-1998 when public employment and resource allocation were determined largely by these primordial considerations. The legacy of long period of Military rule in Nigeria is the distortion of Nigeria's political landscape through corruption, ethnic and religious bigotry.²⁶

Politics is seen by an average Nigerian and the political elite as the means not just to power but also quick wealth and influence through personal aggrandizement or what is well known as corruption and abuse of office. A civilian governor from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria once said that "politics is the **only viable industry** in Nigeria".²⁷ Tamuno further stated that "in Nigeria, "politics from the 1970s...produced the only set of triplets that Nigeria (sic) looked for most anxiously. One, wealth, two, power and three, fame. No other industry produces those triplets except politics...and where there are many competitors there will be many losers because you won't have enough to share to the extent that all competitors will have at the same time."²⁸

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, systematic and congenial corruption has eroded the expected gains of democracy: poverty, massive unemployment and illiteracy have become prevalent in the country. This has led to mobilization and exploitation of ethnic and religious difference as a means of survival in public and private life in the country.²⁹ The ordinary Nigerian across the country has lost faith in the democratic system and is therefore susceptible to manipulation and violence as self-help measures.

Power sharing through the principles and provisions of federal character embedded in Nigerian Constitution is intended to maintain a delicate balance between numerous contending ethnic, religious and interest groups at the national, state and local levels³⁰. This is determined by the factor of indigenship which is tied to the issue of land or ethnicity in Nigerian politics. This is why today even ordinary appointment as a secondary school tutor at national, state or local government service is tied to the issue of indigenship and could also be affected or influenced by ethnic or religious affiliation of the candidates.

²⁶ Attahiru Jega, "The Impact of military Rule on Governance in Nigeria" in Attahiru Jega, et al, **Democracy and Democratization in Nigeria 1999-2001**, 2002:40, Kano, CDR.; Also see Tatab Mentan, *Held Together by Pins: Liberal Democracy Under Siege in Africa*, Trenton, Africa World Press, 2007:46

²⁷ Tekena Tamuno, "Historical Antecedents of Political Violence in Nigeria" in Attahiru M. Jega, et al, **Strategies for Curbing Election Related Violence in Nigeria's North-West Zone**, Kano, CDR, 2003:27

²⁸ Tamuno, 2003:28

²⁹ Jega, 2002 pp37-38

³⁰ Alex Gboyega, "The Public Service and Federal Character." in P.P. Ekeh & E. E. Osaghae, **Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria**. Ibadan, Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd 1989:164

Nigeria is largely an agrarian society. Land ownership is a fundamental pillar of the existence of various communities. Understandably therefore, indigenship is tied to the question of land ownership. Different people try to assert ownership over the area they occupy in order to guaranty their rights as farmers and to aspire to political positions or hold appointments in local governments, state or federal service. This promotes the politics of exclusion and unhealthy competitions, rivalry and violence among different communities and people. Primordial divisions and identities come to occupy primary position in Nigerian politics.³¹ Hence the question of indigenes versus strangers or settlers based on the claim of first arrivals and later arrivals in a place and this could lead to violence even among the same ethnic and religious groups or community, i.e. intra-ethnic conflict. In fact the oldest of all the communal conflicts in Nigeria is the Ife-Modakeke conflict (between a wholly Yoruba group) which has been recurring for over a century.³²

In Southern Kaduna, the multi-ethnic groups who are predominantly Christians see the Hausa-Fulani Muslim minorities who live in their midst as strangers or settlers, while the Hausa/Fulani on the other hand put equal claim to the land which they occupy. This means that the Hausa/Fulani in Southern Kaduna are being denied indigenous status even though some of them have a history of over three hundred years in support of their living there.³³ The question which the Hausa /Fulani ask is, "Where were the tribes (sic.) when this Emirate {Jema'a} came into being?"³⁴.As has been pointed out by TOURE, 2009 "being an "indigene" means being able to claim all citizenship rights, while being a "settler" by implication means denial of some of these."³⁵

The agitation for the creation of Chiefdoms and districts by the ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna are aimed not just at the attainment of independence from the Hausa/Fulani but also at re-defining the ethno-religious map of the area in such a way that it will exclude 'strangers' and prevent them from enjoying the political, and economic resources of the area. The irony lies in the fact that the ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna constitute ethnic and religious minorities in the state as a whole. They collectively fight against political, economic and social domination by the majority Hausa/Fulani in the state, while at the same time fight to ensure their prominence and predominance in the area they occupy.

At the state level, the Hausa/Fulani have always produced the governor of the state in democratic dispensations, since in a democracy, it is a question of number and the ethnic

³¹ E. E. Osaghae and Rotimi T. Suberu , **A History of Identities, Violence, and Stability in Nigeria** CRISE Working Paper NO 6. Jan. 2005 (Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, University of Oxford). Crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper6.pdf (accessed 1/11/11)

³² A. R. Asiyanbola, "Urban-ethno Communal Conflict in Africa: Nigeria." A paper presented at the Union for Africa population Studies (UAPS) fifth African Population Conference, Arusha, Tanzania, December 2007 <http://docs.google.com/viewer> (accessed 1/11/11)

³³ Memorandum Submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the Jema'a Emirate Emirship Staff of Office Riots by the Dangoma Fulani Settlers, Kaduna , Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 22/5/1999.p.1

³⁴ Memo,. Hausa/Fulani, 1996:5

³⁵ Toure Kazah Toure, "The Citizenship Question in Nigeria" in Muazzam, 2009:46

groups in southern Kaduna as an ethnic and religious bloc is a minority in terms of population and therefore cannot produce a Governor through elections in the type of democracy that is largely driven by primordial divisions and consideration. However, the position of Deputy Governor has always been reserved for them by every political party from 1999 to 2007 when the current vice president of Nigeria, Arc. Namadi Sambo was elected the Governor of Kaduna State. This means that the ethnic groups are perpetually reduced to subordinate position in the state's politics. In fact, even the position of Deputy Governor is conceded to them for the purpose of political balance and inclusiveness, which is in the spirit of democracy and peaceful co-existence. This has been one of their major grievances against their fellow Hausa/Fulani indigenes. In 2010, following the death of Alhaji Umaru Musa 'Yar'Adua, the President of Nigeria, the then Vice-president, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn in as the President of the country to complete the residual term of Alhaji 'Yar'adua. Dr. Jonathan in turn, nominated Architect Namadi Sambo as the Vice President. The confirmation of the latter in this position, led to the ascension of Sir. Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa, the erstwhile Deputy Governor of Kaduna State to the position of Governor. The constitution has made it possible for the southern Kaduna ethnic groups to have one of their own for the first time as the Governor of the state. While it is impossible to challenge or change this constitutional opportunity or chance that uplifted the status of southern Kaduna, the major challenge of another round of elections in 2011 was a reality that could not be washed away by the people of southern Kaduna. There was anxiety and tension across the state but more so in southern Kaduna.

Following the civil disturbances that accompanied the Presidential election in April, the southern Kaduna ethnic groups became apprehensive. The Hausa/Fulani in southern Kaduna clearly supported and voted for General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd.), the Presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) which was one of the major opposition parties to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on whose platform Sir. Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa was going to contest the gubernatorial election. Here is the testimony of one of the victims of the post- election violence in Zonkwa, Southern Kaduna:

To the best of my knowledge, the pattern of voting caused it [post election violence]. The Hausa in Zonkwa insisted that they were going to vote for the CPC. But the natives called them and appealed to them to please vote their own (Yakowa). They impressed it on them that since the creation of Kaduna state, nobody from Southern Kaduna has ever been elected governor. But that all these years, those of them from southern Kaduna have been voting people of northern and central parts of the state (which are predominantly Hausa/Fulani and Muslims.³⁶

The post election violence in southern Kaduna not surprisingly targeted Hausa/Fulani people in the area- hundreds of them were killed or injured and thousands were displaced from their places of residence in major towns and villages in the area such as Zonkwa and Kafanchan. It is true that there was widespread post election violence in other parts of northern Nigeria but the scale and pattern are different from that of southern Kaduna which Professor Mahmoud

³⁶ "Post Election Violence: Kaduna Victims recount moving stories" (<http://www.sunnews.com/webpages/news/nationa/2011>) (accessed 2/09/11)

Hamman aptly describes as “genocidal massacre.”³⁷ Many Hausa/Fulani internally displaced persons are still in refugee camp in Kaduna, the state’s capital.

The interesting point is that at the end of it all, Sir. Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa won the gubernatorial election- defeating over ten Muslim candidates who contested against him including that of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the most popular party in Northern Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that in the pre-colonial times, the pattern of inter-ethnic and religious relations in Southern Kaduna was paradoxical. At the political level, there was periodic tension generated by the competition for power and the control of the natural resources. At the economic and social levels however, there was mutual interaction- trade and the use of common language-Hausa language as the medium of interaction and social relations. Colonialism, Christianity and Western education altered the balance of power and set in motion the process of change in political and social relations among the people. Ironically, the non-Muslim ethnic groups of Southern Kaduna are fighting for the creation and establishment of the very institutions they despise and condemn as the symbol of oppression. They have adopted the *sarauta* system, its structure, custom and symbols of the Hausa/Fulani people whom they now violently seek to exclude and expel from their familiar and traditional ancestral environment on the basis of new found identity and political culture.

It must be admitted that the creation of chiefdoms and districts in Southern Kaduna may have doused ethnic and religious tension in the area but it has not settled the thorny problem of the status of the Hausa/Fulani people who have lived in the area since pre-colonial times. The election of Governor Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa has not only crowned the struggle of the non-Muslims in southern Kaduna, but also created an opportunity for reconciliation and unity among the contending interest groups, although the status of the Hausa/Fulani in southern Kaduna is an issue which can only be resolved within the national debate on the question of citizenship, indigenship, and settlers in Nigeria. Since it is an issue which has direct economic and political significance for individuals and communities, it shall remain the cause of periodic violence in not only Kaduna state, but also other places with a similar problem in the country.

³⁷ Mahmoud Hamman, 2011:4, Memorandum on the post-Presidential Election Disturbances in Kaduna and other Northern States, Submitted to the Presidential Panel Investigating the pre and post Election Disturbances in Nigeria” Kaduna, Arewa house, Ahmadu Bello University.

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