A Survey of the Muslims of Nigeria’s North Central Geopolitical Zone

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Abstract

This report surveys the Muslims of the North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria, namely, in alphabetical order, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau States, plus the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. In ethnic and religious terms this is a very heterogeneous part of Nigeria. To try to get a sense of the diverse Muslim populations of each state and the FCT separately, in the very short time allowed for the work, Muslim scholars familiar with their assigned territories were commissioned to write separate essays on their states or the FCT, roughly according to the same plan of this essay as outlined in the Table of Contents. The authors of those state and FCT essays are acknowledged below and their background papers are listed in the bibliography. This report is then based on the state and FCT background papers, plus the research of other scholars of Islam in Nigeria and its histories among the many ethnic groups coexisting there, plus the author’s own work, all as indicated in the notes and references.

Acknowledgements

Much of this report is based on the work of the eight researchers who as part of the Islam Research Programme – Abuja, in the very short time allowed, gathered information on the six states of the North Central Zone and the FCT and wrote background papers about them. They are, for Benue, Ustaz Khalid Muhammad Ibrahim; for Kogi, Dr. Mashood M. M. Jimba; for Kwara, Dr. Abdulganiy Abimbola Abdussalam; for Nasarawa, Dr. Mrs. Sa’adatu Hassan Liman and Dr. Abubakar S.I. Wakawa; for Niger, Dr. M. Umar Ndagi; for Plateau, soon-to-be-Dr. Muhammad Sani Adam Modibbo; and for the FCT, Dr. Nasiru Idris Medugu. The author is grateful for their good work and for their willingness to do their best to answer his many questions. He also gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Islam Research Programme – Abuja, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The views presented in this paper represent those of the author and are in no way attributable to the Ministry.
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A Survey of the Muslims of Nigeria’s North Central Geo-political Zone

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1. Introduction.

1.1. Nigeria’s North Central Zone. Nigeria’s North Central geo-political zone comprises six states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja (FCT): the southern two tiers of states that have been formed out of the old Northern Region, plus the FCT, minus Taraba and Adamawa (see Map 1). The North Central Zone, like the other five geo-political zones into which Nigeria is now for certain purposes divided, was marked out during the reign of Sani Abacha (1993-1998). The six zones were supposed to be the basis for the rotational presidency contemplated in Abacha’s draft constitution. But that constitution never took effect, and the zones at present have no constitutional basis or any constitutional role in the selection of the president. They were however also defined and given roles in the Federal Character Commission Decree promulgated by Abacha in 1996 and still in force today; they

Map 1: Present-day Nigeria, showing the North Central geo-political zone in blue. The boundaries of the former Northern, Western and Eastern Regions are bolded.¹

¹ With many thanks for the map to Jasper Dung of the University of Jos Department of Geography and Planning and the Oklahoma State University Department of Geography.

therefore constitute one of the tools used by Nigeria’s Federal Character Commission to try to ensure that Nigeria’s jobs and wealth are equitably distributed among its peoples (Mustapha 2007). The total population of the North Central Zone according to the 2006 Nigerian census, a little over 20 million people, was then about 14% of the national total (Census 2006), not far off from the 16.7% that one sixth of the nation would be. The 2006 populations of the six North Central states and the FCT, in descending order, are given in Table 1, together with the estimated 2011 populations assuming an annual average growth rate since 2006 of 2.3%.

Table 1: 2006 and estimated 2011 populations of North Central states and FCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>2006 pop. per census</th>
<th>Est. 2011 pop. at 2.3% annual growth since 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benue State</td>
<td>4,291,244</td>
<td>4,807,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger State</td>
<td>3,950,249</td>
<td>4,425,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi State</td>
<td>3,278,487</td>
<td>3,673,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau State</td>
<td>3,178,712</td>
<td>3,561,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwaara State</td>
<td>2,371,089</td>
<td>2,656,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa State</td>
<td>1,863,275</td>
<td>2,087,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCT</td>
<td>1,405,201</td>
<td>1,574,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total North Central Zone</td>
<td>20,338,257</td>
<td>22,787,249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2. The North Central Zone and the Middle Belt. If Taraba and Adamawa were added back to the North Central Zone, the result would be approximately Nigeria’s “Middle Belt”, a construct (in which are often also included the southern parts of Kebbi, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe and Borno States, compare Map 2, next page) that has played some role in Nigerian politics since at least the 1950s (Sklar 1963; Dudley 1968; Tyoden 1993; Logams 2004). What was supposed to have held the vast Middle Belt together politically was never very clear – except perhaps a presumed common wish to throw off the yoke of the Hausa-Fulani ruling classes that for so long had dominated governance within the Northern Region, during and for some time after the period (1900-1960) of British colonial rule. And indeed, Map 2 confirms the ethno-linguistic differences between the “core north” or “far north”, dominated by the Hausa language and Hausa culture, and ruled since the early nineteenth century mostly by clans of Hausaized Fulani (Johnston 1967; Last 1967), and the more southerly parts of the former Northern Region, where there still exists today an incredible diversity of languages, mostly from an entirely different language family than Hausa, each language associated with its own larger or smaller ethnic group, each group still trying to preserve as much as possible of its linguistic and cultural identity and its former local sovereignty (cf. Ostien 2009: 2-7). With the break-up of the Northern Region into a total now of nineteen states plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and democratic rule instituted in the state and local governments everywhere (including local governments in the FCT), the former Hausa-Fulani hegemony as rulers of all these diverse middlebelt peoples, to the extent that it formerly existed from place to place and time to time, is long gone, and with it, probably, little further basis for the political solidarity of the Middle Belt, or now of the North Central geo-political zone. Break-up of all the former regions into smaller states began in 1967, under the rule of the military. Democratic rule returned briefly from 1979 to 1983, and again in 1999, since when it has lasted up to now. Judging by the diversity of political parties the states of the North Central Zone have supported during periods when there have been elections to state and federal offices, they have sometimes seen their interests differently (Table 2, next page). But this

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form of diversity ended in 2003 when all the North Central states went PDP: nationwide PDP won 28 of 36 states in 2007. Behind these election results of course are complex political histories, separately within the states and jointly within the regional and national politics of

Table 2: Parties winning presidential and governorship races in North Central states in elections from 1979 to 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>(still parts of Kwara and Benue)</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>AD/APP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>AD/APP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>(still part of Plateau)</td>
<td>NPN</td>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the times. All this history cannot be gone into here, except as it is occasionally touched on in what follows.  

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5 Sources: various websites. For the meanings of the party acronyms, see next note.

6 The following summary of the meanings of the party acronyms used in Table2 gives a small sense of some of the political history. 1979/1983: NPN: National Party of Nigeria: northern: won 1979 and 1983 presidential elections with Shehu Shagari, a Fulani Muslim from present Sokoto State as candidate; all North Central zone went for it except Plateau (which then included Nasarawa). NPP: Nigerian People’s Party: primarily eastern, but Plateau/Nasarawa voted for it twice (led by Solomon Lar); lost 1979 and 1983 presidential elections with Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo Christian from present Anambra State, as candidate. Also running in 1979 and 1983:UPN: Unity Party of Nigeria: western: came second in 1979 and 1983 presidential elections with Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba Christian from present Ogun State, as candidate; in North Central zone did not even win.
2. Data on religious affiliation in the North Central states.

2.1. Census data on religious affiliation from 1952 and 1963. Before there was Islam or Christianity in the North Central Zone, there were African Traditional Religions (cf. Parrinder 1954 and 1961 and much subsequent literature). It is these that both Islam and Christianity, since they came to these parts of the world, have done their best to replace. Some indication of their success, to the middle of the last century, is given in Table 3, which summarizes, for the states of the North Central Zone, data on population by religion from the 1952 and 1963 Nigerian censuses. Of course none of the present states then existed as such. The data pertaining to the present states have been calculated from the 1952 and 1963 data on the former divisions and provinces from which the states were subsequently constructed, as explained fully in a separate report (Ostien 2012) and summarized more briefly in the notes to Table 3. No attempt has been made to calculate the data for the FCT, which was created in 1976 out of districts formerly part of what are now Niger, Nasarawa and Kogi States. In Table 3 the states are arranged in descending order of percentages of Muslims in 1963.

Table 3: Percentages by religion of 1952 and 1963 populations of North Central states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present state</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Muslim</td>
<td>% Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara7</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger8</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa10</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau11</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue12</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We see here the reduction, between 1952 and 1963, of the percentages of “animists and others”, and corresponding gains in the percentages of both Muslims and Christians. But even in 1963 this process still had a long way to go in most of these states; and unfortunately no census since 1963 has gathered data on religious affiliation. We are left to try to form impressions of current percentages of Muslims and Christians from other sorts of

Kwara State although Kwara is predominantly Yoruba. 1992/1993: NRC: National Republican Convention: “a little bit to the right”: lost 1993 presidential election with Bashir Tofa, a Hausa Muslim from present Kano State, as candidate. SDP: Social Democratic Party: “a little bit to the left”: won 1993 presidential election with M.K.O. Abiola, a Yoruba Muslim from present Ogun State, as candidate, carrying both Plateau/Nasarawa and Kwara along; but Kogi and Niger went NRC. Election subsequently annulled and military rule by a northern general (Abacha) continued after brief interregnum. 1999: AD/APP: Alliance for Democracy/All Peoples Party: coalition of western and northern parties: lost 1999 presidential election with Olu Falae, a Yoruba Christian from present Ondo State as candidate. The ANPP, the All Nigeria Peoples Party, formed after 1999 from the APP, see below. PDP: People’s Democratic Party: national: won 1999 presidential election with Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba Christian from present Ogun State as candidate. All states of North Central zone went PDP in 1999 except Kwara and Kogi, which went AD/APP. 2003/2007: PDP won presidential elections with Obasanjo as candidate in 2003 and Umaru Yar’Adua, a Fulani Muslim from present Katsina State as candidate in 2007, both times defeating ANPP with Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani Muslim from present Katsina State as candidate. In both years all states of North Central zone went PDP.

7 1952 and 1963: Ilorin, Lafiagi-Pategi and ½ Borgu divisions of Ilorin Province.
8 1952 and 1963: Abuja, Bida, Minna, ½ Kontagora divs. of Niger Prov. and ½ Borgu div. of Ilorin Prov.
12 1952 and 1963: Idoma and Tiv divs. of Benue Prov.
information. Unfortunately, given what is available, the “others” than Muslims or Christians tend to drop from view.

2.2. Current data on religious affiliation of elected officials. The religious and ethnic affiliations of persons running for public office are important to most Nigerian voters and are always known to them; indeed these are two of the significant determinants of who people vote for, the policies politicians say they will pursue if elected having little to do with it. If given a choice, and other things being more or less equal, Muslims tend to vote for Muslims and Christians for Christians. Often there is no choice, all the candidates being Muslim or all Christian, in constituencies where one or the other group clearly predominates among the voters. Percentages of Muslims and Christians elected to office are therefore an indicator, within some wide margin of error, of percentages of Muslims and Christians among the voters. This is particularly true if elective offices in different branches and levels of government are aggregated. The electoral constituencies (all single-member) vary in size and geographical configuration and therefore cut across many different demographics where percentages of voters by religion will vary. Looking therefore at the Governors and Deputy Governors (state-wide constituencies), the members of the state Houses of Assembly (between 21 and 29 constituencies per North Central state), the Chairmen of the Local Government Councils (between 13 and 25 constituencies per state), the federal Senators (three constituencies per state), and the federal Representatives (between 6 and 11 constituencies per state), we get the results set forth in Table 4.\(^{13}\) In this table the states are arranged in descending order of percentages of Muslims holding the totals of the elective offices accounted for in March 2011, as shown in the right-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gov.</th>
<th>Dep. Gov.</th>
<th>Muslims in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Mslm</td>
<td>Mslm</td>
<td>24/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>Mslm</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>20/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>Mslm</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>16/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>Mslm</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>17/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>4/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>Chstn</td>
<td>0/29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking percentages of elected officials by religion as an indication of percentages of voters by religion, Table 4 suggests that in Plateau and Benue more of the “others” of 1963 have become Christians than Muslims; in Niger and Nasarawa and probably in Kogi more have become Muslims than Christians; and in Kwara the percentages have stayed about the same. The size of the swings, between 1963 and 2011, of “others” to one side or the other, as indicated by Table 4, is no doubt in some cases exaggerated by the fact that a simple majority (indeed, a plurality) is enough to win these elections, so that even if only a small majority of Muslims or Christians existed in every jurisdiction, they could theoretically win every single office, showing the state by this measure to be 100% Muslim or 100% Christian when in reality it was, say, only 60%. Benue is an example of this exaggeration: it was about 3% Muslim in 1963 (Table 3), and our Benue researcher estimates that it is about 6% Muslim.

\(^{13}\) An even finer-grained result could be obtained if all members of the Local Government Councils were included. In Jos North Local Government, for instance, while the Council Chairman is a Christian, 9 out of 20 of the members are Muslims, elected from wards in the city where Muslims predominate (Modibbo 2012). But to gather similar information for all the jurisdictions here in question was beyond the scope of this work.

\(^{14}\) Sources: researcher reports for this project.
today (Ibrahim 2012), compared to the 0% implausibly shown in Table 4. Plateau is probably another example: the 1963 census found it to be about 26% Muslim (Table 3), yet in 2011 only 16% of the elected officials studied were Muslims (Table 4). Table 4 perhaps also exaggerates the percentages of Muslims in Kwara, Nasarawa and Kogi in the same way; an indication of this is given by the fact that in all these states the Deputy Governors are Christians, suggesting important percentages of the state-wide electorates to be placated by the Muslim majorities. The apparently less sizeable Muslim minority of Plateau State has long been asking for the same consideration from the Plateau Christians, without success (Ostien 2009: 22-26). With these reservations, Table 4 gives some indication of the percentages of Muslims, and certainly of Muslim political strength, in the North Central states at the present time.  

3. Categories of Muslims.

This section describes the main denominational categories of Muslims present in the North Central Zone, with circumstantial detail on some of their activities and some of the NGOs and CBOs they form to carry out those activities. It also describes some of the ways state and federal authorities have dealt with Muslim groups potentially or actually causing civil disturbances.

3.1. Basic doctrinal divisions.

3.1.1. Sunnis. Most by far of the Muslims of the North Central Zone are Sunni Muslims, following the Maliki school of law (probably 90 to 95%). There are many differences among the Sunnis of course; these are discussed further in section 3.2 below.

3.1.2. “Shias”. In Nigeria there are probably very few orthodox Shia Muslims, e.g. of the Twelver school that prevails in Iran or other varieties known elsewhere in the world. There is however a group in Nigeria often referred to as “Shias”. They prefer to call themselves “the Islamic Movement” or perhaps “the Muslim Brothers Movement”. This movement started in the early 1980s when many young Nigerian Muslims, especially students in northern universities, were inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979 and by its ideological purity: Western impositions must be cast off, pious Muslims must rule, and sharia must be the law of the land. Literature from Iran flooded into the country. Some of the northern students visited Iran and held counsel with the ruling mullahs there. Among them was Ibraheem Yaqoub Zakzaky of Zaria, now known as Sheikh Ibraheem El Zakzaky. Allowing for factional splits that cannot be gone into here, Zakzaky became and remains the leader of the Nigerian “Shias” or “Islamic Movement” or “Muslim Brothers Movement”. Doctrinally the Nigerian “Shia” overlap in at least some ways with other Shia: for instance they celebrate the Day of Ashura, the Shia day of mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, grandson of Prophet Muhammad. The extent to which they follow the Iranian or other Shia doctrine is not clear: do they, for instance, believe in the imamate and the rule of fuqaha in the present day? The Amir of their Plateau State branch suggests not, saying that it is a

15 The only other method of estimation of current percentages of Muslims suggested by our researchers, was to make estimates LGA by LGA, based on inquiries among knowledgeable local residents. This was done for Nasarawa State, resulting in an estimate of 61% Muslims for the state (Liman and Wakawa 2012), not far off from the 65% suggested by Table 4.

16 “Islamic Movement”: see http://www.islamicmovement.org/index.htm; and see Abdussalam 2012. “Muslim Brothers Movement” or more briefly “Brothers Movement”: see Modibbo 2012, which has a good section on this group. For more on the Nigerian “Shias” see e.g. Umar 2001: 138-39 and authorities cited.

17 Fuqaha (sing: faqih): experts in fiqh, Islamic law and jurisprudence.
misconception of some Muslims that the movement is indoctrinating Shia doctrine among Nigerian Muslims; this misconception has been a stumbling block towards its da’wah \(^{18}\) programme as many Sunni youths are still hesitating to support its struggle. This misunderstanding is a result of the fact of its admiration of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini as a model in its da’wah activities. (Modibbo 2012)

But a different conclusion is suggested by the following report of an incident in Kano State, when the Director of Da’wah of the Kano State Sharia Commission was called in to deal with some Shia preachers; the report also illustrates one of the ways in which unorthodox sects are sometimes handled by authorities in the north.

In Garko Local Government, some Shia were preaching their “dangerous ideology”. This was reported to the Director. He called the Chairman of the Garko Shari'a Council and they discussed the matter. At some point the Director went to Garko to see for himself what was happening. He went on a Friday, and went to listen to the preaching of the Shia. Among other things they were attacking the first three Caliphs [as being usurpers of the succession to Prophet Muhammad which rightfully belonged to Ali: this is classical Shia doctrine]. The Director and others agreed that this should not be allowed to continue. So they “drove out” the Shia. Not by bringing in the police, or physically removing them, which would have made martyrs of them and which they would have liked. Instead some of the preaching organisations in the Majalisar Kungiyoyin Da’wah [Council of Da’wah Organisations] brought powerful loudspeakers to the place where the Shia were preaching, and started “counter-preaching”: debunking the things the Shia were saying and teaching the correct things. Eventually the Shia just went away. The Director said that of course they would simply go elsewhere and start again, and the struggle would be renewed. \(^{19}\)

What is sure about the ideology of the Nigerian “Shias” is that like the Iranians they believe that Islam – pious Muslims in some form – must rule, and that sharia must be the law of the land. Accordingly they reject the Nigerian constitution and laws as deriving from illegitimate sources, and say they work for the establishment of an “Islamic state” in Nigeria, whose constitution would be the Qur’an and the Hadiths \(^{20}\) of the Prophet Muhammad. They denounce democracy at least as it exists in theory and certainly in practice in Nigeria. They don’t sing the national anthem or say the pledge of allegiance or respect the flag. They denounced the programmes of “sharia implementation” begun in twelve northern states in 1999/2000 as shams and inevitable failures, undertaken as they were by unislamic governments. Possibly they denounce Muslims who believe and behave differently on these points as “apostates”, “unbelievers”, kuffar (sing: kafir): this might be implicit for instance in their calling themselves “the [true] Islamic Movement”. In any case most Nigerian Muslims have rejected “Shia” doctrine on these points in its entirety. Given their views, the Nigerian “Shia” are of course under the watchful eyes of the authorities, as the above story illustrates. They are usually allowed to preach as they like but they are not very welcome. Sheikh al-Zakzaky has been arrested on several occasions. After thirty years of proselytization the “Shia” remain a small minority of Muslims in the North Central states. The authors of the background papers have estimated their numbers as follows:

- **Niger**: “no pronounced presence” (Ndagi 2012)
- **Nasarawa**: “a few” (Liman and Wakawa 2012)
- **Benue**: “a handful” (Ibrahim 2012)
- **Kogi**: “not known to Muslims in the state, except in few areas in Igalaloid such as Anyigba … a handful of Shia are based in Anyigba Township, they are not active and Muslims are

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\(^{18}\) Da’wah: issuing a summons; making an invitation; calling people to Islam; preaching or explaining Islam,

\(^{19}\) Written from notes of the author’s interview with the Director of Da’wah, Kano State Sharia Commission, conducted in Kano on 28 May 2010.

\(^{20}\) Hadith (pl. hadiths or ahadith): see section 3.1.4.
quick to distance themselves from them the moment they realize their dogmatic posture…
There is a pocket size of Shia in Ebiraland….” (Jimba 2012)

- **Plateau**: “2-3%” (Modibbo 2012).

The Kwara and Plateau State papers both contain discussions of the “Shia” there, under the name of “The Islamic Movement” in Kwara and “The Brothers Movement” in Plateau (Abdussalam 2012; Modibbo 2012). But on the main point of interest to the authorities, namely attitudes towards the Nigerian constitution and laws and the liberal-democratic state they contemplate, however imperfectly manifested in practice, the vast majority of Nigerian Muslims of all confessional persuasions accept the present arrangement, work with and within it, and strive, some of them, to make it work better in practice. The Muslim Students Society (MSS, or MSSN), which in the late 1970s and 1980s flirted with “Shia” doctrine on the Nigerian constitution, seems to be free of it today, at least in the Benue and Kogi State chapters (Ibrahim 2012; Jimba 2012). But among the Sunnis there is an exception – the sect of “Boko Haram”, now banned, which takes a very hard line against the Nigerian state and all its works. Boko Haram is discussed in section 3.2.4.1 below.

3.1.3. **Ahmadis**. The Ahmadis are a well-known sect stemming from late nineteenth century India and present in Nigeria since the 1920s, most notably among the Yoruba (Fisher 1963; Balogun 1974; Loimeier 1997: 159-62). There are few of them in the North Central Zone. “No pronounced presence” (Niger); “A relatively small minority… They can be found around Nyanya and Karu” (FCT); “a few” (Nasarawa); “a handful… mostly in Makurdi and Otukpo, among Yoruba immigrants to the state” (Benue). The western part of Kogi State, inhabited by peoples closely related to the Yoruba (Okun) seems to have the greatest concentration of Ahmadis anywhere in this zone:

The Ahmadiyya are found in major towns in Okunland, such as Ayetoro-Gbedde, Ayegunle-Gbedde, Iyamoye and Ogidi. They account for about 40% of the Muslim population in those areas… Recently, a tiny group of Ahmadiyya (consisting about four people only) appeared in [Igalaland] and made Ankepa their base from where they carry out their preaching activities at nearby villages such as Ikanekpo and Ogodu. They have not been able to win a single Muslim to their fold… By and large, the Sunnis could be said to account for about 95%, the Ahmadiyya for 4.5% and the Shia for 0.5% of the Muslims population in the state. (Jimba 2012)

The Ahmadis have in the past suffered persecution by other Muslims, many of whom believe them to be heretics and even non-Muslims, but they seem to be better tolerated now. They are known among other things for their efforts to promote modern systems of Islamic education in Nigeria and to better organise the hajj. Like the vast majority of other Nigerian Muslims they support the Nigerian constitution and laws and work within them.

3.1.4. **Qur’aniyyun**. Qur’aniyyun, generically, are Muslims who accept only the Qur’an as an authoritative guide to faith and practice, to the exclusion of the Hadiths. The Hadiths purport to report the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad; they are stories told by people who purportedly witnessed what he said and did and told others about it, who told yet others and so on down to us in the present day. Most Muslims – including Sunnis, Shias and Ahmadis – find different collections of these Hadiths to be credible as reports of what Prophet Muhammad actually said and did, and accept the sayings and doings themselves, after the Qur’an, as authoritative guides to faith and practice: Allah showing the way to humans through the whole life of the divinely-guided Prophet. Qur’aniyyun reject all this, not only because of the uncertain veracity of the Hadiths, but because they believe that except when he was taking the dictation of the Qur’an – which they agree is divine – the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad were no more divinely-guided than the sayings or doings of any of the rest of us: he too was a mere man. Qur’aniyyun therefore reject most of the Islamic
law articulated in the various schools of fiqh – the “alleged” sharia, as they might say – which is largely based on the Hadith literature. They go their own ways, guided only by the text of the Qur’an.

There are at least two strains of Qur’aniyyun in Nigeria. The best-known are those now commonly called “Kala Kato”, for their use of this phrase to mean “a mere man [i.e. Muhammad] said it”, applied to the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad insofar as we can know them (Hiskett 1987). The most famous representative of this group was the Maitatsine who caused such a stir in Kano in 1980 and posthumously in Borno and Adamawa states (see Kastfeld 1989, Anwar 1997 and Olayiwola 2007 and authorities cited). This group continues to be nurtured within and around the system of traditional Islamic education which continues to exist and attract large numbers of students in the villages and towns and cities of northern Nigeria, see section 4.2 below. At the early stages this type of education focuses exclusively on the Qur’an: learning to recite and even to write parts or all of it out by heart. Most young people pursue this sort of education to some distance. Most of them end up orthodox Sunnis. Only those few who join Kala Kato do not consider it necessary to read or learn from any other book. Accordingly, Kala Kato are uneducated in any Western or even Muslim sense. They still exist in many places in northern Nigeria, living at the margins of society, making their livings sometimes as malams teaching the Qur’an, more often as petty traders, hair and nail-cutters, water carriers, etc.; in Jos one of their leaders has gone into the bread business and employs quite a number of his followers. They keep mostly to themselves, not praying in the same mosques with other Muslims or otherwise associating with them very much. They still sometimes engage in public preaching, which is not welcomed by the authorities. This report again from Kano State illustrates the position:

In Tudun Wada LGA there is a village called Kayu. This is on a lake or river where the fishing is good, so fisherpeople from various places have settled there to pursue their occupation. At this place, a Kala Kato person appeared and began trying to persuade people not to go to school, not to send their children to school, that they should read the Qur’an only, and so on. Some people were even destroying their books of Hadiths under this man’s influence. The Sharia Commission went there. They went to talk to the man and some of his followers. They engaged in discussion about the Qur’an, the Hadiths, and so on. The man was arguing his own ideology. They refuted him. The man left the place before very long. The Sharia Commission established a good Islamiyya school there.

This shows the attitude of most Nigerian Muslims to Kala Kato insofar as they have even heard about them, which many have not. Kala Kato obviously share some beliefs with the presently more notorious Boko Haram (rejection of western education, but on different grounds) but not others (rejection of the modern state, which for Kala Kato is like the weather). Since the upheavals of the 1980s Kala Kato have kept mostly out of the news, except for the occasional outburst, as in Bauchi in 2009. In the North Central Zone they are little known: “Qur’aniyyun/Kala-Kato/Yan-Tatsine, 1%” (Plateau); “a few…not large in number and are found in Lafia” (Nasarawa). In 2009 Governor Aliyu of Niger State said “We've had groups like Kalakatu [sic] … but they have certain absurd rules and

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21 Malam (pl. malamai or malams): Hausa for Ar. alim: Islamic scholar; person learned in the theology and law of Islam and the literature, mostly in Arabic, proper to these disciplines. In Nigeria often used as an honorific.
22 Author’s research in Jos, March-July 2010.
23 From the author’s interview with the Director of Da’wah, Kano State Sharia Commission, see n. 18 above.
24 This was first reported on 28 December 2009, see e.g. The Guardian, 28 Dec. 2009, internet edition, “Religious mayhem claims 30 in Bauchi”; Daily Trust, 29 Dec. 2009, internet edition, “38 Killed in Bauchi Skirmishes”. It appears that this incident involved a power-struggle internal to the sect that got out of hand.
and the reporter for this project on Niger reports “no pronounced presence” of Kala Kato there.

The other strain of Qur’aniyyun found in Nigeria are the followers of Rashid Khalifa, an Egyptian biochemist who settled in Arizona. They call themselves The Submitters, at http://www.submission.org. This is a world-wide organisation with many adherents in all parts of the world, including Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. Another of their names in Nigeria is Al-Quraniyyun; i.e. those who accept the Qur’an only. Their credo is simple: they do not accept any Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). They do accept him as a prophet of Allah…[but they] took the…step of rejecting all the Hadith and concentrating all their worship on Allah’s injunctions in the Qur’an. (Adamu 2003).

The Nigerian Submitters are evidently well-educated academics and business-people well acquainted with the internet. According to Professor Abdulla Adamu, the author of the passage just quoted, they are highly sophisticated, well educated people. They consider the Kala Kato people to be riff-raff.26 A High Court judge in Maiduguri, now deceased, was one of them: Justice Isa Othman, who had some followers in Maiduguri, children of the elite (Olayiwola 2007: 163-64). They are mentioned here as a matter of interest; there are certainly few if any of them in the North Central Zone, except that the background paper on Nasarawa State does say of the Qur’aniyyun there that “Some of them are educated, civil servants” (Liman and Wakawa 2012); this sounds like Submitters rather than Kala Kato.

3.1.5. Others. There are no doubt many other small heterodox Muslim sects springing up and dying out all the time in the North Central Zone, invisible to most except the authorities. For instance,

A minority but weird sect…exists in Bida town [no further account of its doctrines provided] even though the school building where the sect taught its doctrines mostly to youths and women, situated along the eastern by-pass of the town, was destroyed in 2009 to stop further spread of the sect to other parts of Bida Emirate. The sect called “Salaf”[27] is under the leadership of Alhaji Jimeta Bida, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) graduate in Arabic language from Libya in the early 1970s. He has been in hiding since the building that housed his Qur’anic school was destroyed in 2009. (Ndagi 2012)

This passage once again illustrates the firm hand the authorities sometimes take with heterodox sects, cf. the disruptions of the Shia and Kala Kato preachers in Kano State recounted above. Sometimes they go too far, as in different ways in the cases of Darul Islam and Boko Haram recounted in section 3.2.4 below.

3.2. Sunni groups. Four classes of Sunni groups will be discussed: (1) Sufis, of which there are two main groups in Nigeria, the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya; (2) anti-Sufis, principally Izala, principally in the Hausa north, fighting the Sufis by word and deed; (3) Neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi: neither joining any Sufi brotherhood nor taking part with Izala against them, but living simply as “Sunni Muslims”, praying with all others in the mosques if they too will agree, and forming their own numberless groups and networks for socializing and da’wah and good works. Finally there are (4) two special cases, Boko Haram and Darul

26 Author’s interview with Prof. Adamu, Kano, 28 April 2010.
27 Salaf: predecessor or forefather, in this context referring to the as-Salaf as-Saleh, “The Pious Predecessors”, the first three Muslim generations, whose understandings of Islam Salafis hold as orthodox and attempt to follow.
Islam, whose stories further illustrate the diversity of Nigeria’s Muslim community and the ways the authorities sometimes deal with it. But first the Sufis.

3.2.1. Sufis. There are two main Sufi brotherhoods (Arabic turuk, sing. tariqa) in Nigeria, the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya. The Qadiriyya were founded in the 12th century by the Iranian Hanbalite scholar Abdul-Qadir Gilani (or Jilani) (1077–1166), spreading widely in the Muslim world and brought to Nigeria when Muslims first started visiting and settling there. Uthman Dan Fodio, the leader of the 19th century jihad from which the Sokoto Caliphate grew, was a Qadiri. Formerly, Nigerian Muslims who belonged to a Sufi group at all mostly belonged to the Qadiriyya, which was the tariqa of the Muslim ruling and learned classes especially in the north in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Tijaniyya were founded in the late 18th century by the Maghrebi Maliki scholar Sidi Ahmad at-Tijani (1737–1815). The tariqa has since spread widely across West Africa, including Nigeria beginning in the first half of the 19th century but gaining real strength in the mid-20th century. Compared to Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya is a tariqa for the common man. It has become quite popular in many parts of Nigeria, including most parts of the North Central Zone. In the middle years of the 20th century, when Tijaniyya were growing strongly and joined the new democratic politics in Nigeria, roughly 1940s to 1960s, there were a number of civil disturbances arising from Qadiri vs. Tijani wars of words, anathematizations, and physical violence (see Paden 1973; Loimeier 1997; Reynolds 1999). The intra-Sufi strife came to an end with the rise of the anti-Sufis, notably Izala, in the 1970s, when the Sufis put aside their own differences to face their common enemies. Hardly any longer is there serious animosity between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya. Even the Sufis and anti-Sufis have mostly stopped fighting, peace having been declared.

In the present day the Tijaniyya are much more numerous and widespread in the North Central Zone than the Qadiriyya are. Again according to the estimates of the authors of the background papers:

- **Nasarawa**: “The Qadiriyya are very much in small number compared to Tijaniyya.” (Liman and Wakawa 2012)
- **Niger**: “Among the Sufis, as in many other states in northern Nigeria, most by far are adherents of the Tijaniyya order; only an insignificant number are followers of Qadiriyya. Thus, we could say while the Tijaniyya represent about 95% of Sufis, Qadiriyya are about 5%.” (Ndagi 2012)
- **Benue**: “The Tijaniyya are the dominant group among the Sufis in Benue State. …nearly all the Jumu’at Masjids [Friday mosques] are under their control.” (Ibrahim 2012)
- **Kogi**: “About 90% of the Muslims of Lokoja and its environs can be said to be of Tijaniyya order, 2% Qadiriyya, 1% Izala and the remaining 7% are neutral. … [I]n almost every mosque in Igalaland, Tijaniyya litanies are chanted. Though Qadiriyya is known there, it is not popular among them. … The Tijaniyya account for about 90% of Muslims in Igalaland, while Izala accounts for 2%, and neutral Muslims for the remaining 8%. … Though there is a relatively large presence of Izala and tabligh groups (calling others to Allah) and a pocket size of Shia in Ebiraland, the Sunni Muslims represent about 85% of the entire Muslim populace, 80% of whom are Tijanis. … Muslims are a minority group in Okunland, constituting only about 25% of the total population. Out of this percentage, about 60% of them are Sunni Muslims of which about 60% are Tijanis.” (Jimba 2012)
- **FCT**: “The Tijaniyya sect is among the strongest sects in the FCT today; their followers can be found in all corners of the territory. … The sect has strong followers among students and women as well as the market traders within the territory. It has offices and secretariats in all the area councils, mostly located in their places of worship (mosques), which also serve as their places of preaching at all times. They organize Qur’anic recitation competitions among schools and they also go on da’wah in all the corners of the FCT. They also visit prisons and
orphan homes and donate some money for the well being of the prisoners and children.” (Medugu 2012)

- Kwara: “More than 80% [of Kwara Muslims] belong to one or the other of the Sufi brotherhoods of Qadiriyya or Tijaniyya, with Tijaniyya predominating.” (Abdussalam 2012)

Sufi forms of religiosity continue strong in the North Central states, with the Tijani form of it strongly in the ascendency.

The Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya are not formal constructs in any legal sense, but loose networks of networks, whose nodes are leaders claiming spiritual power and religious authority from their own spiritual forebears with whom they are linked by silsilas, chains of authority. Around each leader followers gather; the more followers a leader acquires, and the more he forms his own network by giving out his own ijazas (permissions; certifications), links in silsilas descending from him, the more powerful he becomes. Followers are bound to their leaders by codes of loyalty and obedience, and along with followers in that sense, many people probably also take part in the Qadiri and Tijani worship performed in the mosques without belonging very formally at all. The rules for followers are not onerous at the lower levels of involvement and people in all walks of life can join or associate with the brotherhoods and pursue the sort of religious life they offer at the level that suits them. Many then find further outlets for their religious energies as informed by their tariqa, by forming other organisations dedicated to pious works which they themselves support and manage. Here are two examples, one from the Qadiriyya and one from the Tijaniyya.

3.2.1.1 Qadiriyya Nasiriyya Youth Movement, Jos, Plateau State. The Qadiriyya Nasiriyya are the “Reformed Qadiriyya” founded by Sheikh Nasiru Kabara of Kano (1914-1996) and discussed extensively in Paden 1973 and Loimeier 1997. They are a leading network among the Qadiriyya at least in the north. In Plateau State, some Qadiriyya Nasiriyya members have formed their own “youth movement”, in fact a da’wah group. “Youth” for these purposes usually extends to about 40 years. The following account of the Qadiriyya Nasiriyya Youth Movement Jos, based on an interview with their leader, Malam M. Na’Annabi, gives a good sense of what it is all about:28

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NASIRIYYA:

[Its] aims...are to motivate Muslim youth to have sincerity of belief in Allah at qalb (heart) and work towards attaining the pleasure of Allah. Its objectives are confined within the Book of Allah (Qur’an) and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Therefore, all its teachings and activities are in line with the saying of the Prophet that “truly he succeeds that purifies it and he fails that corrupts it” and Allah saying: “O you who believe! Turn to God with sincere repentance, in the hope that your Lord will remove from you ills (ignorance and misguidance) and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow”. (Q.66.8) There are also other verses and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that support activities of Qadiriyya in general and Nasiriyya youth in particular. Membership is opened to all Muslims who are willing to help Islam (Malam Na’Annabi).

DA’WAH ACTIVITIES OF NASIRIYYA:

It conducts halqat (study cycle) in the mosques during the following periods:

(a) Every Thursday ahadith of the prophet are studied in the mosques.
(b) During Ramadan, Ashafa study29 and tafsir30 are conducted.

28 Quoted from Modibbo 2010: 38-39; paragraph numbering in the original is omitted here.
29 Ashafa: Kitab Ash-shifaa bi Ta’rif Huquq al-Mustafa (Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One), by Qadi Iyad (or Ayaad) ibn Musa (1083-1149), a Maliki scholar and judge of Almoravid North Africa and Spain. The book, on the life, character, and miracles of Prophet Muhammad, is often read and expounded during Ramadan particularly among Sufis.
(c) It organises Maulud celebration on the birthday of the Prophet during which Islamic issues are explained and discussed.

In the field of education the movement has established schools in Jos 20 years ago. The schools are purely Islamic madrasah, the schools are:

1. Al-Nahfatal Nasiriyya along Yan Doka Street in Jos
2. Ma’haddil al Islami Jos
3. Nasiriyya al-Islam Jos. (Malam Na’Annabi)

ACHIEVEMENTS PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS:

Nasiriyya movement is planning to establish a [medical] clinic and invest in lawful business transactions and all activities that will enhance the course of Islam and welfare of the Ummah (Muslim community) (Malam Na’Annabi).

3.2.1.2. Fityanul Islam. Our Tijaniyya example of a Sufi-based NGO formed for religious purposes is Fityanul Islam, as it is known in Nigeria: Fityan al-Islam, Heroes of Islam. Fityanul Islam was formed in 1963 at a congress of Tijani leaders held at Kano (Loimeier 1997: 48f). It is now a national organisation with its headquarters in Kano, chapters in most of Nigeria’s states and committees in many local governments. All the rules are spelled out in a written national constitution sometimes supplemented no doubt with local bylaws. One requirement of the constitution is that members “must not abuse the integrity of Shehunan Tariqas (Sufi leaders)” (Modibbo 2010: 25). The aims and objectives of the organisation are set forth as follows (ibid):

(a) To provide qualitative education to all Muslims;
(b) to provide moral and spiritual training to Muslims;
(c) To promote Islamic ideals and virtues;
(d) To encourage Muslims in the learning of Arabic language and science education;
(e) To provide social services to humanity according to Islamic tenets;
(f) To propagate and assist in building, erection and general maintenance of mosques, schools, graveyards and other sacred places of worship or visits;
(g) In the propagation of Islamic religion, in order to promote peace, unity, understanding and cooperation among Nigerians generally;
(h) To organise and assist the conduct of Islamic activities such as ceremonies, public seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops etc. for the dissemination of information, options and ideas according to Islamic ideals for the promotion of Islamic awareness;
(i) To encourage and enhance peaceful coexistence among Muslims and non-Muslims;
(j) To mobilize and instil a sense of discipline among youth.

Fityanul Islam takes an active part in Islamic affairs all over the country. Here is a report on its Plateau State chapter (ibid: 26-27):

According to the Chairman of [the Plateau State Chapter of] Fityanul, tremendous achievements have been made in the Plateau State, that Fityanul congress made an impact in the spiritual upbringing of the Muslim youth. It built primary and secondary schools in Jos and rehabilitation home in Mangu. Another remarkable contribution was the conversion of over ten thousand non-Muslims into Islam. The congress provided vocational training to a great number of youths (boys and girls) who have become self-reliant and economically empowered. The Fityanul grew steadily through numerous branches in 15 local government areas in the state. It…distributes food stock to the needy people in Jos annually.

The Fityanul congress had numerous challenges and prospects. these include lack of fund to enable it equip its secretariat, to purchase preaching gadgets, to recruit and employ more imams and preachers. Fityanul not happy for having a faction even though that internal

30 *Tafsir*: as used here, Qur’anic exegesis: interpretation and explanation of the text.
division does not tamper with their Sufi (sect belief) relationship, but it is not the best at all (Alh. Usman).

Probably similar reports would be given by state chapters throughout the North Central Zone. The Nasarawa State background paper includes a section on the work of the “Dariqatul Tijaniyya” there (Liman and Wakawa 2012).

3.2.2. Anti-Sufis, principally Izala. So much for the Sufis. We come now to the anti-Sufis, the main organisational manifestation of which is Izala, *Jama’atu Izalatil Bid’a Wa’ikamatis Sunnah*, in English “The Islamic Organisation for Eradicating Innovation and Establishing Sunnah”, now often going by its Arabic acronym, JIBWIS as spelled in the Latin alphabet. Izala has been much written about (Umar 1993, Loimeier 1997, Kane 2003, Olayiwola 2007, Ben Amara 2011 and authorities cited). Izala was formally founded in 1978 in Jos, under the leadership of Sheikh Isma’ila Idris (1936-2000) with the support of Sheikh Abubakar Gunni, the long-time Grand Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal of the Northern Region and powerful religious figure in the North (1922-1992). Izala explicitly defined itself as anti-Sufi: that was what the “eradicating innovation” part of its name meant: identifying, preaching against, winning people away from, and hoping to suppress the alleged deviations and superstitions and magical practices of the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya, all said to be *bid’a*: the wrong kind of innovations, amounting to heresy or even apostasy. What Izala proposed to put in place of all the Sufi complications was a more austere and originalist and allegedly more Godly form of Islam, mildly Wahabi, which was also modernist: an up-to-date Muslim Protestantism if you like, adapting a purified Islam to modern conditions. Izala showed by its own example how things could be done, notably by establishing hospitals and clinics, establishing modern schools for the education of Muslims at many levels (youths and adults, primary to tertiary, Islamic and Western subjects), and promoting the education of girls and women along with the males. Much good has been done in the northern Muslim community by Izala. Unfortunately, besides these positive steps, Izala teaching and preaching also violently attacked the Sufis, not hesitating to condemn them as unbelievers, not Muslims. Public preachings organised by Izala attracted huge crowds. Youths were infused with zealotry against the Sufis. Learned pamphlets and books were written and circulated by ulama on all sides debating the issues; audiocassettes of their preachings and teachings were widely circulated among the illiterate masses. Civil disturbances resulted in the 1970s and 1980s in many places across the north. Extensive surveillance and a number of laws were used by the authorities to try to forestall or quell the disturbances while not interfering too much with people’s constitutional rights. Opinions differ on how well the authorities managed, and where and how far they overstepped the bounds of the law. Among laws enacted during this period, for instance, were ones establishing Islamic Religious Preaching Boards in many northern states, briefed to examine and license intending Islamic preachers,

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31 The following, from the Adamawa State chapter of Fityanul, last updated 28 August 2004, is available at www.islamicfinder.org/getitWorld.php?id=47596&lang=: “General Information: […] In Adamawa State the Association has Local Branches in 20 out of 21 Local Government Areas of the State. It has over 200 Ibtidaiyya Islamic Schools through-out the State with one Islamic Secondary School (Tsaqafiyya School for Arabic and Islamic Studies) in Yola the State capital. The Association also has AID GROUP Members who offer First Aid Services throughout Adamawa State. General Activities: Establishing Schools, Building Mosques, Preaching, Organising Workshops, Conferences, Seminars etc.”

32 Or as Kane translates it, “Society for the Removal of Innovation and the Reinstatement of Tradition” The translation used in the text is by the Bauchi Local Government Branch of JIBWIS, see Ostien 2007: II, 87.

33 The Kogi State background paper mentions a local anti-Sufi group active there: “Al-Adabiyyah Society founded by Alhajj Lukman Imam who combines lecturing at Federal College of Education, Okene with da’wah activities. He is based in Okene and his da’wah is based on anti-Sufism.” (Jimba 2012)

34 Ulama (sing. alim, scholar): Islamic scholars; those learned in the theology and law of Islam and the literature, mostly in Arabic, proper to these disciplines. Cf. ‘malam’, n. 22 above.
and making it a crime to preach without a license (discussed further in section 5.4 below); when these laws were sought to be applied against the radical Izala preachers they themselves learned the meaning of their constitutional right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.\textsuperscript{35} The efforts of the civil authorities to forestall and quell religious disturbances by force if necessary, and efforts by Muslim leaders to make peace among the ulama and preach peace to the masses, finally brought about “the domestication of Izala” (Kane 2003: Chapter 8), and by now has put the old Sufi-anti-Sufi conflicts mostly to rest. But the background paper on Plateau State says that at least in Plateau “The misunderstanding between Izala and Sufis is still a problem even though the gravity of the situation has reduced extensively since there is no longer any physical violence as used to be experienced” (Modibbo 2012).

For some years Izala has been split into two factions, Izala A and Izala B, headquartered in Jos and Kaduna respectively. Both factions still operate under the same original written constitution, discussed further below. Further details of the split must be passed over here (consult Ben Amara 2011).\textsuperscript{36} Only some broader contours of Izala in the North Central Zone can be pointed at. One is the way ethnicity sorts out where Izala gets established and where it does not. As has already been said, Izala has largely been a Hausa phenomenon. That this continues to be true seems confirmed by the state background papers written for this project. In the states where the populations of Hausas are small and concentrated, as in for instance in Kwara State, there Izala exists, but only among the small Hausa or “Muslim stranger” settlements:

- **Kwara:** “Few belong to anti-Sufi groups like Izala; Izala has no bearing in Kwara. ... It is important to point out here that members of these new groups are non-indigenes of Ilorin the state capital where almost all these groups are concentrated… [They] prefer to pray only with their own members.” (Abdussalam 2012)\textsuperscript{37}

- **Benue:** “Non-Sufis (Izala and Salafiyyun): This group constitutes the non-indigenes like the Igala of Kogi State, Hausa/Fulani and a handful of indigenous members. They are mostly civil servants, teachers, bankers and traders… They constitute [about] 20% of the population of the Muslims in Benue State [who are of course a small minority of about 6%].” (Ibrahim 2012)

- **Kogi:** As quoted more fully in the entry for Kogi in section 3.2.1 above: “...Lokoja and its environs… [about] 1% Izala. …Izala accounts for [about] 2% of Muslims in Igalaland… Though there is a relatively large presence of Izala and tablig groups…and a pocket size of Shia in Ebiraland, the Sunni Muslims represent about 85% of the entire Muslim populace, 80% of whom are Tijanis. ... [In Okunland...about 60% of the [Muslim minority] are Sunni Muslims [the others are Ahmadis] of which about 60% Tijanis.” (Jimba 2012)

Where the percentages of Hausa become larger, there Izala also exists, but still mostly among the Hausa. For instance, in Niger State there are three main ethnic groups: Nupe, Hausa, and Gbati (or Gwari as the Hausa know them), estimated at 40%, 32% and 28% of the population respectively (Ndagi 2012). As to Sufis and anti-Sufis:

[T]here evidently appear to be more tariqa Muslims than the Izala among the Nupe. There are also more Izala followers among the Hausa than can be found among Nupe and Gwari Muslims in Niger State. (Ibid.)

\textsuperscript{35} Ostien forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{36} According to Ben Amara 2011, Chapter 2, the split started in the mid-1980s. It stemmed from questions about leadership of the organisation; in particular about the status of Sheikh Ismaila Idris, Izala’s founder; certain questions about finances; and certain doctrinal disputes, centered on the question of takfir and Izala’s relations with other Muslims.

\textsuperscript{37} See Olayiwola 2007: 51-72 for discussion of still-lingering divisions between Hausa and Yoruba Muslims, the crux of which is “the discriminative attitude of the North against the spiritual leadership of the Yoruba.”
Izala is also strong in Jos, where it was founded. It is no coincidence that there is a large Hausa-Fulani community of longstanding in Jos, with many wealthy families and many learned ulama among them: it was they who were behind Izala to begin with and still support it. Perhaps without belabouring the point further, one can sum it up by saying that there seems to be something about Izala that non-Hausas do not find attractive. Maybe some continuing middlebeltish reaction against Hausa-Fulani dominance or discrimination is at work. Or maybe Izala is simply too argumentative and willing to abuse other Muslims. Whatever it is, in conclusion of this section here are two further reports on Izala in the North Central zone that shed more light on its ideas and what it is doing:

**FCT** (per Medugu 2012)

The Izala, or the Jama'at Izalatil Bid'a wa Iqamatus Sunnah (Movement against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy), is principally concerned with the purification of Islam and abolition of practices that are not original to the Qur'an and Sunnah, the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. … The Izals do not regard the creation of an Islamic state as a primary concern. They are an ultra-orthodox movement wanting a return to the true practice of the faith. Because a large section of the Izala leadership is drawn from the civil service, the group has not been engaged in any conflict with the state. Their conflict is rather with other Muslims and other Islamic sects. [They are] an anti-Sufi-movement established to fight what is conceived of as bid'a, innovation, practiced by the Sufi brotherhoods… Izala is active in da’wah (propagation of Islam) and particularly in education. The Izala movement in Abuja can be traced to when the Federal Capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja in 1991. Today, the sect has many followers within and outside the city of Abuja.

**Plateau** (per Modibbo 2012)

[Izala] is silent over the qualification or conditions for admission of members but in section 4 of its constitution Izala warns all members of the movement “To protect the dignity of this Society (JIBWIS) and sovereignty of the nation.” The movement has categorically denied the active membership of women in running its affairs and/or as Aid Group members as doing so contradicts Sunnah. It preaches peaceful coexistence and gives much emphasis on Islamic and Western education.

Izala is a formally structured organisation with a written constitution. It has two councils at the top namely executive (comprised of elders and patrons) and ulama councils. … The movement has established its Aid Group (‘yan agaji) which works hand in hand with working and organising committees of the movement. There are other important committees like a working committee which is responsible for organizing da’wah activities. Other important offices of Izala include the Secretaries (General Secretary, Administrative Secretary, Judiciary, Educational, Finance and Publicity), Treasurer and Auditors, both at the state, local, district and ward levels.

The main purposes of forming the movement have been given in section 3 of its constitution and can be summarized as follows:

1. To unite all Muslims as stated by God in the Holy Qur’an;
2. To enlighten the people about the activities of some so-called Muslims who have been distorting the true teachings of Islam;
3. To alert all Muslims so as to be aware of books written by unscrupulous Malams just to bring confusion in Islam;
4. To show all Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) before his death revealed the message he received from God;
5. To make it clear to all Muslims that anybody who claims prophecy or that Muhammad (PBUH) has been visiting him, should be regarded as a liar.

Its da’wah activities are conducted under the council of preaching with the help of the executives, elders and patrons of the movement. Teaching and preaching have been
recognized as the major programmes of the society. It organises ward, local, state and national open air preachings throughout the state. It offers sermons during Friday congregation, walima (wedding) gatherings and Sallah festivals. Apart from that, it conducts preaching at any given time as requested by a branch in the state. There is also a study circle between Salat al-Maghrib and Isha and after Salat al-Subhi where Hadith, Qur’an and fiqh (jurisprudence) are studied.

The movement in Plateau has established schools for Higher Islamic Studies which offer both ordinary and diploma certificates in Arabic and Islamic Studies. It has also established technical and science secondary schools, and nomadic education schools in Barkin Ladi and Mangu Local Government Areas of Plateau State [for the pastoral Fulani]. In the area of health care, the movement has five primary health care centres and a Sunnah Hospital. It also commissioned branches in 14 local government headquarters in the state.

The movement in the state has been confronted with some problems, two of which are:

1. The division of Izala: Izala which started as a single body in Jos is today split into two groups, known as Izala ‘A’ and ‘B’.
2. The misunderstanding between Izala and Sufis is still a problem even though the gravity of the situation has reduced extensively since there is no longer any physical violence as used to be experienced.

The relationship between Izala, Sufi groups, Shia and Plateau State government as matter of fact is nominal, as they mostly have very little to do with each other.

Similar reports could no doubt be given about other Izala chapters elsewhere.

3.2.3. Neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi. We come then to the third class of Sunni groups under discussion: what were described in section 3.2 as neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi: neither joining any Sufi brotherhood nor taking part with Izala against them, but living simply as “Sunni Muslims”, praying with all others in the mosques if they too will agree, and forming their own numberless pious groups and networks for socializing, da’wah and good works.

This class of groups is neither a corporation nor even a network of networks: it is defined only by exclusion, by the non-participation of its members in any tariqa or in Izala. It is composed of people who are neither attracted to Sufi Islam nor inclined to condemn the Sufis as unbelievers. This leaves open a wide field of opinion, ranging from people from Muslim backgrounds, “cultural Muslims”, who have more or less given up religion altogether as many in the west have done, to pious Sunnis, as learned and austere in their practice as Izala might wish, who do not believe in picking fights. The number of such “independents” is perhaps not very many:

- **Niger**: “Only about 20% of the Muslims in Niger can be said to belong to this category. ... Significant numbers of Gbagyi Muslims in Niger State are neither tariqa nor Izala.” (Ndagi 2012)
- **Plateau**: The strength of the “neither Sufi nor anti-Sufi group” is estimated at about 10% of the Muslims, “mostly moderate-salafi”. (Modibbo 2012)
- **Benue**: “These are liberal Muslims who do not follow any opinion about Sufi or non-Sufi. They are Muslims and that is all. They are petty traders, students, civil servants. About 5% of the Muslims in the state.” (Ibrahim 2012)

3.2.3.1. Nuruddeen Society. Among ethnic groups, the number of independents is perhaps highest among the Yoruba, where Izala never took hold and there is a long tradition of tolerance for diversity of religious opinion and practice, both among Muslims and between Christians and Muslims. Yoruba Muslims have been in the forefront of founding

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38 Salat al-Maghrib: the evening or dusk prayer, prayed just after sunset. Isha: the night prayer, prayed after darkness has fallen. Salat al-Subhi: = Salat al-Fajr, the dawn prayer, prayed between dawn and sunrise.
“independent” organisations taking no stand on Sufi religiosity, open to people of all persuasions on that point, and getting on with their programmes. A good example is the Nuruddeen Society. Contrast the following account of its Jos branch with the earlier accounts of the Qadiriyya Nasiriyya Jos, Fityanul Islam, and Izala:

**Nuruddeen Jos (per Modibbo 2012)**

Nuruddeen Society of Nigeria is an Islamic voluntary organisation. The society was founded in 1948 and has over 50 branches in Nigeria. The Jos branch was formed in 1953. Nuruddeen is made up mainly of Yoruba members. Article 4 of the constitution of the society enumerates the aims and objectives of the society, which include:

1. To maintain library for use of members, students and the public;
2. To encourage literary and intellectual pursuits among the members and the public;
3. To encourage any individual or other institutions that may wish to further their education and or to establish Islamic centre;
4. To eradicate all forms of evils and corruption and to foster feeling of brotherhood among all members of the Muslim community;
5. To establish and maintain media houses which shall operate inter alia periodicals and newspapers devoted to the interest of Islam and advocate Muslim culture generally;
6. To undertake the translation of the Holy Qur’an and other Islamic books into any language, publish and circulate same among Muslims as well as non-Muslims;
7. To organise Islamic lectures, exhibitions, conferences, classes, seminars, workshops and volunteer service courses for the Muslims etc.

Nuruddeen Society of Nigeria has two distinct components: national organisation and zonal branches. At each level the following committees and a board would obtain: Executive Committee, Committee of Elders, Education Committee, Welfare Committee, Social and Tafsir Committee, Finance Committee and Irshad Board. Women, Youths Wings and First Aids Group also exist. There are appointed and elected officers to oversee the general affairs of the Society.

The programmes of the society in the state include teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies, conducting tahfiz (Qur’anic memorization) fortnightly in Jos for its members. Organising nikah (marriage) and naming ceremonies for its members within and outside Jos. Giving annual and monthly tafsir (Qur’anic exegesis). The group has its branches in Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Bassa Local Governments. It generates its funds through collection of zakat and sadaqat (alms and charity) to finance its programmes. The society in the state has a cordial relationship with all Islamic groups and individual Muslims in Plateau state government. The society established many Islamiyya primary and secondary schools, with over 4,000 pupils and students enrolled in the in the following schools: Nuruddeen Islamic/Arabic Primary School, Nuruddeen Nursery-Primary School, Nuruddeen Teachers Training College, Nuruddeen Adult classes. All the schools have been approved by the government and other examination agencies.

3.2.3.2. Other groups of independents. In fact new NGOs and CBOs are formed by Muslim “independents” all the time, for all sorts of purposes, from civic education and civil rights to fighting HIV/AIDS. Modibbo 2010 studies nineteen Muslim groups active in Plateau State alone, including some Sufi groups and Izala. In 2009 the author of this essay collected information on Muslim NGOs and CBOs in Jos, which adds eight groups to Modibbo’s list, including for instance the Islamic Forum for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, the Jasawa Development Association, and three women’s groups, Muslim Sisters Organisation, Muslim Sisters Association, and Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development. A relatively new independent group, founded in 1995 and now active in all states of the North Central Zone, is the Nasrul-Lahi-il-Fathi Society of Nigeria
(NASFAT), whose mission is “To develop an enlightened Muslim society nurtured by a true understanding of Islam for the spiritual upliftment and welfare of mankind.” The “independent” groups are a heterogeneous class, ethnically, religiously, programmatically. They play important roles in their communities, thickening the mix of Nigerian civil society not only among the Muslims. Some are discussed in what follows in this report and particularly in sections 6 and 7 below.

3.2.4. Two special cases. Finally, to the categories of Sunnis just described must be added two special Sunni cases, which do not fit well into any of the above and further illustrate the diversity of religious groups always springing up and dying out in northern Nigeria.

3.2.4.1. Boko Haram. This group seems to have originated in the mid-1990s in Maiduguri. Some of the members performed hijra (migration) in c. 2002, relocating to a remote part of Yobe State from where they made news in 2003-04 as the “Nigerian Taliban”, going to war with the police. They were scattered, but then regrouped around the person of Muhammad Yusuf, a product of the traditional system of Qur’anic education in the northeast, not a great thinker but a fluent and persuasive preacher in the Kanuri and Hausa languages. From his base in Maiduguri Yusuf travelled widely in the north, preaching and proselytizing, all the way to Sokoto and Kebbi, and groups loyal to him grew up not only in Borno but in Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi, Kan, and Kaduna States, and probably other places. Behind Yusuf was the shadowy Abubakar Shekau, the “second in command”, who seems to have been the thinker behind the operation. Boko Haram took extreme positions within Sunni Islam on many questions of what is halal and what is haram, and anathematized those who thought and did otherwise. To send your child to a government school was haram. To read or study most of Western learning was haram. To accept the liberal-democratic form of government contemplated by the Nigerian constitution was haram. To take any job with government was haram. And so on taking a large array of hard-line positions against present-day Nigeria and Nigerians including most other Muslims. Boko Haram’s positions overlap on some matters with those of the “Shia” and on others with Kala Kato. For instance, like the “Shia” but unlike Kala Kato, Boko Haram condemns the Nigerian constitution and laws and calls for creation of an Islamic state; and like Kala Kato but unlike the “Shia”, they reject Western education. But the Boko Haram ideology is different from both of those other sects on fundamental matters: notably it is reasoned from Sunni sources. The charismatic preaching of Muhammad Yusuf, arguing all the evils of this present age in support of his views, attracted a large following mostly of uneducated and otherwise unemployed youths, Qur’anic students at best, who were organised into farming and business activities that generated an income for the group; there were also rumours of support from big men who preferred to keep in the background, and even of funding from abroad, but none of that has been established by very good evidence in any public forum as far as this writer knows. An active debate went on among northern ulama during roughly 2003-2009, in Arabic and Hausa, in print and on audio and video cassettes, about Boko Haram’s ideas. Prominent scholars debated those ideas publicly among themselves and with Muhammad Yusuf. Many prominent Sunni ulama, Sufi, Izala and independent, preached against them and warned against them. Boko Haram condemned the ulama in turn as heretics whom it was halal and even meritorious for anyone to kill. In June and July 2009 things finally fell apart when the shooting by mobile police in Maiduguri of some seventeen Boko Haram members (none died) triggered retaliatory attacks on the state and its officials and against private individuals including some of the ulama and


*Halal*: permissible; *haram*: forbidden; in both cases under Islamic law.
some Christians. In the end the group was ruthlessly suppressed by the police and the army acting at the direction of state and federal political leaders – the governors and the then President, Umaru Yar’Adua. In the process the government clearly went far beyond the bounds of the law in the attempted eradication of Boko Haram. Many of the youths fighting with it were massacred, although it must be said they themselves were ready to fight to the death, convinced they would die as martyrs and would be rewarded in heaven accordingly. Muhammad Yusuf was summarily executed while in police custody, without any sort of trial however summary, as also was his completely innocent father-in-law and many others. Some are still languishing in prison awaiting trial, which will be a long time coming. After the crisis was over the government of Borno State declared Boko Haram an unlawful society and banned it under the Penal Code.\textsuperscript{41} But Boko Haram still exists. Possibly having linked up with like-minded groups elsewhere in Africa (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb; Al-Shabab in Somalia\textsuperscript{42}) they are still killing people in Maiduguri and elsewhere. They have been much written about in the popular press but the scholarship is just developing (Da’wah Coordination Council of Nigeria 2009; Mohammed 2010; Adesoji 2011; Umar 2011). They were not a phenomenon of the North Central Zone, and at present are little known of there.

3.2.4.2. Darul Islam. This group was founded in 1993, in Niger State, by a completely orthodox Sunni malam, apparently Hausa by ethnicity, who only wished to form a pious community that was isolated as much as possible from the rest of the sinful world.\textsuperscript{43} The community – Darul Islam – started small but grew by the end to about four thousand people, all living together near Mokwa, men, women and children. They acquired land or the right to use land where they built their settlement. They farmed, grew livestock, traded, and otherwise supported themselves by economic activity. Among themselves they applied a strict Maliki sharia in all matters civil and criminal, except that they did not claim the right to execute any harsh punishment on anybody: serious cases were handled by excommunication or by the police. They had their own qadi (Islamic judge). They had their own Islamiyya schools (see section 4.3) and hospitals. They did not reject Western education, but provided it to their children. The Niger State government knew about them and even came to inspect them, and relations were friendly. There was peace between Darul Islam and the rest of the world.

Then in 2007 a new governor – Aliyu Babangida – came into office in Niger State; and in July 2009 Boko Haram blew up to the north and east. Two weeks after Boko Haram were quelled, i.e. on 15 Aug. 2009, Governor Babangida also took out Darul Islam.\textsuperscript{44} Claiming that the existence of the community constituted a threat to the peace and security of Niger State that could become as serious as Boko Haram, and that he was acting to forestall this threat, one fine early morning the new governor sent armed forces who swooped down on Darul Islam, arrested all of them, kept them in detention camps for some period, and gradually repatriated all of them to the other states and sometimes other countries from which they had

\textsuperscript{41} From the northern Penal Code of 1960, now the law as amended in all northern states: “97A. A society is unlawful if declared by an order of the Governor to be a society dangerous to the good government or [the state, Borno for instance] or any part thereof. 97B. Whoever manages or is a member of an unlawful society shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years or with fine or with both.”


\textsuperscript{43} Much of the material in this paragraph can be gathered from Bashir Yahuza Malumfashi, “Behind the gates of Darul-Islam”, \textit{Weekly Trust}, 7 August 2009, internet edition. Separatist puritan communities are not uncommon in Nigeria, particularly perhaps among the Yoruba, see Olayiwola 2007: 19-20.

\textsuperscript{44} See e.g. Aisha Wakaso, “3,500 Islamic Sect Members Evicted in Niger”, \textit{This Day}, 16 August 2009, internet edition, and subsequent news.
come to live in Darul Islam. Kano took in and is supporting the former leader of the community and his family. The Niger State governor’s action was widely questioned, as to why it was necessary to go so far in this case, and as to the legality of what was done. All the discussion has been to no avail: the deed was done, the victims were compensated, no formal complaints have been filed, and life goes on. There seems to be no scholarship so far on Darul Islam.

4. Education of Muslims.

4.1. Introduction. The proper education of their children is as important to Nigeria’s Muslims as it is to parents everywhere. This means in the first place teaching them the Qur’an. As the author of our background paper on Kwara State puts it:

> [T]he Muslims of Nigeria, Muslims of Kwara State inclusive, are always desperate to give their children, before any other education, the traditional Qur’anic education, and this is the first illiteracy eradication programme that Muslims believe should be given to their children before they proceed to acquaint themselves with Western education. The major objective of traditional Qur’anic education is to allow children to know how to read the Glorious Qur’an with which to observe their daily prayers and other religious rites in order to accomplish the purpose of creation by Almighty Allah. There is no reservation from any groups or organisations against this system in Kwara State as the basis to be a good Muslim. (Abdussalam 2012)

Accordingly all Muslim children are given at least some basic Qur’anic education: at the beginning learning to recite and recognize the Arabic text by rote, without understanding what they are saying or reading, and gradually being instructed in the meaning in their own languages. But increasing numbers of Muslim children also start early to acquire “Western” forms of education as well, from primary school through Ph.D. There are now three interacting school systems in Nigeria where all this learning takes place, two more or less private, one public. This section briefly sums up the position with special reference to the North Central Zone. A number of Muslim youths also go abroad for parts of their educations, notably to universities elsewhere in the Islamic world, for instance Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia; further discussion of this aspect of the education of some Nigerian Muslims is beyond the scope of this report.

4.2. Traditional Qur’anic schools. These are the Qur’anic schools inherited from the pre-colonial West African past, run by “malams” (as the Hausa say) or “alfas” (as the Yoruba say), in their various ranks and degrees of learning. There are many varieties of these schools which cannot be discussed further here (see Modibbo 2012). The schools are private enterprises, from which in many cases the malams get their living, although many malams are also engaged in farming or trade. Young children, beginning at four or five years old, male and female, are taught by the malams to recite Qur’anic verses from memory, and to form the Arabic letters. Students who continue may eventually learn to recite the whole Qur’an from memory, and if they still continue they may learn to write it all out from memory. Some become fluent and literate in Arabic, and branch out from the Qur’an to the Hadith literature, the *fiqh*, and so on, which they study with scholars in those fields more advanced than themselves. As in any school system the student body forms a pyramid, with masses of young children at the base and decreasing numbers continuing as they get older. Girls drop out before boys; few girls continue beyond the elementary stages. There is still in the farther north a strong tradition of sending young boys away from home to follow itinerant malams, or “to the east” (because in Borno there has been an especially respected tradition of Qur’anic learning). The boys who continue in the system, known as *almajirai* (sing. *almajiri*), pursue no other form of education, but at best learn some skill or trade from which they eke out their livings; many survive themselves, and assist their malams, by begging. Large numbers of
these boys and young men exist in the larger northern towns and cities, attached to their
malams and not much else, not knowing much beyond the Qur’an and not fitted for any but
the least complicated employments. Most people agree that the traditional Qur’anic school
system must somehow be “integrated” with the “Westernized” systems described below, so
that these young boys and men will be better socialized into the new Nigeria, better educated
in the new ways of thinking so important in the modern world. There is a lot of nostalgia for
the old almajiri way of life untainted by the contamination of the West with all its haste and
godless distractions. Nevertheless almost everybody accepts that one can acquire a Western
education and still remain a perfectly good Muslim, and that these days all Nigerian children
must get at least the Western rudiments. So there are programmes on how to integrate the
Qur’anic schools, malams and students, gradually into the Islamiyya and public schools
discussed below. In the design of these programmes many factors are being taken into
consideration: Dr. Aliyu Tilde’s Discourses on the almajiri and what to do about them
(Tilde 2009) give a sympathetic account of the problem from all sides.

There are traditional Qur’anic schools in all states of the North Central Zone. The schools
for young children exist everywhere: as the background paper on Kogi State puts it, “the
schools are scattered across the nooks and crannies of the Muslim communities in the state”
(Jimba 2012). At some point some of the children are put by their parents or guardians into
more formal schools, whether Islamiyya or public, while others continue with their Qur’anic
education and yet others just drop out of school altogether. The percentages continuing with
Qur’anic school into their teens increase, the more into the culture of the “core north” one
goes. Thus in the North Central Zone Niger State probably has the largest population of
almajiri: in 2009 it had 15,899 malams running 8,210 Qur’anic schools with 586,521 pupils,
embracing “about 60% of all male children 1 to 18 years”; this data was gathered by the
Niger State Committee for the Integration of Qur’anic Schools with Western Education in its
2009 report (Ndagi 2012). Plateau with its sizeable Hausa-Fulani population is reported to
have 360 elementary Qur’anic schools, plus 80 more of the more advanced type known as
tsangaya, plus 120 ilimi schools (from Ar. ilm, knowledge, especially of Islam) where the
wider literature and learning of Islam is acquired (Modibbo 2012). But increasing
percentages of Muslim children in all parts of the north are attending Islamiyya or public
schools from quite an early age instead of or in addition to their studies with the old-style
alfas, malams, and sheikhs.

4.3 Islamiyya schools. As opposed to the traditional Qur’anic schools, there are broadly-
speaking the Islamiyya and the public schools. Both types are “westernized” in format and
teaching style, with buildings, blackboards, desks, books in the vernaculars, uniforms for
primary and secondary students, salaries for the teachers, lectures by the teachers at the
higher levels, periods to the day, grade levels, examinations, and certificates, diplomas or
degrees at the end. The difference, though this is becoming blurred as will be seen below, is
that the Islamiyya schools are private and have a stronger focus on Islamic subjects or at least
a stronger Muslim atmosphere, while the public schools are run by the government and focus
more on secular subjects. Another difference is that the Islamiyya schools charge fees, just
like private Christian schools, but the public schools do not. Another is that the standard of
education in the Islamiyya schools, as in the Christian schools, is generally higher than in the
public schools, as the following observation from Niger State indicates:

Islamiyya schools, mostly privately-owned, operate in Niger State. They are commonly found
in the urban towns of Bida, Minna, Kontagora and Suleja in Niger State. This group of
schools operates a curriculum that blends Islamic with western education. Muslims,
particularly the Izala group, who can afford the fees charged by private Islamiyya schools,
enrol their children and wards in such schools. Others who cannot make do with public
primary and secondary schools. This is without regard to ethnicity. In other words, Muslims who can afford to send their children to Islamiyya schools do so, whether they are Nupe, Gbagyi or Hausa. (Ndagi 2012)

4.3.1. Primary and secondary Islamiyya schools. The curriculums and many of the teaching materials used in the primary and secondary Islamiyya schools are now prescribed by such bodies as the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, based at Institute of Education, ABU Zaria, and the Federal Ministry of Education. The Islamic Education Trust in Minna, Niger State, discussed further in section 6.4 below, has also been very active in the development of the theory and practice of Islamiyya education in Nigeria. At the higher (secondary) levels the schools prepare students for standardized exams, success in which qualifies them to go on to tertiary institutions and sometimes for certain jobs. Some Islamiyya schools focus on preparing students for exams leading to Junior and Senior Islamic Studies Certificates (JISC and SISC, also known as Islamic and Higher Islamic Certificates); in these schools instruction in Arabic and the Islamic sciences predominates but other subjects like social studies, English, and maths are also mandatory. Other Islamiyya schools focus on preparing students for the more secular Junior and Senior School Certificate Exams (JSCE and SSCE) administered by the National Examinations Council (NECO) or the West African Examinations Council (WAEC); these schools must provide instruction in much of the full range of “western” secondary school subjects, and the amount of time students spend on specifically Islamic subjects is accordingly reduced. Both girls and boys attend Islamiyya schools in about equal numbers, though often in segregated classrooms. The various efforts of groups like Fityanul Islam, Izala, the Nurudeen Society and Darul Islam to set up Islamiyya schools in the North Central Zone for Muslim children to attend have been touched on in section 3 above. They are not the only ones. In fact as in the Christian community the private Islamiyya school sector of the economy has been expanding rapidly; demand is high and entry barriers are quite low, and to establish such a school is an act of piety. The Islamiyya schools, and their relations to the Qur’anic school system, the public school system, the universities, and the national examining bodies, have been developing rapidly since the 1950s; the most noted scholarship on them are Hiskett 1975, Reichmuth 1993 and 1996 and Umar 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

Today the state governments too are entering the Islamiyya school business. For instance, in Benue State some private Islamiyya schools receive grants-in-aid from the state government (the Arabic College, Makurdi, the Muslim Community School, Otukpo, and the Muslim Community Secondary School, Ogule-Agatu) (Ibrahim 2012); the basis for this is presumably that the schools are providing a service which the government would otherwise have to provide itself. Other state governments are providing what amount to Islamiyya schools as part of the public secondary school system. Two in Kwara are the College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ilorin and the College of Arabic Studies, Jebba, government-run schools providing Islamiyya-style education (Abdussalam 2012). In Niger there are fifteen Colleges of Arts and Islamic Studies (CAIS), all government-owned, scattered around the state. “Graduates of traditional Qur’anic schools and Islamiyya primary schools prefer to join these CAIS for their secondary education because of the specialized attention they give to the study of Arabic and Islamic Sciences” (Ndagi 2012). One can expect this entry of the state into Islamiyya-style primary and secondary education to increase in the north as the effort continues to integrate the millions still in the Qur’anic schools into more modern styles of education. The likely model is the Islamiyya schools, standardized and run by the states as part of their obligation under UBE, Universal Basic Education, to extend free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child aged 6-15 years. Although the Islamiyya-style public schools will have a more Islamic atmosphere than exists in the present
public schools, it may nevertheless be a necessary step in bringing all the malams and their almajirai into UBE.

4.3.2. Adult education. One important work of the Islamiyya schools has been to provide adult education at the primary and secondary levels particularly to women who had not previously had the opportunity to study Arabic or learn much about Islam. Izala especially has been noted for this (Modibbo 2010 and 2012).

4.3.3. “Tertiary Islamiyya” schools. In this category of “tertiary Islamiyya” there are some private and some public ones. I call them all “Islamiyya” because their primary focus is one aspect or another of Arabic and Islamic studies; but obviously this further blurs the initial distinction between the purportedly private Islamiyya schools and the public schools.

In the private sub-category at the tertiary level, two examples are Al-Hikmah University and Muhyideen College of Education, both in Ilorin, Kwara State. Both have their own websites giving information about them.\(^{45}\) Muhyideen was established by Imam Jubril Sha’aban, who has also set up a private Islamiyya secondary school, the Muhyideen College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, also in Ilorin (Abdussalam 2012). The secondary school prepares students for the exam for the Senior Islamic Studies Certificate, SISC. Success in the SISC qualifies them for entry to the tertiary Muhyideen College of Education (and other tertiary institutions of course), which trains them to be teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and when they finish grants them NCEs, the same National Certificates of Education granted by the state-run Colleges of Education, now a minimum qualification for teachers in most primary and secondary schools. Like the public Colleges of Education, the Muhyideen College of Education is under the supervision of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). In fact private tertiary schools of all sorts, even universities, are another growth industry in Nigeria.

In the public sub-category of “tertiary Islamiyya” schools, there are two examples from the North Central Zone, from Kwara and Niger States. Both are Colleges of Islamic Legal Studies, originally granting diplomas in “Civil Law and Sharia”. This type of diploma was pioneered in the late 1950s and the 1960s, first at the Institute of Administration, Zaria, then at the Faculty of Law of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU; Faculty of Law established 1962), and later at ABU’s Centre for Islamic Legal Studies (CILS, established 1966). The aim was to train judges and other court staff for the northern Native Courts (subsequently renamed Area Courts, now in the sharia states become Sharia Courts), who would be capable of administering both the Islamic personal and other civil law applied in the Native Courts in cases involving Muslims, and the new Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes brought in the North in 1960. In the 1980s and 1990s, after the break-up of the Northern Region into states, CILS, along with the Faculty of Law at Bayero University Kano, assisted in the establishment of separate Colleges of Islamic Legal Studies in many of the northern states, including the Justice Fati Lami Abubakar College of Islamic Legal Studies, Minna, and the College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin.\(^{46}\) Both now offer a variety of certificates and diplomas in “Sharia Law” or “Civil Law” or “Civil Law and Sharia” (Ndagi 2012; Abdussalam 2012), the diplomas now being a common minimum qualification for

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46 Similar colleges in other states: Adamawa: College for Legal Studies, Yola. Bauchi: A.D. Rufa’i College for Legal and Islamic Studies, Misau. Borno: Mohammed Goni College of Legal and Islamic Studies, Maiduguri. Jigawa: Jigawa State College of Legal and Islamic Studies, Ringim. Kaduna State has CILS. Kano: Aminu Kano College of Islamic Legal Studies, Kano. Katsina: Yusuf Bala Usman College of Legal and Islamic Studies, Daura. Kebbi: School of Legal Studies, Yauri. Sokoto: College of Legal & Islamic Studies Sokoto. Yobe: Atiku Abubakar College of Legal and Islamic Studies, Nguru. In the North Central zone, there are no such schools in Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau or the FCT.
appointment as registrar or judge of the Area and Sharia Courts of most of the northern states. For further details as to curriculums and course content see Ostien 2007: Chapter 7. Whether there is really enough demand for graduates of these programmes to sustain these schools is a question they are facing. In Niger State the College has added a diploma in Arabic, Islamic Studies and Hausa, and one in Mass Communications, to its original repertoire. Both the Niger and Kwara Colleges of Islamic Legal Studies are affiliated to Bayero University Kano, which prescribes their curriculums and moderates their exams, and through which they are accredited.

4.4. Public schools. Finally a brief word on Muslims attending the public schools – not the new Islamiyya type but the government-run primary and secondary schools first established in the colonial period, the tertiary colleges and polytechnics, up to the fully-fledged federal universities and now increasing numbers of state universities. All these types of institutions exist in all the North Central states, and Muslims and Christians attend them as students and teach in them as teachers and lecturers and professors in large numbers.

4.4.1. Primary and secondary. The lower levels of public education, the public primary and secondary schools, have long been neglected and underfunded and left to fend for themselves all over the country, the politicians finding other things to do with the money running through their hands. The curriculums are prescribed in detail by the Federal Ministry of Education. But the teachers are often poorly trained and are poorly and irregularly paid, and in the schools the teaching and teaching materials are of low standard when they exist at all. The students who come out of the public schools, as secondary school leavers say, are notorious for having received hardly any education at all, sometimes still being innumerate and illiterate in any language. Nevertheless many Muslims and Christians send their children to these schools, not having the resources to send them to better private ones and not wishing to send them away as almajirai. Most students attending the schools after all do learn something, and some learn quite a lot.

As to specifically religious education, the position in the Nigerian public primary and secondary schools is that students get a good dose of it, on one side or the other of the Christian/Muslim divide. To quote from an earlier study:

Practice in the Nigerian public schools amply fulfils the constitutional presupposition [Art. 38(2)] that religious instruction will be given and religious ceremonies conducted in the public schools. School days, and assemblies and other functions, routinely begin with prayer, whether after the Muslim or the Christian fashion. Muslim students take time out during the day for scheduled prayers, and attend services at Friday mosque. At the public boarding schools, church services are held on Sunday for Christian students attending there. But most tellingly, the official curriculums for all primary and secondary schools, prescribed by the Federal Ministry of Education, make religious studies mandatory for all students through JS-3 (9th grade in U.S. parlance). They are optional after that, but most students pursue religious studies through SS-3 (12th grade) because they are part of the state-sponsored standardised exams most school-leavers take: GCE, SSCE, or WAEC (compare SAT). Classes are either in Islamic Studies or in Christian Religious Knowledge, at the election, per [Art. 38(2)], of the student or his parents: evidently all Nigerian students are presumed to be either Muslim or

47 One hears this same complaint even in the developed world. There it is the exception; in Nigeria it has become the rule. Cf. Daily Trust, 6 April 2011, internet edition, “Another Mass Failure in School Exam”, reporting results of the November/December 2010 NECO exams, and saying: “Mass failure in examinations conducted by [NECO, WAEC and the National Business and Technical Examinations Board] has become disturbingly regular in the last few years, and getting worse... The persistent high failure rates have been attributed to low quality of teachers, deplorable state of teaching and learning facilities in schools, among other factors. The few available trained teachers are themselves products of a lowly pedagogical standard. Motivation among teaching staff members is low.”
Christian, and probably most of them actually are. As prescribed by the Ministry of Education, religious studies classes cover such Christian topics as ‘Relationship with God’, ‘The Bible as the record of God’s revelation of himself’, ‘Creation’, ‘Sin and Its consequences’, ‘Jesus Christ the Messiah accepts suffering and death for us’, ‘The resurrection of Jesus Christ’, ‘The Holy Spirit’, etc., and such Muslim topics as ‘Qur’an as a Holy Book’, ‘The Holy Qur’an as the completion of revelation’, ‘Prophet Muhammad as the seal of Prophets’, ‘Allah’s attributes’, ‘Life after death, judgement, paradise and hell’, and ‘The concept of repentance and forgiveness’. This is obviously not neutral or disinterested teaching about religion; it is indoctrination, aimed at inculcating religious belief and practice which, as [everyone] hopes, will bring about also the sound moral and civic behaviour that religious belief and practice are thought to entail. The teachers, who will have specialised in religious studies in their colleges of education or universities, are almost universally committed Muslims or committed Christians as the case may be. Like all other teachers they are employed and paid by the state. (Ostien and Gamaliel 2002: 25-26)

This is a type of involvement of the state in the teaching and practice of religion that would not be allowed in countries where there is a stricter separation of religion and state, e.g. the USA (ibid.). But the Nigerian constitution clearly permits it, Nigerian Christians and Muslims both want it, and both get it on more or less equal terms. As noted, the schools having been neglected, the quality of religious instruction too has suffered. This is widely recognized and efforts are being made on both sides to improve matters.

4.4.2. Tertiary. The field of tertiary public education in Nigeria is complicated in ways that cannot detain us here. The reader is only reminded that people of different faiths all study and teach in these institutions together, though in different proportions in different institutions. And then students wishing to pursue specifically Muslim subjects can do so in one way or another up to Ph.D. level. To summarize:

(1) In the Colleges of Education in Kwara, Kogi and Niger States, there are Departments of Arabic and Islamic Studies where students can pursue an NCE in that field. Perhaps the same is true in other states.

(2) The Kogi State Polytechnic has a Department of Islamic Studies, where students can get an OND and HND in Islamic Studies. Perhaps the same is true in other states.

(3) In the universities:
   (a) in the Faculties of Arts there are Departments of Arabic, or of Islamic Studies, or of Arabic and Islamic Studies, where one can get a B.A. or B.Sc. in these fields, and continue up to Ph.D. This is true at the Universities of Abuja, Ilorin, and Jos, and at Kogi, Kwara and Nasarawa State Universities; only Benue is left out.
   (b) in the Faculty of Law of the University of Ilorin, one can pursue an LL.B. in “Common and Islamic Law”, with a heavier concentration on Arabic and Islamic law in the syllabus than in the straight bachelor of laws programme one can pursue in the alternative; there are also post-graduate courses in aspects of Islamic law, and one can pursue LL.M. and Ph.D. degrees with dissertations on such subjects as well. In two other Faculties of Law, although only one first degree (straight LL.B.) is offered, there are Departments of “Private and Islamic Law” (Abuja) or “Islamic and Customary Law” (Nasarawa State), and advanced degrees can be pursued in these fields.
   (c) in the Faculty of Education of the University of Ilorin, one can pursue a B.A. (Ed.) in either Arabic or Islamic Studies.

49 Id., pp. 113 and 139 (the Qur’an), 124-26 (the Prophet Muhammad), 143, 224, 227, 229 (the ninety-nine attributes of Allah), 221 (life after death), 223 (repentance and forgiveness).
There are other complications. But perhaps the point has been sufficiently made: Nigeria’s Muslims, having made places for their own subjects in the western-style schools, are full partners in the educational enterprise at all levels, public and private, sacred and secular. The system obviously has problems, but these derive not from religion but from other factors.

5. Islam in government.

The numbers of Muslim elected officials in the states of the North Central Zone has already been discussed in section 2.2 above. Here are discussed some institutions of government which exist in the North Central Zone which are specifically Muslim or are directed at least in part at specifically Muslim ends.

5.1. Islamic traditional rulerships. In all the North Central states except Benue and Kogi, there are Islamic emirates tracing their lineages back to the Sokoto Caliphate; often the ruling houses are still at least nominally Fulani. Enumerating the “first class” emirs only: Niger State has the Etsu Nupe/Emir of Bida, the Etsu Agaie, the Etsu Lapai, the Emir of Kontagora, the Sakin-Zazzau/Emir of Suleja, and the Emir of Minna. Kwara has the Emirs of Ilorin and of Lafiagi. Nasarawa has the Emirs of Lafia, Nasarawa and Keffi. Plateau has the Emir of Wase and Dendi. There are lesser emirates in Kwarra and Niger. The emirates today, though still Islamic institutions, are much flavoured with local ethnicities. The Emir of Ilorin, though descended from the Fulani Shehu Alimi through two of his sons (the emirship alternating between the houses), is today distinctly Yoruba. The Emir (or Etsu) of Bida, though descended from the Fulani Malam Dendo through two sons and one grandson (in rotation among the houses), is distinctly Nupe. Then in all states there are other traditional rulers, sometimes of equal or greater dignity with the local emirs, whose forms of authority derive mainly from ethnicity and traditional religion, though overlaid now with Islam or Christianity. Examples in Kogi State are the Attah of Igala, the Ohinohi of Ebira and the Obaro of Kabba, the first two now traditionally Muslim and the third traditionally Christian. The leading traditional rulers in Benue are the Tor Tiv and the Och’Idoma. The chairman of the Council of Traditional Rulers in Plateau State is the Gbong Gwom Berom, headquartered in Jos. Below the first-class chiefs come descending ranks of other traditional rulers – district, village, and ward heads, often with their own local titles – answerable up the line in the traditional rulership hierarchies. Under the British the traditional rulers, under the name of Native Authorities, were powerful, exercising a wide range of legislative, executive and judicial powers. That is all gone now: the chiefs no longer hold court themselves or control the local police, prisons, or other courts as they once did, nor can they make law or administer it. Their roles today mostly have to do with conflict prevention and mediation (Blench et al. 2006). In each state there is a Council of Traditional Rulers sometimes called on by government for advice and more frequently for assistance in preventing or quelling communal violence springing up for one reason or another. In sections 5.4 and 5.6 we shall see how in Niger State the emirs have been given other responsibilities under the regime of sharia implementation in place there.

5.2. Administration of Islamic law in the courts. All parts of the North Central Zone except Niger State (dealt with separately in section 5.6 below) have “Area Courts”. These are the successors, since 1967/68, of the northern Native Courts of colonial days. All parts of the zone also have High Courts and Magistrate’s Courts. In all these courts litigants in civil cases have choice-of-law options, and one body of law they can choose (or that the court can choose for them) is Islamic law. Accordingly Islamic personal law and other Islamic civil law are often applied in cases involving Muslims in the courts, particularly the Area Courts, throughout the North Central Zone. The courts also apply all of the more or less vague bodies of native law and custom of the many local ethnic groups as appropriate in given cases, as
well as amalgams of all of the above: in particular, Islamic law as applied is often modified by local custom (Yusuf 1982: 44-49; Liman 2010). Among some ethnic groups, notably the Yoruba, even many Muslims among them still prefer to go under their own ethnic law and custom to the exclusion of sharia:

Whereas courts in Hausaland have tended to enforce Islamic law in most...causes, Moslem Yoruba cases...in the Offa area [in Kwara State] have been tried primarily in accordance with Yoruba customary rules and procedure. (Yusuf 1982: 135; cf. Oba 2008: 70, noting that in a number of towns in Kwara State Islamic law has not displaced customary law among the Yoruba Muslim inhabitants.)

Probably the same is true among other ethnic groups in the North Central Zone, perhaps for instance among the Igala and Ebira of Kogi State, but this subject has not been systematically studied.

5.3. Sharia Courts of Appeal. In the old Northern Region a “Moslem Court of Appeal” was set up in 1956. This was replaced by the regional Sharia Court of Appeal in 1960. As the Northern Region has gradually been split up into more and more states, the states have always inherited the laws and legal institutions of their parent states and ultimately of their ancestor region, subject of course to modification. (For the history see Ostien 2006). Thus all the northern states and the FCT now have their own Sharia Courts of Appeal, inherited from the Northern Region under the virtually identical statute, except Benue which shares with Plateau. The laid-down jurisdiction of the Sharia Courts of Appeal formerly was understood to be to hear appeals from the North’s Native Courts, since 1967/68 transformed into Area Courts, primarily in matters involving Islamic personal law. Since 1999/2000, however, in the states that have undertaken sharia implementation, the jurisdictions of the state Sharia Courts of Appeal have been broadened to include other civil matters and even criminal matters – anything decided in the new inferior 50 Sharia Courts the sharia states have set up, themselves given virtually plenary original jurisdiction of all matters civil and criminal if the parties are Muslims. The only sharia state in the North Central Zone is Niger; the question of the expanded jurisdiction of the Niger State Sharia Court of Appeal is discussed further in section 5.6.4.1 below. Since 1979 states have also been constitutionally authorized to establish Customary Courts of Appeal, with jurisdiction to hear appeals from the states’ Area (or in the southern states, Customary) Courts in civil matters decided under one or another body of customary law. In the North Central Zone Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and Plateau States, and the FCT, all have Customary Courts of Appeal running in parallel to their Sharia Courts of Appeal. This indicates that there are considerable volumes of litigation in their Area Courts decided under the laws and customs of one or another of the many local ethnic groups, and the appeals in such cases are directed to the Customary Courts of Appeal. In Kwara State, where there is no Customary Court of Appeal, the many cases that are still being decided in the Area Courts under Yoruba law and custom are presumably going on appeal to the High Court, as was the case everywhere before the advent of Customary Courts of Appeal in 1979.

5.4. Islamic Religious Preaching Boards. The Islamic Religious Preaching Boards existing in many northern states have been mentioned in section 3.2.2 above. They enter again in this section on Islam in government, because one of the North Central states, Niger, has a Preaching Board, which is not untypical of those in other states.

Niger’s Board has been in existence since 1979 pursuant to a law then enacted; revised in 1985, the law is now Cap. 63, Laws of Niger State 1989 (from which are quoted the sections below). The Board has a chairman appointed by the governor, who for many years has been

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50 Inferior, that is, in the judicial hierarchy, to the Sharia Courts of Appeal, to which their judgments are appealable.
Sheikh Ahmed Lemu, former Grand Kadi of the Niger State Sharia Court of Appeal (for more on Sheikh Lemu see section 8.1.6 below). Other members are (§3):

(b) one person learned in Islamic religious matters to represent each Emirate Council;
(c) one person each to represent the Ministry of:
   (i) Education;
   (ii) Health and Social Welfare;
   (iii) Justice; and
   (iv) Information, Youth, Sports and Culture.
(d) two other persons learned in Islamic religious matters to be appointed by the Governor.

The functions of this Board are laid down in §8:

(a) to determine and regulate the qualification, competence and sincerity of any person to become an Islamic religious preacher or malam;
(b) to conduct examinations and set standards for any person desirous of becoming an Islamic religious preacher or a malam;
(c) to issue licence and certificate to qualified Islamic religious preachers and malams;
(d) to exercise control over the movement of Islamic religious preachers and malams;
(e) to register all Islamic religious organisations in the State;
(f) to prescribe terms and conditions on licences and certificates;
(g) to regulate and determine the types of Islamic religious poetry or songs to be approved for public consumption and dissemination in public places of worship;
(h) to render advice to the Emirate Councils on Islamic religious matters.

Besides sending representatives to the central Preaching Board, the eight Niger State emirates each have an Islamic Religious Advisory Committee, composed of

(a) a Chairman, to be appointed by the Emirate Council, who shall be a person of good repute and well versed in Islamic religious matters;
(b) all District Heads who are Muslims within the Emirate;
(c) one respectable malam from each District within the Emirate.

(§§ 9 and 10). Obviously a great deal of oversight and control of Islamic religious activity within the state by government, through this Board and through the emirates, is contemplated by the statute. Preaching Board laws in other states are similar.

The idea of regulating Islamic preachers in the north through what amount to boards of government-appointed ulama first got started in the mid-1960s, when provocative preaching by a number of people including Maitatsine was a problem particularly in Kano, building up to the crisis of December 1980 when thousands were killed, with aftershocks in Maiduguri, Kaduna, Yola and Gombe continuing until 1985 (Anwar 1997). The growing strength of the anti-Sufi movement through the 1970s, culminating in the founding of Izala in 1978 and its subsequent campaigns of preaching through the 1980s, added another dimension to the problem – violent conflict between Sufis and anti-Sufis sparked by incendiary preaching on both sides; many states thought this new source of civil strife might also be controlled through Preaching Boards. The latest spur to this form of attempted regulation of Islamic preachers has been Boko Haram, in response to which Borno State enacted a new Islamic Religious Preachings Law in 2010 – as though it had never had one before, although such laws have been in force in Borno since 1977; and as though the Preaching Board on ground in Borno had not been fully aware of the growing menace of Muhammad Yusuf since the mid-2000s and had been unwilling or unable to do anything about it.\footnote{Per author’s interviews with members of the Preaching Board and others in Maiduguri in May 2010.}
The Preaching Boards are to be discussed more fully in a forthcoming study by the present writer (Ostien forthcoming). What can be said here in summary is that for a number of reasons the Boards have not worked very well: established in times of crisis, facing resistance and falling into disuse, revitalized when another crisis comes, falling into disuse again: in a 2008 interview Sheikh Lemu said of the Niger State Preaching Board that it was then “in a coma” and had been for a number of years.\(^{52}\) One reason certainly is the questionable legitimacy, both in Islamic and in Nigerian constitutional theory, of a board of government-appointed ulama determining who is qualified to preach and who is not, and who among those otherwise qualified “go too far” whether towards aberrant doctrine or towards criticism of the powers that be and other sinners. The tradition of the righteous preacher courageously criticizing not only corrupt and oppressive rulers but also the “rapacious ulama” who “worship wealth and those in power no matter how corrupt they may be” has strong roots in Nigeria, going back to the brothers Uthman and Abdullahi Dan Fodio who led the Fulani jihad of the early nineteenth century (Abdullahi 1984: 44ff; cf. Hiskett 1994). This tradition, and the constitutionally-protected freedom of Nigerians to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, always in the minds both of dissenting preachers and of the Preaching Boards, have tended to limit the effectiveness of the Boards, whose powers on paper seem so sweeping. In the aftermath of Boko Haram a second state in the North Central Zone, Kwara, contemplated setting up a Preaching Board, but in the end thought better of it:

KWARA State Governor Bukola Saraki has withdrawn the Religious Preaching Bill 2010 earlier forwarded to the state House of Assembly for consideration. Dr. Saraki asked the legislators to discontinue work on the bill, saying government was considering other means of regulating preaching in the state. The bill had sought to regulate religious preaching in the state with a view to sustain peace and religious harmony. Our correspondent learnt that the governor has already asked the Council of Ulamas and the Christian Association of Nigeria to carry out the regulatory functions.\(^{53}\)

5.5. Muslim Pilgrim Welfare Boards. All states of the North Central Zone have statutory Muslim Pilgrim Welfare Boards, whose job, in conjunction with national authorities, is to manage the hajj (pilgrimage) every year, for pilgrims coming from that state. There are parallel state Christian Pilgrim Welfare Boards managing the annual pilgrimages of Christians to the Holy Land. These perhaps require no further comment.

5.6. Sharia implementation in Niger State. The programmes of sharia implementation undertaken in twelve northern Nigerian states beginning in 1999-2000 are extensively documented in Ostien 2007; Ostien and Dekker 2010 provides an overview with discussion of many constitutional and other issues. In the North Central Zone, the only state to join the sharia implementation effort was Niger. This section gives a brief recap of what Niger State has done in this line.\(^{54}\)

5.6.1. Initial amendments to courts and penal laws. Niger State’s then governor, Engr. Abdulkadir A. Kure, reacted very quickly to the surge of enthusiasm for sharia implementation, bringing in five separate bills already signed into law on February 22, 2000. These took a minimalist approach to sharia implementation. For instance new inferior Sharia Courts were not established as in other sharia states; instead the Area Courts Law was amended in ways that changed the existing Area Courts into de facto Sharia Courts. New

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52 Interview on 28th February 2008 in Minna by the author.
54 Full details of all matters discussed here are given in the relevant chapters of Ostien 2007, the entirety of which, with supplementary materials not published in the hard copy, is available at http://www.sharia-in-africa.net/pages/publications/sharia-implementation-in-northern-nigeria.php.
Sharia Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes were not enacted as in other sharia states. Instead the existing Penal Code was amended in a way intended to make it “sharia compliant”, by adding a new section, applicable to Muslims only, laying down the classical Islamic punishments for specified crimes if proved in specified ways; and the existing Criminal Procedure Code was amended to bring it into line. The Sharia Court of Appeal Law was amended to expand the court’s jurisdiction beyond matters of Islamic personal law only, to other matters, civil and criminal, decided in the Area Courts under Islamic law.

5.6.2. The Niger State Advisory Council on Religious Affairs. There was dissatisfaction with what Governor Kure had initially done and with the way he had done it (minimal consultation as well as minimalist legislation), and the Governor was soon prevailed upon to appoint an Advisory Council on Religious Affairs (NISACORA) to review the position. In mid-2000 NISACORA held hearings all over Niger State, visited Zamfara State to see what had been done there, and made its recommendations accordingly. The full report and recommendations of NISACORA are available online as supplementary materials to Ostien 2007: vol. II.

5.6.3. Further legislation in 2001. A much fuller programme of sharia implementation was then embarked on in Niger State in 2001. To summarize:

- An Advisory Council of Ulama was established, to advise the governor on issues he might refer to the Council. Sheikh Lemu was made the chairman.55
- A Sharia Commission was established, with departments of Sharia Implementation, Information and Enlightenment, Sharia Monitoring, and Planning, Research and Reconciliation of Muslim Communities.56
- Initially the Sharia Commission set out to establish hisbah57 groups all over the state, but by 2004 this effort had been abandoned and the only hisbah activities under the Commission were confined to certain places in Minna.58
- The Niger State Liquor Law was amended, tightening regulation of alcoholic drinks, and considerable effort was invested in enforcing the new prohibitions.59
- A Zakat and Endowments Board was established, which has in turn established Zonal and District Zakat Committees and Councils all over the state, charged with the collection and distribution of zakat60 and the encouragement and management of pious endowments, awqaf.61
- Finally, the Area Courts were abolished and new inferior Sharia Courts established in their place, with appeals from them in all matters directed to the Sharia Court of Appeal. This brought Niger into line with other sharia states in this respect.62

What was not changed was the way Islamic penal law had been brought in, by amendment to the old Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes rather than by enactment of new Sharia Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes for enforcement in the Sharia Courts. This has led to problems as discussed in section 5.6.4.2.

55 For details see Ostien 2007: vol. VI, ch. 8, “Councils of Ulama and Related Bodies”.
56 See ibid; also Ndagi 2012.
57 Hisbah: enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong according to the sharia; by extension, those who enjoin and forbid.
58 For details see Ostien 2007: vol. VI, ch. 10, “Hisbah Groups”.
60 Zakat: the Islamic ‘alms’ or religious tax, payable annually, in cash or in kind, on most forms of wealth, and meant in various proportions for the support of specified classes of people including the destitute, the poor, those in debt, those in bondage, strangers stranded on the way, new converts to Islam, those ‘striving in the way of Allah’ including e.g. Qur’anic teachers, and those who administer the tax itself.
5.6.4. Two legal problems.

5.6.4.1. Sharia Court of Appeal jurisdiction. All sharia states expanded the jurisdiction of their Sharia Courts of Appeal from matters of Islamic personal law only, to all matters, civil and criminal, decided in their new inferior Sharia Courts. As to three states, Borno, Niger and Kebbi, this expansion of Sharia Court of Appeal jurisdiction has been challenged as being unconstitutional, in the state High Courts of Borno and Niger States and in the federal Court of Appeal in a case coming up from Kebbi State. In all three cases, the courts have so ruled. Accordingly, in Borno, Niger and Kebbi States, the pre-sharia-implementation position has been reinstated: while the inferior Sharia Courts continue to decide all sorts of matters under Islamic law, it is only matters decided under Islamic personal law that go on appeal to the Sharia Courts of Appeal; matters decided under other aspects of Islamic law, as before, go on appeal to the High Courts.

5.6.4.2. Application of the Penal Code in the Sharia Courts. In 2004 a Muslim defendant was convicted in a Niger State Sharia Court of theft-related offenses, under several sections of the Niger State Penal Code as amended in 2000 putatively to make it “sharia compliant”. On appeal to the High Court, the defendant’s lawyer made the following argument: (1) under the 2001 statute creating the new inferior Sharia Courts, the law to be applied in the Sharia Courts is sharia law and sharia law only; (2) the Penal Code even as amended is not sharia law; (3) therefore the Sharia Courts do not have jurisdiction to apply the Penal Code; (4) therefore the defendant’s conviction in the Sharia Court under that Code should be thrown out. The High Court completely agreed. The upshot is that the Niger State Sharia Courts should not be trying criminal matters any longer, as there is no code except the Penal Code under which to try them; but they nevertheless apparently continue to do so as there are not enough Magistrate’s and High Courts to handle all the load.

5.6.5. Conclusion on sharia implementation. The whole penal side of sharia implementation, with the hudud and qisas theoretically brought back for application to Muslim offenders, has largely faded out. What has become of it in Niger State is one example. In three other sharia states (Borno, Yobe, Gombe) the Sharia Penal Codes, though enacted as law, have never actually been brought into force. Where they have been in force, the old-fashioned punishments that so many all over the world find objectionable today (lashing, amputation, stoning, an eye for an eye) are being pronounced as sentences less and less often by the Sharia Courts. When they are pronounced, they are not being carried out (the

65 Per author’s interviews with a number of people in Niger State in 2008 and after.
66 Hudud: punishments prescribed by Allah for specific offences, namely, in Maliki law, zina (roughly, sex outside of marriage; punishment: either one hundred lashes if the offender has never been married or stoning to death if the offender is or has ever been married); qadhf (wrongful accusation of zina; punishment: eighty lashes); sariqah (theft meeting certain conditions; punishment: amputation of the right hand for the first offence and further amputations for subsequent offences); shurb (drinking wine, and by extension imbibing other intoxicants; punishment: eighty lashes); hirabah (roughly, armed robbery; punishment ranges from amputation of right hand and left foot up to death by crucifixion depending on circumstances); and ridda (apostasy from Islam; punishment: death).
67 Qisas: retaliation in kind for woundings or killings: an eye for an eye, etc.
governors refuse their consent; the convicts languish in prison unless and until someone releases them). Non-Muslims have been scrupulously left out of the whole penal side of sharia, so no one is complaining about that either. Criminal matters in the Sharia Courts are rarely in the news today.

Meanwhile, as the penal side of sharia implementation fades, the rest of it goes on. All the new Islamic institutions – sharia courts, councils of ulama, sharia commissions, zakat boards, hisbah organisations – continue in being in the sharia states including Niger. How the new institutions are faring is too broad a subject for further discussion here. At a minimum they “are providing useful opportunities, for many people, for the responsible expression of Islamic learning and piety and the beneficial application of Islamic precepts in all aspects of life” (Ostien and Dekker 2010: 606).

6. Other Muslim groups.

Many Muslim organisations at work in the North Central Zone, private and public, have been discussed in the foregoing pages. This section briefly gives further information about four types of groups – councils of ulama, women’s groups, youth groups, and educators – plus an important umbrella organisation active everywhere in the north.

6.1. Councils of Ulama. Four of the background papers mention this type of local group (with italics added to highlight differences):

- in Benue there is a “State Council of Imams and Ulama” (Ibrahim 2012)
- in Kogi there is a “State Council of Ulama” (Jimba 2012)
- In Plateau there is the “Council of Ulama and Elders Jos” (Modibbo 2012).
- in Niger there is the “Advisory Council of Ulama” (Ndagi 2012)

Of these, the only “official” one, appointed by the governor and giving Islamic advice to the governor if he seeks it, is the one in Niger State. It isn’t very active. The other three are self-constituted NGOs, organisations of ulama come together at state (Benue, Kogi) or local level (Jos) to try and chart a common Islamic course through modern times. These types of organisations exist in all North Central territories at different levels of localisation; they are more or less active in thinking and speaking for Islam or for the Muslims where they are.

The Council of Ulama and Elders in Jos is an especially interesting case. The place in the North Central Zone where Muslims and Christians have been most in conflict with each other in recent years has been Plateau State, with Jos the worst case. The Council of Ulama and Elders in Jos – ulama, elders, and also local politicians, it is an assorted group of Muslim voices – was established in 2003, to help steer the Muslims of Jos and Plateau State through very troubled times involving much conflict, including fighting and killing, between themselves – the Muslims, chiefly the Hausas – and everyone else in Jos (Human Rights Watch 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008; Ostien 2009). The Jos Council of Ulama and Elders has been much looked to, as defining and expressing the opinions of the local ummah, or at least of the local “Hausa/Fulani” known as “Jasawa”, of whom there is a large community settled in Jos for generations who feel they are being denied their rights. Some aspects of the Council’s role in the electoral politics of 2003 and 2007 as played out in Jos are recounted in Ostien 2009: 22–26. Since the outbreak of ethno-religious violence in Jos in November 2008, the Council has been quite often in the news. This group deserves further study.

6.2. Women’s groups. No separate survey of Muslim women in the North Central Zone, or of the groups they form, could be attempted as part of this project. For a recent survey that covers quite a lot of ground the reader is referred to Nasir 2007.
Three women’s organisations are discussed in the state background papers prepared for this project:

- The Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), and its work in Plateau State, are discussed at some length in Modibbo 2012. A brief biography of the Nasarawa State Amirah of FOMWAN, Hajiya Zainab Talatu Abdulmu’in, is given in section 8.1 below. FOMWAN has its own website, see http://www.fomwan.org/, where much information about it and its work is available.
- The Badrudin Islam Asalatu Circle, headquartered in Ilorin but now with branches in Ibadan, Lagos and Bida, is described in Abdussalam 2012. Started by women for the purpose of da’wah among women, this group now has men’s wings (husbands) and children’s and youth wings in all branches.
- The Egbe Obirin Alasalatu [Women’s Worship Group]. “This women association is very active in Okunland [Kogi State]. It was first introduced in Ayetoro-Gbede in 1957 by Alhajj Mahmood Ajao Jimba, an Ilorin itinerant scholar. It later spread to the nooks and crannies of Okunland.” (Jimba 2012)

Another organisation of Muslim women, discussed further in section 7.2.2 below, is the Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development (WISCOD). WISCOD is active in the Muslim communities of Jos North and Wase LGAs in Plateau State in HIV/AIDS awareness and support, peace building and other projects. It comes in in section 7.2.2, on inter-religious coalitions and partnerships, because of its working relationship with a Christian group, the Mennonite Central Committee. And then a women’s rights activist organisation, WRAPA, organised and headed by Muslim women, is discussed briefly in section 8.2.1.

But this short list drastically underrepresents all the Muslim women’s groups there are. As Nasir says:

[M]ost Muslim women…belong to at least two or three different social groups organised around common interests – ethnic, religious, occupational, gendered, or other. There are women’s wings of many predominantly male organisations, (Nasir 2007: 91)

FOMWAN itself has over 500 member groups. Unfortunately time did not permit further investigation of this topic. But three outstanding women – B. Aisha Lemu of Minna, Saudatu Mahdi of Abuja, and Khadijah Gambo Hawaja of Jos – are brought in for brief special mention in sections 6.4 and 8.2 below.

6.3. Youth groups. Many groups of Muslims form along lines of age-group. To follow just those who pursue Western-style educations: There are Muslim Student Society chapters in virtually all secondary and tertiary educational institutions. There are Muslim Law Student Society chapters in virtually all the Faculties of Law, and similarly for the other Faculties and Departments of the universities, polytechnics, and so on. When they come out of school and become active in other things, young Muslims form other sorts of local associations often for da’wah. Two examples may be mentioned:

- Okun Muslim Youths Council: “based in Tudun Wada, Kaduna. The Council was formed in 1995 by some youths from the Okun community living outside their state (Kogi) to propagate Islam across the Okun community. The group is funded with donations and contributions made by its members and well-wishers.” (Jimba 2012)
- Voice of Islam: Nasarawa State youths using the electronic media and public lectures to preach unity among Muslims and to try to intervene in conflicts so there will be peace. Members include civil servants, traders, teachers, male and female. (Liman and Wakawa 2012).
There are also associations or federations of youth groups (compare FOMWAN). Perhaps the most active is the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations (NACOMYO), which has more or less active chapters in most state capitals. Makinde and Ostien forthcoming discusses the roles of NACOMYO chapters in setting up Independent Sharia Panels in Lagos and Oyo States; and see Sanni 2007 and Jimba 2012 for further information about NACOMYO.

6.4. Educators. The educational activities of the many malams and alfas as sole proprietors, as well as the Ahmadiyya, the Qadiriyya Nasiriyaa Youth Movement Jos, Fityanul Islam, Izala, the Nuruddeen Society, Darul Islam, and a number of other groups and individuals, have already been mentioned in this report. Educational activities of some other North Central groups are as follows:

- **Dariqatul Tijaniyya** in Nasarawa State, among other things running schools. (Liman and Wakawa 2012)
- **Ansar-ud Deen Society of Nigeria**, active all over Nigeria, among other things running schools in Kogi State (Jimba 2012) and no doubt many other places.
- **Islamic Orphanage Foundation**: an Ilorin group with Arc. Saefullahi Ahmad Alege as chairman and other notable local Muslims as members. Raising money and using it to educate orphans who could not otherwise go to school. (Abdussalam 2012)
- **Schools in FCT.** The FCT background paper gives a list of registered Islamic schools in Abuja, and discusses two in detail, the Fou’ad Lababidi Islamic Academy and the Esteem International School. (Medugu 2012)
- **Islamic Education Trust.** Especially noteworthy is the Islamic Education Trust (IET), headquartered in Minna, Niger State. This organisation was founded and is run by Sheikh Ahmed Lemu and his wife B. Aisha Lemu. The IET has done much work in trying to improve primary and secondary education for Muslim children throughout Nigeria, including the production of well written school books. It has also been a voice of reason and moderation in the Muslim community; two examples are the book by Mrs. Lemu on *Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam* (Lemu 1991), and the more recent publication by the Da’wah Coordination Council of Nigeria, which is headquartered at IET, on *The “Boko Haram” Tragedy* (Da’wah Coordination Council of Nigeria 2009). A long section of Ndagi 2012 is devoted to the IET.

6.5. Jama’atu Nasril Islam (Arabic: *Jama’at Nasr al-Islam, Society for the Support or Victory of Islam*) (JNI). JNI is another umbrella group (compare FOMWAN and NACOMYO), in this case not an association or federation of other groups, but rather, theoretically, an association of all Muslims at least of northern Nigeria:

> [E]very Moslem of Northern Nigeria, male and female, young and old is deemed to be a member of the Jama’a. It only remains for him or her to choose whether to be an active member or a sleeping member. (Paden 1973: 183, quoting *Nural Islam* (*Nur al-Islam, The Light of Islam*), the journal published by JNI for some years, vol. 1 no. 1 (April 1965).

JNI was formed in the early 1960s under the auspices of the then-Premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto. Its early history and vicissitudes are discussed in Loimeier 1997: 135-148 and Kane 2003: 152-157. Although its founders hoped JNI would become a national body, speaking for all Nigeria’s Muslims in the national councils, that did not happen; that national role has rather been taken up by the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), founded in 1974, with its headquarters now in Abuja. Today JNI remains a presence only in the ex-Northern Region, with its headquarters in Kaduna and with more or less active branches in most states.

68 References to NSCIA are scattered through many texts. Paden 2008: 33-34 provides a brief summary of its origins and aims. The group has a website at [http://nscia.org/splash/?p=70](http://nscia.org/splash/?p=70).
The state branches have their executive officials who run the affairs of Jama’atu while the sub-branches are constituted at LGA level. It is the responsibility and power of the state chairman to appoint a chairman and a secretary of sub-branches in order to facilitate the smooth running of its functions. The following committees are allowed to be established: Central General Purposes, Central Finance and Resources, and Central Education and Propagation; and other committees as may be considered necessary. The aims and objectives of Jama’atu include propagation of Islam and in so doing to strive to win adherents from non-Muslims, to revive and maintain Islamic morals among Muslims of all ages and sexes, to encourage intellectual religious activities, and to promote friendly relations among Nigerian Muslims in particular, and world Muslims in general. It is also aims at establishing schools where students can be taught Islamic religion and its cultural values, and other subjects of general education and above all to ensure unity and cooperation among Muslims.... (Modibbo 2012)

But JNI has not succeeded in bringing all Muslims even in the north into its fold. The state and local branches tend to be dominated by local traditional rulers, who are mostly Sufis. Anti-Sufis, Izala and its members in particular, therefore mostly abstain. JNI “has lost its influence in some parts of the region (Kogi State inclusive) to some upcoming societies” (Jimba 2012). Nevertheless in many places JNI remains an important forum for intra-Muslim discussion and mediation. In Kwara State, for instance:

The relationships among these various [Muslim] groups is cordial, in the sense that all of them belong to either the Organisation of Muslim Unity (OMU) or to Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI). OMU is an umbrella organisation for Kwara State that coordinates Muslim organisations in the state, and in fact almost all Muslim groups in the state belong and contribute to supporting its activities. Headquartered in Ilorin, its officers are elected from the member organisations. They are even organising joint programmes, especially during Ramadan. As to JNI, almost all Islamic group leaders are members, under the Chairmanship of the Emir of Ilorin. Other Muslim emirs, obas, traditional chieftaincy holders and other prominent Muslims are also members. These two auspices have created and maintain religious harmony in the state. (Abdussalam 2012)

Likewise, when Muslim representation is sought for sub-national inter-religious groups, in the north it is often JNI or its local leader who is brought in. At the national level, the co-chairmen of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) are, ex officio, the heads of NSCIA and CAN, the Christian Association of Nigeria. But in Plateau State, the co-chairmen of the state’s Inter-religious Council for Peace and Harmony are the heads of the state branches of JNI and CAN. JNI also plays roles in other inter-religious peace groups in Plateau State, as we see in the next section.

7. Muslim participation in inter-religious groups.

7.1. Official and quasi-official organisations. The recent growth of inter-religious groups in Nigeria has mostly been driven by inter-religious conflict and the need to address it. Conflict between Muslims and Christians developed into a serious problem during the 1980s. One proximate cause was the great debate over the proposed Federal Sharia Court of Appeal during the constitution-making process of 1976-78, which polarized Christians and Muslims along religious lines (see Ostien 2006). Another cause of dissension was Nigeria’s entry into the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in late 1985. The most serious outbreak of communal violence in this period was the fighting that started between Muslim and Christian groups at the Kafanchan College of Education in March 1987 and spread from there to other parts of Kaduna State and elsewhere in the north (see Kukah 1993: ch. 6; Loimeier 1997: 295-98; Boer 2003: passim). One response of President Babangida to the Kafanchan crisis was to dissolve all religious societies and associations in institutions of learning throughout
Nigeria, and prohibit formation of any new ones for a period of one year. Another response, calculated to address religious tensions more broadly, was to create at the federal level an inter-religious Advisory Council on Religious Affairs, “charged with responsibility for fostering religious harmony in the country” among other things by “serving as an avenue for articulating cordial relationships amongst the various religious groups and between them and the Federal Government.” The Advisory Council on Religious Affairs Act is still in the statute books. But the Council was never very active, and for some years seems not to have been constituted as a body at all.

Its place has been taken by the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council, NIREC.

The establishment of NIREC [in 1999]...was occasioned by the incessant ethno-religious crises which punctuated the socio-political landscape of Nigeria... NIREC...is a permanent and an independent body established to provide religious leaders and traditional rulers with a variable forum to promote greater interaction and understanding among the leadership and their followers as well as lay foundations for sustainable peace and religious harmony in Nigeria. (Quoted from NIREC’s website at http://www.nirec.org/history.html)

Unlike the statutory Advisory Council on Religious Affairs, NIREC is an technically an NGO, a voluntary association of Christian and Muslim leaders speaking more or less with one voice. But although an NGO, it is supported at the national level by the federal government: “Supported and encouraged by President Olusegun Obasanjo, who saw the body as a wonderful project emanating from the leadership of both major faiths, NIREC was inaugurated on the 29th day of September, 1999... The new Nigerian government under the leadership of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua...continued with the policy of support for NIREC” (ibid). Presumably the same has continued under the regime of President Jonathan. NIREC has a constitution (available at its website); as was indicated above, under the constitution the co-chairs are the “heads of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) respectively.”

NIREC’s constitution contemplates not only a national body, but also “State and Local Government chapters [consisting] of equal number of members to represent the [local] Christian groups and the Muslim groups...” Whether any state or local government chapters of NIREC have actually been established is not known to this writer. The Plateau State Inter-Religious Council for Peace and Harmony, mentioned in section 6.5, may be a state chapter of NIREC. As indicated, its co-chairs are the heads of the Plateau State branches of CAN and JNI. But the Plateau State Inter-Religious Council, far from being self-constituted as NIREC is, seems to be a creature of the Plateau State government. In 2010 Governor Jang spoke of having “reconstituted” it as part of his efforts to bring peace to the state; and its co-chair, the Plateau State CAN chairman, has recently spoken of the “mandate” given him in “the

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70 Advisory Council on Religious Affairs Decree, No. 30 of 1987, subsequently Cap. 9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990; the quotations are from §3.
73 “Address of the Plateau State Governor, Jonah David Jang, at the meeting of 19 northern state governors held at Presidential Lodge, Rayfield, Jos, on Thursday, 23 April, 2010”, published at http://www.impactnigeria.org/?p=319.

7.2. NGOs and coalitions of NGOs. Below the quasi-official level of NIREC and its state chapters if any, other inter-religious NGOs, or inter-religious partnerships, coalitions, and networks of NGOs, form, mingle and dissolve ad hoc as needed and as funding allows. A large number of these have grown up in Plateau State in recent years in response to the seemingly incessant conflicts there. Funding has come from a wide variety of sources. The remainder of this section briefly describes a sample of these Plateau State groups.

7.2.1. Inter-religious NGOs. Among the organisations that have been formed are carefully balanced groups of Muslim and Christian peace professionals, formally incorporated, getting money – contracts – from domestic and foreign sources to pursue defined programmes of action, and doing the work and managing the money as scrupulously as their donors could demand. A good example of this is The Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN). CEPAN is organised as a private not-for-profit organisation under the laws of Nigeria. It has a website, [http://www.cepannigeria.org/](http://www.cepannigeria.org/), where many details about it can be read, including the people who founded it, manage it and work for it, the programmes it pursues, and who funds them (one funder over a number of years, for example, has been CORDAID, a development and aid organisation based in the Netherlands\footnote{For Cordaid see [http://www.cordaid.nl/nl/(12997)---.html](http://www.cordaid.nl/nl/(12997)---.html).}). CEPAN staff and managers are equally balanced between Christians and Muslims and between men and women. It was established in February 2004 “in response to the plethora of violent sectarian conflicts in Nigeria”, by a group of seasoned peace building practitioners, scholars and community leaders [most of who] have been involved in peace work for a number of years, working with different faith-based organisations and communities to foster mutual understanding and accommodation among the diverse ethnic and religious communities in Nigeria. … [CEPAN] works to strengthen the values of peace, cultural and religious harmony among the diverse people of Nigeria through a broad spectrum of community-based peace building and people-oriented development activities. The organisation believes that people are the real pillars for peace building and therefore strives to enhance their capacity. CEPAN’s programmes are predicated on the belief that people and development are intertwined. (Quoted from CEPAN’s website)

The passage goes on to list the other organisations with which CEPAN is “affiliated”, i.e. with which it cooperates in various ways, including, as noted, Cordaid; also CAN, and also JNI, NACOMYO and other Muslim organisations, among others. The Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) (“The Pastor and the Imam”, see [http://imcnigeria.org/](http://imcnigeria.org/)), is a group of the same type. Headquartered in Kaduna, IMC acquired a good reputation for the effectiveness of its programmes of faith-based inter-faith mediation in Kaduna State after the Kafanchan (1987), Zangon-Kataf (1992), Kaduna City (2000), and other lesser outbreaks there. Over the last ten years IMC have also done a lot in Plateau State. They are or have been affiliated with more than thirty listed Nigerian and international “partners” and “collaborators”. CEPAN, IMC, and others like them, are deliberately inter-religious in their management and staffing, in the other groups they work with, and in the programmes they carry out. They are doing peace and reconciliation work according to best global practices. Unfortunately the work does not seem to have got at the roots of Plateau’s problems. Nevertheless the programmes are being defined and run with intelligence and integrity, and although the money spent may not have brought about all the hoped-for benefits, many lessons are being learned all around.
CEPAN and IMC are examples of professional inter-religious NGOs. From their standards, other groups diverge in different directions. On the one hand, some equally professional groups are not so inter-religious as they, at least in their internal make-ups. For instance, the Jos unit of Justice Development & Peace/Caritas (JDPC), run by the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos, has some but not many Muslims on its staff. One they have, though, is a trained peace professional active not only in JDPC’s programmes but in Muslim organisations as well; and as will be seen in the next section JDPC works in inter-religious coalitions with Muslim and other organisations. On the other hand, some inter-religious groups are not so professional as CEPAN, IMC and JDPC: not that they are “unprofessional” in any negative sense, but that they are not as formally organised, their members are not necessarily peace professionals, and their programmes are not so well defined. One example of this was the “Platform for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development”, a group of Christian and Muslim businesspeople, academics, and elders that came together in Jos after the crisis there in January 2010, feeling that they had to try and do something to address the situation. This group met weekly over a period of months, reached out in various directions, and eventually dissolved, partly into the now formally-registered Young Ambassadors for Community Peace & Inter-Faith Foundation (YACPIF), which is working directly with the youth gangs that foment so much of the violence.

7.2.2. Inter-religious partnerships, coalitions, and networks of NGOs. Inter-religious partnerships are often formed between “mono-religious” NGOs to work on defined projects. For example, two Jos NGOs, the Islamic Forum for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, run by Sheikh Sani Ibni Salihu, and the Christian Foundation for Social Justice and Equity, run by Joseph Sangosanya, have partnered to do programmes of peace and rights building in Plateau State, funded by the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy. Another example is the partnership between the Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development (WISCOD) (mentioned in section 6.2), and the Jos office of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Funded by MCC, WISCOD, a Muslim organisation, works at HIV/AIDS awareness and support, peace building and other projects in the mostly Muslim communities of Jos North and Wase [LGAs]. MCC has partnered with them for about five years. Amina Ahmed is the coordinator and WISCOD members are mostly Muslim woman – many of them are educated, progressive and passionate about effecting change in their communities.

76 Some information about JDPC/Jos may be read in a 2010 interview with its Coordinator, Father Anthony Fom, see http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-father-anthony-fom-of-justice-development-peacecaritas-jdpc-catholic-archdiocese-of-jos.
77 This is Sani Suleiman, a JDPC volunteer since 2001 and staff Programme Officer since 2007. Mr. Suleiman read public administration at the Plateau State Polytechnic, social work at the University of Jos, and has been trained as a teacher at the National Teachers Institute in Kaduna. He has also done courses at the Africa Peacebuilding Institute in Zambia and at University of Massachusetts in Boston, where he went for a three-week programme on resolution of disputes, interfaith and interethnic. He is the Secretary of the Plateau State branch of NACOMYO. (Based on the author’s interview with Mr. Suleiman in Jos on 16 February 2009.)
78 The author was privileged to attend a meeting of the Platform for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development in February 2010 and to take part in the discussions. Further information about the group has been provided by Dr. Katrina Korb of the University of Jos Faculty of Education, who was part of the Platform and now works with YACPIF. For more on YACPIF see its website at http://www.yacpifoundation.org/index.html.
A good example of an inter-religious coalition or network of NGOs is the Emergency Preparedness and Response Team (EPRT) that has existed in Jos since 2005. MCC was instrumental in helping to form EPRT and to provide training for its members. Its secretariat is at the offices of JDPC. Besides MCC and JDPC, members include CEPAN, NACOMYO, JNI, FOMWAN, CAN, the Country Women’s Association of Nigeria (COWAN), the Red Cross, the Plateau State Emergency Agency, and the National Orientation Agency (NOA). To give one example of its work: during and after the Jos crisis of November 2008, EPRT members exchanged information by telephone to try to get an accurate picture of what was happening as the crisis unfolded, cooperated to prevent the further spread of violence; then, when the violence subsided, met to discuss how they could assist the victims. Among other things they registered the internally displaced persons scattered in all the camps where they had gathered, identified the most vulnerable, determined needs, tried to meet needs among other things by providing medicine, food, mats, blankets, and cooking utensils, and worked with other organisations to coordinate relief efforts. EPRT did similar work after the Jos crisis of January 2010. The EPRT network is also supposed to provide early warning of potential crises and help forestall them. This has not worked well, for a number of reasons; but this inter-religious network has been an important factor in relief efforts after the fact.

Finally, one other network may be mentioned: the Plateau State Peace Practitioners’ Network. This was formed in 2010, to bring together peace practitioners of all persuasions from across Plateau State for purposes of information-sharing, capacity-building, and mutual encouragement and collaboration. To some extent formalized under a Memorandum of Understanding, the Network has installed officers, held periodic meetings, and organised trainings. Further information, for instance as to which organisations participate and which do not and the degree of inter-religious cooperation being fostered, was not available at the time of writing.

8. Some notable North Central Zone Muslims.

Besides Muslim groups, the research for this project was to identify and describe “[Muslim] individuals that have religious, social, and political impact within society.” Accordingly the authors of the North Central background papers have each given brief biographies of a number of prominent Muslims at work in their jurisdictions. One each of these is reproduced in section 8.1. Two other individuals are brought in for special mention in section 8.2.

8.1. Seven of those discussed in state and FCT background papers. Brief biographies of a total of 23 notable individuals are given in the background papers, as follows:

Benue State (Ibrahim 2012)
- Ustaz Sulaiman Abdurrahman
- Sheikh Muhammadu Madugu
- Imam Ahmad Mustapha Alifeti
- Malam Abubakar Umar Aguda

FCT (Medugu 2012)
- Sheikh Tajudeen Bello
- Dr Taofik Abdulazeez
- Ustaz Abdul Fatah Adeyemi

Kogi State (Jimba 2012)
- Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja
- Honourable Justice Yunus Abdullahi (Rtd).

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81 Per the author’s interview with Fr. Anthony Fom and Sani Suleiman at JDPC, 16 February 2009.
83 Per Dr. Katrina Korb.
Much insight into the lives and activities of North Central Zone Muslims is to be gained from these brief biographies. One from each jurisdiction is included here:

8.1.1. Benue: Malam Abubakar Umar Aguda (per Ibrahim 2012)

Malam Abubakar Umar Aguda is a native of Idah in Kogi State. He was born in 1958 to the family of Umar Aguda. He has been in Makurdi since 1986. He attended St. Michael Primary School, Idah between 1969 and 1976. He proceeded to St. Peters College, Idah and obtained his West African School Certificate Examination Council (O Level Certificate) in 1981. In 1982, Malam Abubakar Umar went to College of Education, Malumfashi in Katsina State and obtained the Nigeria Certificate in Education in 1984. He taught for some time before proceeding to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to obtain a Bachelors Degree in Education (B.Ed.) in 1993, and then a Masters Degree in Education from the same university in 1997. He also obtained a Masters Degree in International Relations from Benue State University in 2001.

Malam Abubakar took appointment from the Federal Ministry of Defence as a teacher with the Nigeria Air Force Base Secondary School Makurdi since 1986. He is presently a Chief Education Officer. While in the school, Malam Abubakar served the students as the National Vice President of the Muslim Students Society between 1985 and 1987. He was a representative in the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) between 1992 and 1996. Malam Abubakar Umar has been a Nigeria director of the Munazamat Da’wah Al-Islamiyya based in Khartoum, Sudan. He coordinates admission of students into the International African University, Sudan. He attended many seminars and workshops on leadership and da’wah in many international universities like Islamic University of Islamabad, Pakistan, in Niger, and Libya.

Malam Abubakar is one of the founding members of the Da’wah Group [in Makurdi]. He is a proprietor of Arabic Secondary School Makurdi. He also serves as consultant on education to all Islamic schools in Benue state. Malam Abubakar Umar is a great Islamic actor in the state, he is an educationist, a da’wah activist, a grassroots mobilizer and highly respected by the Muslims of Benue State.

8.1.2. FCT: Sheikh Tajudeen Bello (per Medugu 2012)

Sheikh Tajudeen is the Chief Imam of Fouad Lababidi Central Mosque Wuse Zone 4 Abuja. As such he leads public prayers, and preaches, especially at Friday prayers in the Fouad Central Mosque. His sermons are read in Hausa, Yoruba, English and Arabic. He also
engages himself in *da’wah* within and out of the FCT. Because of his humble nature and how he interacts with the society, his mosque has many people performing their Friday prayers there. People were converted to Islam every Friday in the mosque. Sheikh Bello engages himself in dialogue process at all times, and makes Muslims and non-Muslims to understand Islam and how to worship Allah, as well as informing them about Muhammad, the prophet of Allah.


Sheikh Yusuf, popularly known as Sheikh Yusuf Lokoja, was born in 1916 at Bagana in Igala land to a family of Nupe extraction (Tahir 2005). At the age of four, his parents moved down to settle at Lokoja and at the age of eight he was enrolled at Sheikh Abubakar Qur’anic School in Lokoja. He committed the whole Qur’an into memory at a tender age at Sheikh Asafa Qur’anic school where he also read some basic books on Islamic studies. He later studied under different scholars and Sufis in Lokoja.

Sheikh Yusuf was initiated into the Tijaniyya order by Sheikh Abdullahi Haruna in Lokoja in 1949. In 1959, he visited Sheikh Niass in Senegal who granted him *ijazah* (permission) to confer *muqaddamship* on his followers. He has travelled extensively in Nigeria, West Africa and the Arab world. He has visited Kaolac in Senegal, Ghana, Mali, Republic of Benin, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco.

Sheikh Yusuf was versed in Arabic and Islamic studies. He is a prolific writer with more than 100 prose and versified works on various aspects of human endeavour especially Sufism. His major achievement is his school, Markaz at-Ta’lim al-Araby wal’Islamy (Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies) which he established in Lokoja in 1963. The College, which is an affiliate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, offers Senior Islamic Studies Certificate (SIS), an equivalent of WAEC, NECO or GCE. The College is attended by students from various parts of the country especially Kogi, Kwar and Niger States. Most of the graduates of the College later proceeded to university and graduate to become judges, lawyers, university dons, imams and preachers.

8.1.4. **Kwara: Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna (per Abduussalam 2012)**

Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna, the youngest of the six children of his father, was born in 1937 at Lafiagi, Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. He lost both his father, Alhaji Naibi Haruna Saba Kobo and mother, Malama Mariam Haruna at a tender age. His father died as Naibi Imam (Deputy Chief Imam) of Lafiagi. His grandfather, Saba Kobo was the 12th Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate.

He was therefore brought up under the guardianship of his elder brothers, Sheikh Idris Haruna (Yanda) and Alhaji Abdullahi Tsowa Haruna. He was able to demonstrate versatility in Islamic scholarship along with his brothers. It is noted that he was the most brilliant of all his siblings. The little Muhammad Bida Haruna started his Qur’anic education under his father but completed it under his elder brother Sheikh Yanda at the age of fifteen.

He moved to Ibadan and Lagos in 1951 and 1957 respectively to pursue his Qur’anic education further. He used to accompany his Mu’allim (Sheik Sani Abdul-Salam Arathi) on preaching and touring of Yorubaland and Cotonou in the Republic of Benin. He however graduated in 1961, having acquired proper knowledge of Arabic and various branches of Islamic studies. He later left for the School for Arabic Studies, Kano in 1963 where he obtained Higher Islamic Studies Certificate in 1966. He returned to Lafiagi the same year.

Alhaji Haruna acquired Arabic and Islamic learning from different malams, they include one Sheikh Alfa Sani Abdul-Salam Arathi at Ibadan and late Professor Noib Suwaid of Bayero University Kano, among others. He started conducting open-air preaching in the whole of Nupe-speaking areas of old Kwara State at a tender age. He worked as an Arabic

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84 *Muqaddam*: a subsidiary leader within the order, authorized to teach his own students.
and Islamic Studies teacher in various schools under the defunct Patigi/Lafiagi Local Education Authority from 1967-1971. His quest for knowledge took him back to Abdullahi Bayero College/ABU Kano campus for a Diploma course in Arabic and Islamic Studies between 1971-1974.

He was appointed as an Area Court Judge under the Kwara State Judicial Division, on 15th February, 1976. Despite his change of profession, he remains a teacher because he was still teaching students in his house whenever he returned from court. On the 16th day of February, 1994 Alhaji Lafiagi was appointed Kadi in the Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, Ilorin.

Having been assessed as both a scholar and a jurist and having been found worthy in learning, Alhaji Imam Muhammadu Bida Haruna was appointed Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate Council on July, 25th 1997, turbaned on 23rd August 1997. Because of his new leadership in the community he had to retire his appointment as Kadi on 1st September 1998 to pave way for effective performance of duties of Imamship in the Emirate.

A pious and simple scholar who devoted all his time to the service of Arabic and Islamic education in Lafiagi, he is currently a leading scholar of tafsir in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. Even before he became the Chief Imam of Lafiagi Emirate Council his annual leave was permanently fixed to coincide with the month of Ramadan, to enable him carry out effectively the Ramadan tafsir which he has been presiding over since 1985 till date. He has credit for enlightening the Muslims in Lafiagi Emirate as a result of which clarification was made to debunk the claims that:

1. That females are not allowed to be educated.
2. That Muslims should not study under non-Muslims or in non-Muslims nations.
3. That Islam encourages fatalism.
4. That Islam discourages scientific investigations.
5. That Islam is oppose to modern education.
7. That Islam is against progress and development etc.

8.1.5. Nasarawa: Hajiya Zainab Talatu Abdulmu'min (per Liman and Wakawa 2012)

Hajiya Abdulmu'min was born on 11th April, 1962. She is an indigene of Nasarawa town, Nasarawa LGA, Hausa/Fulani by tribe. Her father is a retired civil servant, a former permanent secretary to be specific. She went to public primary school, after which she proceeded to St. Louis College, Jos, between the periods of 1975-1980. She was admitted into the University of Jos to study English Education, in which she obtained a B.Ed. in 1986. During her National Youth Service (NYSC), she served in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Sokoto in 1986-1987. She subsequently returned to the University of Jos where she obtained her Master’s degree in English Education in 1992. She is presently undertaking a Ph.D. programme in the University of Maiduguri. She was an English lecturer with the Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa from 1987-2005. She joined the Nasarawa State civil service in 2005, when she was appointed a permanent secretary and posted to the office of the Head of Civil Service, Lafia, a position she is still holding to date. In 2004, she became the Amirah of the Nasarawa Local Government branch of FOMWAN. She was nominated a State Na’ibat Amirah in 2006, and became the State Amirah in 2007 to date. She is also the Adviser to Women in Da'wah in Nasarawa State from 2008. Women in Da'wah is an international organisation of women Islamic scholars in Nigeria with branches all over. They preach to women on both spiritual and social aspects of life. They usually have a national conference once a year. The headquarters is in Abuja.


Nupe by tribe, Sheikh Ahmed Lemu is a renowned Islamic scholar in Niger State. Now aged 82 years, he is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS),
University of London. He was the pioneer Grand Kadi of the Niger State Sharia Court of Appeal when Niger was created in 1976 out of the then North-Western State.

Sheikh Lemu is one of the few scholars in the state who benefited from both the Qur`anic and Western systems of education. He was a principal at the famous Kano School for Arabic Studies (established in 1948) which trained Arabic teachers for schools and judges for the Native and then Area Courts in the northern parts of Nigeria between 1940s and 1980s. He is an intellectual, scholar and preacher who preaches and delivers sermons in Arabic, English, Hausa and his native tongue, Nupe. Sheikh Lemu in conjunction with two other personalities including his wife, a Briton by birth, established the Islamic Education Trust for the propagation of orthodox Islam as well as for the preservation of Islamic culture that is rooted in traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Through his preaching activities, Sheikh Lemu has no reservation about co-education (males and females learning under one roof) provided there are rules to guide and regulate interaction between the two opposite genders. He maintains good rapport with other groups of Muslims as well as with non-Muslims. The latter manifests in his involvement in inter-faith dialogue forum within and outside Niger State. He is opposed to puritanical and radical religious ideologies. This is evident in his condemnation of the “Boko Haram” insurgency in the north-east parts of the country.

Sheikh Lemu relates very well with the state as well as with formal political processes. He is the Chairman of the Niger State Advisory Council of Ulama, Chairman of the Niger State Preaching Board, and President of the Islamic Education Trust (IET), Minna. He funds the IET with his personal resources and with donations received from international charitable organisations. He annually conducts tafsir (commentary of the Holy Qur’an) sessions during the month of Ramadan. He preaches on radio and television. He preaches every Friday in Hausa language during the weekly Friday congregational prayer at the Minna Central Mosque, which is the mosque the Governor of the state routinely attends. Although Sheikh Lemu hails from Lemu, a Nupe town in Bida Emirate of Niger State, Minna has remained his place of domicile in the past 35 years.

He has a lot of concern for the acquisition of knowledge from a system that blends between Islamic and Western education. He has authored several Islamic books on areas that include fasting, zakat, prayer (salat), and pilgrimage (hajj).

8.1.7. Plateau: Sheikh Muhammad Sani Yahaya Jingir (per Modibbo 2012)

Sheikh Jingir is the Chairman of the Ulama Council of JIBWIS [Izala] A, headquartered in Jos. He was born in Gurum, Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau Stale on the 1st January 1950. Attended Katako Amo Primary School from 1954 to 1959, after which he went for Arabic Grade II programme in Maiduguri College of Legal Studies from 1978 to 1982. He then proceeded to Bayero University Kano for Diploma in Hausa, Arabic and Islamic Studies from 1984 to 1987. He obtained B.Ed. Language Arts in the year 2000 and M.Ed. in Guidance and Counselling in 2004 both from University of Jos. He had read Qur’an and fiqhu for knowledge before he left his home town. He assumed the national leadership of Ulama Council of Jama’atu Izalatil Bid’a Wa Ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS) after the death of its founder Sheikh Ismail Idris in 2000.

He has been serving Islam in various capacities both at state and national level with outstanding performance. Some of these include Co-Chairman, Ulama/Elders Council Jos; Mufti (Adviser) of Amir Hajj Team; Member, Board of Trustees, National Mosque Abuja 2002 till date; Member, National Ulama Council of Nigeria from 2004 till date. He is widely travelled within and outside the country in propagating of Izala doctrines. The theme of his preaching is calling Muslims to return to the pure monotheism (tawheed) and sincere emulation of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW); and to uphold Islam in its entirety. He frowns at Sufism for innovating unacceptable acts of worship in Islam but he is moderate compared to his predecessor. Apart from preaching he is also engaged in research and writing, and has
four books in circulation. He is subtle and kind-hearted. He is an optimist and cherishes hard work and diligence. He is married to four wives and has over thirty sons and daughters with many grand children.

8.2. Two notable women for special mention. The work of Hajiya B. Aisha Lemu at the Islamic Education Trust in Minna has been mentioned in section 6.4. Here two other notable women are briefly described.

8.2.1. Saudatu Mahdi. Mrs. Mahdi, of Katsina State though long resident in the FCT, is Executive Director of WRAPA, the Women’s Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative.

WRAPA is a Nigerian NGO, headquartered in Abuja, which is devoted to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women through education, political advocacy, and the provision of legal services. Its Secretary General, Mrs. Saudatu Shehu Mahdi, is a leading women’s rights activist in Nigeria. (Yawuri 2007: 129)

In 2001-2003 Mrs. Mahdi became one of the key coordinators of the appellate efforts in the two famous cases of Safiyatu Hussaini and Amina Lawal, women convicted of *zina* in Sharia Courts in Sokoto and Katsina States and sentenced to death by stoning. Through the efforts of Mrs. Mahdi and many others the convictions were overturned in the states’ Sharia Courts of Appeal (for details see Ostien 2007: vol. V). Mrs. Mahdi, in addition to directing the other work of WRAPA, has also turned her efforts to codification of Islamic personal law in Nigeria (Mahdi 2004), to domestication in Nigeria of the UN Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and to improvement of Nigeria’s national gender policy (Mahdi 2008). She is part of a significant activist movement among educated Muslim women in Nigeria. 85

8.2.2. Khadijah Gambo Hawaja. Of a younger generation than Mrs. Lemu and Mrs. Mahdi, Khadijah Gambo Hawaja has emerged as a leading peace activist among the Muslim women of Jos. Born in Jos, to an Ngas mother and Hausa father, Hajiya Khadijah received her primary and secondary education at St. Theresa’s and at Naraguta Grammar School, both in Jos. She then attended the School for Higher Islamic Studies at Sarkin Mangu, Jos (Grade II HIS Certificate, 1994), the Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto (NCE in Arabic and Islamic Studies, 1999), and finally the University of Jos (B.A. in Islamic Studies, 2003).

The mother of six children has long taught Arabic and Islamic Studies privately to women, and for the last seventeen years, during Ramadan, has given *tafsir* for women in Jos and elsewhere. Following the renewed ethno-religious violence in Jos in late 2008 (see Ostien 2009), she became one of the founders, and remains the Chair, of the Plateau State Muslim Women Peace Forum. She is also active in inter-religious groups, including Women Without Walls and the Save Nigeria Group. She lends an articulate female Muslim voice to the peace effort in Jos. 86

9. Summary of findings.

9.1. Heterogeneity of the zone. Nigeria’s North Central geo-political zone comprises six states, namely, in alphabetical order, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau States, plus the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. These territories range in population from almost 5 million for Benue State, down to about 2 million for Nasarawa State and about 1.5

85 Mrs. Mahdi and the activist agenda of a number of Nigeria’s Muslim women are discussed in Nasir 2007: 100-105.

million for the FCT. In ethnic and religious terms this is a very heterogeneous part of Nigeria. In the 1990s it was demarcated as a “zone” for certain purposes of national administration, but little holds it together politically.

9.2. Percentages of Muslims. No Nigerian census since 1963 has gathered data on religious affiliation. Aggregation of the 1963 provinces for which census data was gathered, into the current states of the North Central Zone, yields the following results on religious affiliation by current state in 1963 (in descending order of percentages of Muslims):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present state</th>
<th>Religious affiliation, 1963</th>
<th>% Muslim</th>
<th>% Christian</th>
<th>% Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By now most of the large percentages of 1963 “Others” have become either Muslims or Christians, but nobody knows in what proportions. To provide some basis for estimation, the numbers of Muslims among elected officials in a number of cross-cutting constituencies in each state were determined, with the following results (in descending order of percentages of Muslims holding the totals of the elective offices accounted for in March 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total elected Muslim officials</th>
<th>% elected Muslim officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>59/65</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>40/51</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>31/48</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>29/60</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>8/51</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>0/68</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To the extent that numbers of Muslims among elected officials reflect numbers of Muslims among the voters, this gives some sense of Muslim strength in the states in question.

9.3. Diversity of Muslim belief and practice. Most Muslims of the North Central Zone, as throughout Nigeria, are Sunnis of the Maliki school. But there are non-Sunnis, including some Shia or quasi-Shia, some Ahmadiyya, some Qur’aniyyun (followers of the Qur’an only, to the exclusion of the Hadiths), and no doubt other small sects. The Sunnis are also divided among themselves, among two main groups of Sufis, the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya, anti-Sufis, the chief of which is Izala, and “independents”, people belonging neither to any Sufi nor any anti-Sufi group, but identifying themselves neutrally as ‘Sunni Muslims’. Among the main Sunni groups, which one predominates varies from place to place and from ethnic group to ethnic group. For instance in Niger State there are “more tariqa [Sufi] Muslims than the Izala among the Nupe. There are also more Izala followers among the Hausa than can be found among Nupe and Gwari Muslims” (Ndagi 2012). Within any one of the main Sunni groups themselves there are also ethnic variations. Yoruba Tijanis resident in Kwarar State, for instance, tend to take a different attitude towards observance of sharia law in their personal affairs than do Hausa Tijanis resident in Niger State. Sometimes discrete groups form around special sets of ideas. One example is Boko Haram, which has taken extreme positions within Sunni Islam on many questions of what is halal and what is haram and fights with everybody. Another example is Darul Islam, a completely orthodox and peaceful but
puritan and separatist community that formed in Niger State. Of course within all the groups there are individual variations along the scale from “cultural Muslim” to true believer. In short, there is considerable diversity of Muslim belief and practice in the North Central Zone.

9.4. Tolerance of religious diversity. There has in the past been sectarian intolerance and violence among Nigeria’s Muslims, notably in the 1940s and 1950s, between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya, then in the 1970s and 1980s between the Sufis jointly and Izala, which was formed specifically as an anti-Sufi group. The preaching of Maitatsine and his followers in the 1960s and 1970s was also directed in condemnatory terms at other Muslims and provoked outbreaks of violence. This tendency has not completely died out, as the recent affair of Boko Haram demonstrates. But Izala has been “domesticated” (Kane 2003), the Maitatsine/Kala Kato/Qur’aniyyun tendency is also domesticating, and the authorities are trying to come to grips with Boko Haram. Ideology is fading as a divisive factor among Muslims as all become clearer about what is important and what is not, about the things they share and the things that divide them. Religious peace is constantly preached by Muslim and Christian leaders alike. It seems clear that a wide tolerance, allowing everyone a large measure of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion as guaranteed by the constitution, and letting no one be quick to condemn others, is winning both the ideological and the affective battles in Nigeria, and certainly in the North Central Zone.

9.5. Religiosity. There is still a lot of religiosity among the Muslims of the North Central Zone, just as there is among the Christians: a lot of firm belief in systems of metaphysical-theological-moral propositions, of which Christianity is one broad set and Islam is another. These propositions are not only believed but they are ever on one’s tongue and practiced and applied in many pious ways. Inducting children into the religion remains central, as do witness and missionary activity. It is the author’s observation that Western education even pursued to Ph.D. level does not change this for most Christians or most Muslims. Possibly this religiosity will gradually wane, as it has in other parts of the world. Nigeria’s believers of all persuasions firmly hope not, and are doing their best to forestall it.

9.6. The state and religious freedom. The civil authorities have sometimes had to involve themselves with religious actors, either to avert perceived threats of violence or to suppress actual outbreaks. One method used in several northern states, but including only Niger State in the North Central Zone, has been the establishment of Islamic Religious Preaching Boards, responsible to license intending preachers and discipline those who preach without or in violation of a license. These Boards have not worked very well, partly because of the evident tension between them and the religious freedom guaranteed not only by the constitution but in Islamic doctrine as well. Nevertheless the authorities generally know very well what is happening throughout their domains: dissident or heterodox preachers are quickly identified and watched. The authorities make their own assessments of the potential volatility of given situations and of the need to defuse them. Sometimes they have taken preventive actions of questionable legality and averted whatever alleged risk there was. Sometimes they have let things go too far, until they really did explode into serious civil unrest, at which point the civil and military authorities proceeded to deal with the miscreants without mercy and without regard to due process of law. Nigeria’s constituted authorities too are still learning what the civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution are supposed to mean in practice.

9.7. Education. A main finding of the report is that Muslims of almost sects in all parts of the North Central Zone are hungry for education. They are actively pursuing better educations for themselves and for their children, including Western education. An exception is Boko Haram, whose teaching that Western education is haram is rejected by most Muslims – virtually all Muslims in the North Central Zone. Western education is viewed as halal and
even necessary today, and more serious efforts than heretofore are being made even to integrate the traditional Qur’anic schools with Westernized schools, so that the large numbers of Qur’anic students and malams still existing in some places will be better socialized into the new Nigeria. There is a growth industry of private “Islamiyya” schools at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, organised on the Western model and combining Islamic and Western subjects. Many Muslims also attend or teach in government-run schools at all levels, in which Islamic subjects are studied and taught from primary school to Ph.D. Nigeria’s Muslims, having made places for their own subjects in the Western-style schools, are full partners in the educational enterprise at all levels, public and private, religious and secular. The remaining problem is to raise standards at every level.

9.8. Islam in government. Except in Benue State, Muslims hold elective office, more or less, in all parts of the North Central Zone (see section 9.2). In Plateau, Jos in particular, Muslims are struggling for more political power. In Niger and Kwara they dominate the government. All of that is according to the constitution and laws of the democratic secular state working themselves out locally. But within the secular constitution, Islam is present in the governments of all jurisdictions of the North Central Zone, in diverse ways. For instance, Islamic civil law is applied in courts of first instance throughout the zone, more or less at the election of parties to particular cases (the same courts also apply the law and custom of Nigeria’s ethnic groups in appropriate cases, and sometimes “English” law). To hear appeals in cases decided under Islamic personal law, all states (again except Benue, which shares with Plateau), plus the FCT, have Sharia Courts of Appeal, whose judges are scholars of Islamic law (there are also Customary Courts of Appeal in most North Central States). There are Islamic traditional rulerships – emirates – in all states except Benue and Kogi (there are other traditional rulerships all over, grounded in ethnicity and not necessarily Muslim or Christian at all). There are Muslim Pilgrim Welfare Boards in all jurisdictions, indicating that each is sending a certain number of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca and Medina every year at state expense (there are equally Christian Pilgrim Welfare Boards, indicating that each jurisdiction is also sending a certain number of Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and surrounding areas each year at state expense). Then, beyond this type of balancing of Muslim, Christian, and ethnic interests in the governments of the northern states, worked out as part of Nigeria’s constitutional history from the 1940s to the 1990s, there are the twelve “sharia states”, which beginning in 1999/2000 added more Islam to their mix of government. In the North Central Zone, Niger State is the only sharia state. Under its 2000-2001 programme of sharia implementation, in which it joined eleven other northern states, Niger has set up a system of inferior Sharia Courts, given them power to apply even Islamic criminal law (including hudud and qisas) to Muslims, directed all appeals even in criminal cases to the state Sharia Court of Appeal, and in addition set up an Advisory Council of Ulama, a Sharia Commission, and a Zakat and Endowments Board. This is fairly typical of the range of new legislation that marked the sharia implementation programmes of twelve northern states (Ostien 2007). None of the other North Central states, notably including Kwara, adopted any of it, preferring to leave the place of Islam in the system more or less the way it had been for a long time before. Every state is doing Islam in government a little differently, depending on its history and present mix of ethnicity and religion, and all claim to be within the secular constitution and laws, each its own local laboratory of democracy. Some idea of how this is working out in practice in Niger and other sharia states is given in section 5.6.

9.9. Attitudes towards the Nigerian state. The Nigerian civil authorities monitor public attitudes towards themselves, because this is prudent and because Nigeria is a democracy, though beset with many problems. On one point of interest to the authorities, namely attitudes towards the Nigerian constitution and laws and the liberal-democratic state they contemplate,
however imperfectly manifested in practice, the vast majority of Nigerian Muslims (and Christians) of all confessional persuasions accept the present constitutional arrangement and Islam’s place within it. It is what has been agreed to, and it is regarded as what is most likely to lead to progress for Nigerian Muslims and for all Nigerians. Most Muslims work with and within the constitutional order, and strive, some of them, to make it work better in practice. There are however two well-known groups in Nigeria – the “Shia” and Boko Haram, discussed sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.4.1 respectively – which reject the secular state and say they work towards an Islamic state in Nigeria. Everyone else accepts the constitution and laws, subject to amendment. For them the only problem is that the laws are constantly corrupted and subverted by human greed and incompetence from which no religious or ethnic group is immune, and so aren’t working out as well as they should and could be. The “Shia” are marginal and Boko Haram have been decimated and driven underground though they are still bombing and killing.

9.10. Muslim CBOs, NGOs, etc. The sort of civil society that political scientists praise is thriving in the Muslim communities of the North Central Zone. “Community-based organisations”, “non-governmental organisations”, networks of same, and the more or less pious and public-spirited citizens who run all those groups, are always coming together and pursuing their programmes at every level of social organisation, intersecting with each other in many ways. This sociability or communitarianism is true of every ethnic group and religious persuasion – a human trait, sanctioned by religion. Among other things, the Muslims come together to take council and to do da’wah and good works. Often Muslim groups overlap with Christian and government groups to do their joint projects. The report gives circumstantial details of a number of these groups, from the Qadiriyya Nasiriyya Youth Movement Jos, sponsoring madrasas in Plateau State, to CEPAN, an NGO run jointly by Muslim and Christian peace professionals pursuing peace in Plateau State, to WRAPA, a women’s rights organisation. The details bear out that there is a large degree of practical freedom of religion practiced among the Muslims of the North Central Zone, with ways of being a Muslim ranging from ancient to modern all recognized and accepted.

9.11. Prognosis. Nigerians, including Nigeria’s Muslims, along with their evident piety, are a healthy-minded people, realistic, sociable, practical, and down to earth. They are innately tolerant, except when infected with intolerant ideologies which most of them today are not. There is a theory among some parts of the Christian population that Muslims only seem to be reasonable in their demands, that in truth they are all always scheming to take over the country for Islam. This is true only in the same sense that the Christians too are always scheming to take over the country for Christianity: in both cases people are doing their pious bests to keep and spread their faiths, and leaving the result in God’s hands. Together with people of good will of all religious persuasions, so the author believes, Nigeria’s Muslims, certainly those of the North Central Zone, will continue to make progress toward better government and sounder administration of all their institutions according to modern “best practices”, which is the real key to addressing their problems.
Bibliography.


