INTERFAITH RELATIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Policy Paper N°2

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Executive summary

While the first phase of the IRP-Abuja project concentrated on mapping Muslim actors and institutions in three areas of northern Nigeria, the second phase focused on the relationship between the various Muslim groups with their Christian neighbours in northern Nigeria.

This Policy Paper outlines the findings from and policy implications of each of the eight research projects undertaken by IRP-Abuja.

I. Introduction:

The Phase 1 of the IRP-Abuja project concentrated on mapping Muslim actors and institutions in the three geo-political zones of northern Nigeria. It also examined the theological and ritualistic differences between these various Muslim groups, their cooperative or conflictual relationships to each other, their relationship to political authorities and the state, their role in the educational system, and the roles of women members within these Islamic groups. The key findings of the Phase 1 research can be found in: *Phase 1 Policy Paper: Islamic Actors and Interfaith Relations in northern Nigeria*.

In the Phase 2 of the IRP-Abuja project, attention shifted to the relationship between the various Muslim groups with their Christian neighbours. The aim was to establish the most important dynamics in interfaith relations between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria. This Policy Paper summarizes the key findings of the research carried out under Phase 2. It also incorporates comments and suggestions from a stake-holders conference held on the findings in Abuja in August 2012.

The objective of this Policy Paper is to introduce the reader to some of the empirical material deriving from the research projects and to draw attention to a few policy issues raised by the research.

List of Phase 2 Research Projects:

- From Dissent to Dissidence: The Genesis & Development of Reformist Islamic Groups in Northern Nigeria, *Murray Last*
- Jos: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Conflict Resolution, *Abdul Raufu Mustapha, Adam Higazi, Jimam Lar, and Karel Chromy*
- Complementarity, Competition and Conflict: Informal Enterprise and Religious Conflict in Northern Nigeria, *Kate Meagher*
- *Almajirai*, Madrasas & Society in Kano, *Hannah Hoechner*
- Rural Insecurity on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria: Livelihoods, Land, and Religious Reform among the Berom, Fulani and Hausa, *Adam Higazi*
- Muslim Others: Criss-crossing Ethno-Religious Identities and Conflict in Kano, *Yahaya Hashim and Judith-Ann Walker*
- Christians and Christianity in Northern Nigeria, *Jibrin Ibrahim and David Ehrhardt*
- Religious Leadership and Governance in Kano, *David Ehrhardt*

II. Research Summaries, conference comments, and policy suggestions

1. From Dissent to Dissidence: The Genesis & Development of Reformist Islamic Groups in Northern Nigeria

Murray Last

Key Findings

The central argument of this paper is that the Muslim umma in northern Nigeria has never been without religious dissidence. Religion provides both the language of discontent and the logic for political resistance as a moral act. The use of force to stamp out overt discontent has never been wholly successful: the nodal points around which discontent reconstitutes itself as violent protest can (sometimes) be eliminated, but the aftermath is usually the dispersal of the dissidents who re-group for self-righteous revenge. As such, there is a process to the development of separatist Muslim communities which needs to be studied if government is to formulate both successful policies of containment and a programme that leads the government to self-reform: for these 'extreme' movements of protest (even Boko haram) articulate real concerns, even ideals, at the grass-roots that are unwise to ignore. This was true in the past; it is still true today – hence this paper starts with an analysis of the legitimate conditions for dissent in Hausaland.

The main body of the paper then consists of two parts. The first part provides a selective history of dissent in northern Nigeria, starting by re-analysing the jihad of the Shaikh 'Uthman dan Fodio in 1804 as an early example, and the most successful, of all northern Nigeria's religious protest movements. But it also analyses the 19th-century dissent against the Sokoto Caliphate and the 20th-century resistance against the British colonial rulers, highlighting continuities in thought and practice. Throughout this first part of the main paper, the focus is on dissent as a historical process which may or may not be successful, depending on factors such as the economies of the movement, and the demographic composition of its' terrain. The second part of the paper then seeks to outline the various ways, explicit and implicit, by which Muslims can express their disagreement with what is going on around them, especially in government. The idea is that one can 'read' dissent while observing daily life, for example in mosques, modes of dress, and patterns of relocation. The paper ends with several practical recommendations, suggesting to talk with dissidents to prevent violence; to offer them the freedom to preach their beliefs whilst

eschewing violence; and to offer them a rural space where they can live their vision of the personal 'good live'.

Policy Implications

- There is the need to talk with Islamic dissidents in northern Nigeria so as to stop them from using violence – and getting them to forsake violence by offering them freedom to preach what they will, except a call to violence. It may require the government initially to subsidise their community, providing them with craft skills, land and water supplies, even electricity.

- Achieving such a community also has long-term policy implications, as it might provide a model for other dissident religious groups to emulate in future, taking in young jobless men with inclinations towards a religiously 'good life.' Nigeria – not just northern Nigeria – is going to need ways of revitalising the countryside and absorbing constructively the expanding population.

- Much of current thinking is based on the binary Muslim/Christian divide. There should be more recognition for the diversity of Islamic beliefs in Nigeria in all policy circles, as well as for the continuous and ever-present dissent and dissidence within the Muslim community.

2. Jos: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Abdul Raufu Mustapha, Adam Higazi, Jimam Lar, and Karel Chromy

Key Findings

This paper examines the long-running crises in Jos using the lens of the security dilemma. It is often argued that the conflict in Jos is caused by a number of factors, including the struggle over the 'ownership' of Jos, struggle over the control of the paramount rulership of the city, the definition of who is an indigene and who is a settler, and based on these, access to jobs, scholarships, and political office. We argue that these are important structural causes of the conflict, but since they have existed since the 1930s, they cannot explain why the city became convulsed by violence from the 1990s, and not before then.

We argue that a series of political and administrative changes from 1976 began to re-shape how the Christian indigenes and the Hausa Muslim settlers (the Jasawa) interpreted the long-run structural characteristics of their shared city. With time, this process of re-interpretation led to perceptions of threat which both the indigenes and the Jasawa had to contend with. Given the threat perceptions, the two groups increasingly sought for ways to defend and protect their core interests. The break-down of established patterns of managing difference was therefore central to the search for new ways – including the resort to violence. We trace the basic structures of the security dilemma that faced the Jasawa and

the Berom indigenes, and show how, in each case, there was a movement from 'normal' politics to 'deviant' forms of politics.

We then examine how individuals, neighbourhoods, Plateau state governments, and successive federal governments have been responding to the cycle of violence. We show how the violence has re-shaped individuals' social networks and accelerated the process of neighbourhood segregation. We examine how individuals and neighbourhoods seek safety through such strategies. At the state level, we examine the repeated establishment of commissions of inquiry, and the equally repeated inability to implement the recommendations of any inquiry. We examine the responses of executive and the legislature branches at the federal level, and also point out the crippling tension between federal and state authorities.

Finally, we argue that Nigerian society has often approached the conflict in Jos through two contradictory normative principles: (1) supporting inclusive civic citizenship; (2) or respecting the cultural and territorial rights of indigenous minority groups who may be threatened by bigger and better endowed ethnic groups. We argue that this approach, along with the intransigence and opportunism of some politicians makes it difficult to find a mutually agreeable route to peace. We argue that confidence building measures which address every-day fears and insecurities of the combatant groups must first be addressed, before we gradually broach the more contentious substantive issues.

Policy Implications
- To build peace in Jos, our first objective must be to address the security dilemmas between the Berom and Jasawa. This calls for close attention to confidence building measures – regular joint committees, disclosures of youth and vigilante activities and formations, procedures for investigating questionable occurrences – instead of, or along with, judicial commissions or fact-finding panels.
- In terms of responses to violence, the most effective initiatives have been those with strong grassroots involvement and direction. NGOs and CSOs involved in Jos should specifically think of confidence building measures that might be necessary to promote wider communal dialogue and interaction. At the federal and state levels, some of these confidence-building measures may include the resettlement of the displaced persons and other forms of substantive or symbolic compensation and restitution for losses suffered during the conflict. The Solomon Lar panel report, discussed in the paper, seems to be the closest in spirit to our vision of a viable path forward.

- While forceful government intervention may be necessary sometimes, it should be a last resort, rather than the only tool in the tool-kit. Some violent confrontations can be avoided if early warning signals are picked up and the problems addressed through political means. Institutions like the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) can be used both for an early warning system for social conflicts, and for the initiation of confidence-building measures between conflicting communities. The government should resist the temptation of using a military solution for what are essentially civil political conflicts.

- Additional points raised in the discussions at the August 2012 conference:
  - Federal institutions for conflict resolution and violence prevention are weak, badly funded, and rarely consulted;
  - There are serious issues concerning military interventions in Plateau:
    - Perceived ethnic bias,
    - Lack of equipment and communications,
    - No relevant human rights training for domestic deployment of troops
    - Overly long presence of soldiers in civil duties
    - Lack of transparency in patterns of deployments
  - Experienced officers could be involved in improving domestic military intervention;
  - There should be a better integration of the police and military activities in domestic peace-making interventions.
  - Need to emphasise human rights training for troops before deployment

3. Rural Insecurity on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria: Livelihoods, Land, and Religious Reform among the Berom, Fulani and Hausa

Adam Higazi

Key Findings

This study documents and analyses the violent conflicts in rural and peri-urban areas of the Jos Plateau, in central Nigeria. While the violence in metropolitan Jos has received substantial academic and media attention, the rural violence is less well understood. This paper attempts to help fill this gap in our knowledge, as the highest levels of violence in Plateau State are now in the rural areas, primarily between two ethnic groups, the Berom and Fulani. The study draws on fieldwork carried out in 2011-12 in the areas of the Jos Plateau affected by conflict, and earlier research on the rural conflicts of 2001-2. The study shows that the rural violence on the Jos Plateau is concentrated in certain areas; it does not directly affect the whole Plateau. The current phase of violence began in January 2010 and

has continued intermittently since then in three Local Government Areas, out of 17 in Plateau State: Barakin Ladi, Riyom, and Jos South.

The ethnic composition of the local government administrations in these areas is predominantly Berom, probably the largest 'indigenous' ethnic group in Plateau State, but there has also been a century or more of Muslim – predominantly Fulani, Hausa, and Kanuri – settlement in these LGAs. Most of the Hausa/Kanuri population in the rural and semi-rural areas of the Jos Plateau, and a substantial number of Fulani agro-pastoralists, were driven out in January 2010. Subsequently the Fulani regrouped in parts of Barakin Ladi and Riyom, and it is in these areas that the conflict has become protracted. The Nigerian federal government imposed a 'state of emergency' in Barakin Ladi, Riyom and Jos South, in addition to Jos North (which includes the central part of metropolitan Jos), on 31 December 2011. The response of the government has been a military one, and the Special Task Force (STF) that has been deployed to Jos, consisting of military and mobile police, has a significant presence in the villages too. The impact and local reception of the STF is touched upon at different points in the paper, but the major part of the analysis focuses on the political, social and economic factors underpinning the conflicts. The paper suggests that these need to be attended to if a resolution to the conflicts is to be found.

The narrative aspect of the study outlines the sequence of events and the dynamics of the violence. It also highlights the divergent, often religiously framed, interpretations of the conflicts. The focus is on the period from January 2010, when large-scale violence restarted in some of the rural areas of the Jos Plateau. The present conflicts are in some respects a continuation of earlier conflicts, which took place in 2001-2 but then ceased until 2010. The paper explores why and how collective violence recurred in 2010 and then became protracted in the rural areas. The paper also analyses urban-rural links and the replication of aspects of the disputes in Jos city in the rural areas, but argues that although there are continuities between the urban and rural conflicts, there are also some important differences. The pattern of violence clearly shows that there is not a generalised conflict between Muslims and Christians on the Jos Plateau, though it might frequently be framed in this way; the conflict is limited to certain areas and certain groups. The paper therefore analyses the particular features of religious reform in the affected areas, but also other factors that have contributed to the present conflicts and which are more particular to the rural milieu.

The paper addresses five main thematic areas: the interplay of religion, ethnicity and politics; socio-economic disparities and indigeneity; education; political leadership and 'the youth'; and land and cattle. The paper argues that aspects of all the above elements of social and material life, as they relate to inter-group relations, have contributed to

ethnic/religious mobilisation and armed conflict in the affected parts of the Jos Plateau. Some of the points of dispute are locally specific, but the protagonists on both sides also draw on religious ideas and discourses that have resonance at global or regional levels. One of the effects of the coming to prominence of the jihadist movement 'Boko Haram' and of the present insecurity in the north is that different conflicts are becoming conflated in the public discourse and imagination. There are signs that this is affecting processes of mobilisation and collective action on the Plateau. The paper therefore argues that locally specific aspects of conflict need to be understood and questions of interpretation and attribution kept at the forefront of our analyses.

Policy Implications

- Due to the protracted nature of the conflicts on parts of the Jos Plateau, moves that address the prevailing sense of injustice, which is present on both sides, needs to be contemplated. These could be through the promotion of intergroup dialogue, the payment of compensation for established losses, or through the implementation of some of the recommendations of the many commissions of inquiry that have looked into the problem. Some these objectives might be done through the judicial system, or perhaps through religious bodies. Community involvement would be essential and all sides in the conflict would need to have an equal stake in the process. The idea would be to promote reconciliation rather than to use such a process for recrimination and settling scores.

- The land question in Barakin Ladi, Riyom, Jos South LGAs and the northern part of Mangu LGA may need to be revisited. The Berom have lost land in parts of Barakin Ladi and Riyom, while the Fulani and Hausa have been pushed out of other areas of these LGAs. The difficulty, however, is that while some movement of people back to their former areas of residence may be necessary for genuine reconciliation and peace, how can that reconciliation and trust between groups be encouraged after such high levels of violence between them, and how could it be sustained? Policy might start from securing rights to land and subsistence in current areas of residence before addressing the question of the return of those displaced in the fighting.

- Educational policies need to be revisited. The educational system, for all its deficiencies, could have an important role in reducing the social polarisation between Muslims and Christians, and the Fulani and Berom in particular. If Muslim and Christian children and youths are not socialised together the present deep divisions are likely to be sustained into the next generation.

4. Complementarity, Competition and Conflict: Informal Enterprise and Religious Conflict in Northern Nigeria

Kate Meagher

Key Findings

This study explores the role of informal enterprise in limiting or exacerbating religious conflict in northern Nigeria. While informal enterprise makes up the bulk of popular livelihood activities across Nigeria, particular activities tend to be dominated by specific religious or ethnic groups. This study explores whether this situation tends to accentuate conflict between more and less successful enterprise networks, or whether it builds collaborative inter-religious relations through economic interdependence and familiarity among producers, traders, customers and suppliers on different sides of the religious divide. Understanding the day to day experience of inter-religious relations among informal enterprise operators in cities troubled by intensifying religious conflict can offer new lessons about the forces that exacerbate religious tensions, and the local institutional resources that may help to reduce them.

These issues are addressed in the context of empirical research on cross-religious informal economic organization carried out in the northern Nigerian cities of Kano and Kaduna. Both cities have large and dynamic informal economies, and a recent history of serious religious conflict. However, the two cities also have important historical and structural differences relevant to exploring questions of religious conflict and popular enterprise. Kano represents a centuries-old commercial centre with long-established commercial networks, and has a Muslim majority and small settler Christian minority. Kaduna is a colonial settlement with a shorter commercial history, and has large indigenous Christian as well as Muslim communities. In each city, the study focused on informal activities that reflected inter-religious relations of complementarity, competition and value conflict. In Kano, this involved informal currency changing, motorcycle taxis, tyre dealers, butchers and sellers of goat's head pepper soup in beer parlours. In Kaduna, study activities included tailors, motorcycle taxis, butchers and goat meat sellers. Slight variations in the activities chosen were necessary to accommodate differences in religious relations, commercial history and contemporary organization of particular informal activities in the two cities. In each activity, the analysis focused on relations across the religious divide, and how the activity has been affected by religious conflict. Particular attention was devoted to how popular institutions of economic collaboration interacted with the political mobilization of religion, with a focus on how local economic institutions contribute to social resilience as well as creating social and political vulnerabilities to conflict.

The study arrived at five main findings. The first is that religious conflict is not the biggest problem faced by any of the informal business activities studied. It was widely considered a serious but intermittent risk factor that interrupted business for a few days, and sometimes caused losses, but was not a fundamental risk to livelihoods or to inter-religious cooperation. Other issues, such as lack of electricity, insecurity (focused as much on armed robbery as religious violence), unemployment and excessive taxation were considered more pressing problems, all contributing to what were seen as a main underlying causes of conflict: poverty and unemployment. A second finding was that whether inter-religious relations were based on cooperation, competition or value conflict, collaborative relations of credit, mutual assistance and social interaction existed and showed surprising resilience to the pressures of accelerating religious conflict. Even where informal operators were competitors in the same activity, or engaged in activities against the religious values of one party, the vast majority prioritized the economic interdependence of their livelihoods and protected customers and suppliers from other religious backgrounds in times of religious crisis. Despite the resilience of inter-religious collaboration, the third finding was that commercial relations across the religious divide were changing in response to religious conflict. In most cases, this involved adaptation to new realities, such as shifting sites or modalities of operation in response to the impact of instability on markets, without loss of mutual credit relations or interaction across the religious divide. However, in some cases there were signs of fraying of inter-religious relations, including a longer suspension of credit relations after eruptions of violence, increasing residential and business segregation along religious lines, and efforts to replicate complementary business skills with a view to replacing rather than perpetuating interdependence.

The fourth finding was that ethnic specialization (more pronounced in Kano) was as effective at building inter-religious cooperation as inter-ethnic business organization (more prominent in Kaduna), but seems more vulnerable to political mobilization. Older ethnically-specialized business systems built deeply embedded institutions of collaboration across religious lines, but seem more susceptible to political manipulation than inter-ethnic activities and associations. This relates to the fifth finding, which was that political mobilization from above rather than religious antipathy per se were seen as central to religious conflict. Increasing mobilization of informal actors and associations by officials and politicians – often for electoral competition or taxation – has tended to weaken religious cooperation and trust across the religious divide. The majority of informal business actors in all of the activities studied were acutely aware that religious conflict was a consequence of electoral agendas and poverty at the grassroots, rather than arising from any inherent antipathy between religious groups.

Policy Implications

- There is great scope for building on existing institutions of inter-religious collaboration and conflict resolution embedded in popular business organization. Importing new institutions of conflict resolution based on Western notions of 'good governance' can often do more harm than good if they do not build on existing collaborative institutions that are embedded in popular values and practices.

- Any remit of any search for solution to problems of religious conflict must move beyond the fighting to address the real economic causes of conflict rooted in poverty, unemployment, and the erosion of popular livelihoods. Focusing on building security and mutual tolerance will do little if the underlying strains of poverty and unemployment are left unaddressed. Indeed, using local institutions to try to paper over these tensions is likely to undermine rather build on their institutional legitimacy.

- Recognizing that religious conflict is a symptom of deeper economic deprivation underlines the need to focus on the livelihood concerns of informal actors, which involve infrastructural investment in electricity and transport, local business incentives and job creation as much as social welfare and conflict resolution measures.

- New policy approaches to rebuild governance in northern Nigeria should beware of initiatives that harness and politicize informal enterprise associations for purposes of security or revenue generation. Political mobilization of informal enterprise associations tends to weaken downward accountability and grassroots trust in associational executives unless it is accompanied by a rapid and demonstrable improvement in relevant services and livelihood conditions.

5. *Almajirai*, Madrasas & Society in Kano

Hannah Hoechner

The main questions of this research were to determine who the ubiquitous almajirai child-beggars in northern Muslim societies are, and why they become almajirai? What are their daily routines and experiences? What impacts are current and former almajirai likely to have on the socioeconomic and political context of Kano and its rural hinterland?

Key Findings

Controversies surrounding the almajirai: How almajirai are perceived depends to a large extent on the lens used. Policy makers and development workers concerned with universalising basic education register them as 'out-of-school-children'. Reform-minded Muslims consider their begging un-Islamic and therefore problematic. Child's rights advocates take the fact that almajirai often live away from their parents to mean they are

'neglected' or 'abandoned'. With security concerns on the rise in the context of Boko Haram related violence, the almajirai are increasingly perceived in the media as a 'time bomb' and 'cannon fodder'. Aware of the negative views people hold of them, the almajirai I conducted my research with opposed such views with self-conceptions as devoted migrants in search of spiritual knowledge.

Reasons for almajiri enrolment: In a context of poverty where modern education is costly and of poor quality, and where the high frequency of divorce entails the need to 're-accommodate' children, the almajiri system offers an educational option that is available even when other options fail. A high regard for Qur'anic memorisation, specific conceptions of childhood, and particular notions of an accomplished social life provide the ideological backbone of almajirai.

 Almajirai's daily routines and experiences: In the course of their schooling, most almajirai travel through a wide array of geographical and social settings. Their sojourns in urban areas, which often involve employment as household help, are characterised for many almajirai by victimisation and abuse. In this context, almajirai are likely to make two formative experiences: that there are people who regard them as underdogs, and that there are people who have significantly more than them, both in terms of material resources and opportunities.

Impact on the socioeconomic and political context of Kano: The spiritual knowledge and skills the almajirai acquire are likely to diminish in value as competition from more modern *Islamiyya* school students for prestige and social standing increases. The skills on which they have a monopoly (spiritual medicines) are becoming increasingly commodified, undermining the almajirai's livelihood security. In terms of secular skills, many almajirai become experts in eking out a living in Kano's urban informal economy. However, sustaining a family on such a basis is likely to be difficult. For most, returning home to rural areas is an option, but agriculture has been deteriorating. Their lack of opportunities to further their education, to experience a shared humanity with people of different classes/faiths, and to experience the success of peaceful political engagement are likely to influence how almajirai deal with the prospect of a stunted economic future and with the awareness of their relative disadvantage.

Policy Implications
Engage with the conditions on the sending side:

- **Put poverty back on the table**. Unless rural poverty is addressed the *almajiri* system will persist. In descriptions of the *almajiri* system as wrong-but-wilful cultural

choice, the structural inequalities shaping educational opportunities in northern Nigeria are easily sidelined. It is important to insist in discussions about the topic that any solution not addressing these will be elusive.

- **Improve secular education**. Secular education needs to be made truly cost-free. School timetables need to be adjusted better to the work rhythm of peasant households. Teachers need to be better trained. Learning environments need to be improved. It must be ensured that students can transition to the next level of education respectively (primary to secondary school, secondary school to higher education). The northern state governments and the federal government must take the lead on these issues.

- **Sensitise parents**. Most parents don't lack consideration for their children's safety. More awareness of the difficulties these children face as *almajirai* may alter their decisions. If sensitisation messages come from insiders, including current and former *almajirai*, they are more powerful than judgement passed on the system by outsiders. Radio programmes can best reach rural constituencies.

Improve *almajirai*'s lives and futures:

- **Conceive of *almajirai* as worthy of respect and support**. Humanize the perception of the almajirai by giving them a voice in the public sphere. Through participatory projects such as the docu-drama we produced, *almajirai* can be offered a forum to voice and publicise their concerns. The radio is a medium through which a wide constituency can be reached and has been used with *almajirai* before. Former *almajirai* that 'succeeded' in life and religious leaders may act as advocates and role models.

- **Offer educational opportunities for current and former *almajirai***. Offering secular education and vocational training to *almajirai* on their lesson-free days (Thursday and Friday) is unlikely to be perceived as an interference with their Qur'anic studies by teachers and parents (see ESSPIN projects). Members of the National Youth Service Corps ("corpers") could be employed as teachers, contributing to inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-class exchange. Former *almajirai* may be reached through adult education programmes, especially if these are free of costs and available in rural areas. *Almajirai* should also be offered opportunities for a 'lateral entry' into the formal education system, e.g. through access to higher institutions of Islamic learning.

- **Strengthen *almajirai*'s rights as domestic workers**: Their employers are crucial to the *almajirai*'s wellbeing and well placed to make a difference to their lives. A public

code of conduct, developed with both *almajirai* and their employers, and publicised through the media, establishing good practice in terms of care and payment of household helps, could sensitise the population for the *almajirai*'s concerns. An ombudswoman should be elected in each neighbourhood to champion the *almajirai*'s concerns and to defend their interests.

6. Muslim Others: Criss-crossing Ethno-Religious Identities and Conflict in Kano

Yahaya Hashim and Judith-Ann Walker

Key Finding

The study shows that the poor acceptance of diversity among Muslims in Kano has created two classes of Muslims in the city with one considered indigenous and 'authentic' and the other consisting of Muslims of minority ethnicities who are rendered 'second class' Muslims even as they are part of the majority religion in the city. In the context of repeated and violent ethno-religious conflict in Kano since the late 1980s, this division within the Muslim Ummah has made the building of an important bridge for peace across the religious divide in the city even more difficult. The presence of a community of non-Hausa Muslims, sharing criss-crossing identities with each one of the two main parties to the ethno-religious divide in Kano, created the potential opportunity of using that community as a bridge between the two combatant communities. Unfortunately, this potential has <u>not</u> been realized. Instead, the non-Hausa Muslims seem to be the object of attack from <u>both</u> sides. This study explores their reactions to this precarious circumstance. Studies on ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have failed to focus on the unique experiences of these Muslim 'Minorities' and the way they have become targets of attack from all sides.

Policy Implications
- There is an urgent need to strengthen Muslim minority associations in Kano and other northern cities to empower them to assert their rights as Muslims and as citizens.
- State governments in the northern states have tended to ignore the plight and losses of the Muslim minorities during conflict, or involve them in conflict management afterwards. There is a need for northern state governments to recognize and acknowledge Muslim minorities and their associations.
- The Muslim minorities are a potential bridge between the two combatant communities. This bridging possibility needs to be explored in conflict management processes.

7. Christians and Christianity in Northern Nigeria

Jibrin Ibrahim and David Ehrhardt

This paper introduces some of the main dynamics that characterise the contemporary Christian population of Nigeria, with a focus on Christianity in the northern region of the country. It sketches the origins of the divide between 'old' and 'new' Christian movements and presents data on the demographics and diversity of Nigerian Christianity, suggesting that there are five main Christian movements in Nigeria: the Roman Catholics, the 'orthodox' Protestants, the African Protestants, the Aladura churches, and finally the Pentecostals. Furthermore, the paper discusses some of the ways in which Nigerian Christians are positioning themselves and their religion in Nigeria's public sphere. In particular, it focuses on the 'internal' and 'external' democratic challenges facing Christianity in Nigeria. As such, this paper outlines several themes that are important in the development of contemporary Nigerian Christianity. The limitations of the work, however, point towards significant gaps in our current understanding of Christians and Christianity in Nigeria – gaps that suggest clear avenues for further research. It is our hope that such research will not only lead to a better appreciation of Christianity in Nigeria, but also to concrete avenues for the improvement of interfaith relations in the country.

8. Religious Leadership and Governance in Kano

David Ehrhardt

This paper aims to analytically describe the ways in which the two most popular religions, and more particularly their leaders, help to address Nigeria's many governance deficits. It uses Kano as its case study, due to its significance as a commercial hub and Muslim stronghold in northern Nigeria. In terms of data, the analysis is based on 18 interviews with Christian and Muslim leaders in Kano, conducted in September 2011. Building on the work by other members of the Nigeria Research Network, the paper first underlines the contrasting trends towards unity and differentiation that characterise both Muslim and Christian communities in Kano. It then analyses the ways in which religious leaders describe their roles in society. In brief, it presents three different sides to the public personas of religious leaders: their roles as scholars and teachers, their pastoral care for their followers, and as community representatives.

With these roles in mind, the paper then suggests how religious leaders contribute to governance in Kano. It shows that religious leaders primarily contribute to the city's governance in four areas: (religious) education, individual well-being (both in spiritual and material terms), social stability and communal peace, and the position of their faith in the

public sphere. In each of these areas, the interviewed leaders generally aim to promote the interests of their own religious community. Some of the leaders, however, are also involved in the struggle for other 'political' issues through faith-based NGOs, such as the provision of public goods and the protection of equal citizenship rights. Although assessing the impact of these contributions goes beyond the purposes of this paper, the paper does suggest some tentative approaches to this issue by outlining the strengths and constraints of the agency of religious leaders.

Policy Implications

- The contribution of religious leaders to family counselling and low-level mediation is unparalleled in the Nigerian context. It could be extended and enhanced, for example by providing further education to religious leaders in areas such as family planning, maternal health, and gender relations – issues where northern Nigeria is in particular need for rapid development.

- Religious leaders and organisations should be supported in their efforts to provide religious and secular education.

- The high level of access and respect that religious leaders in Kano have renders them highly effective media through which reliable information may be distributed. This is particularly important in a context where access to reliable information is hampered by free, but imperfect news media, a low literacy rate, and a historical prevalence of powerful gossip and rumours.

- Religious leaders should be more involved in resolving the issue of religion in Kano's public sphere. It is clear that the current combination of the secular Federation, the *sharia* State of Kano, and the city's marginalised Christian community is tense and requires a more lasting and equitable resolution. And while constructive engagement of religious leaders may seem difficult to achieve in the current context, it is equally hard to think of a resolution that does not involve Christian and Muslim leaders. The coming together of the religious leaders under the interfaith 'Kano Covenant' is a worthy example of how peaceful co-existence can be promoted.

- Finally, authorities and international actors should be careful not to engage religious leaders in activities that will undermine their contributions in the above aspects of Kano society. This pertains particularly to the involvement of religious authorities in political affairs.

III. Conclusion

This Policy Paper outlines key elements of each of the projects studied under the Phase 2 of the IRP-Abuja project. A fuller treatment of the policy issues raised in both Phase 1 and 2 of the IRP-Abuja projects can be found in the following documents:

- IRP – Abuja Policy Brief No. 1, February 2013, Informal institutions and peace in Northern Nigeria: Enhancing interfaith relations without damaging informal mechanisms of responsiveness;
- IRP – Abuja Policy Brief No. 2, February 2013, Almajirai in northern Nigeria: a collective responsibility;
- IRP – Abuja Policy Brief No. 3, February 2013, A Decade of Fear & Violence: Ethno-religious Conflicts on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria;
- IRP – Abuja Policy Brief No. 4, March 2013, Policing communal conflicts: the state, parallel security providers, and communities.