UCLA
Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Maguzawa and Nigerian Citizenship: Reflecting on Identity Politics and the National Question

Permalink

Journal

ISSN

Authors

Osewe, Akubor Emmanuel
Musa, Gerald M.

Publication Date

2018

DOI

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed

Maguzawa and Nigerian Citizenship: Reflecting on Identity Politics and the National Question

Akubor Emmanuel Osewe and Gerald M. Musa

Abstract

Previous scholars have suggested varied opinions about the history of the Maguzawa people. While some have argued that the term Maguzawa (plural) is a Hausa word, others have asserted that Bamaaguje derives from the Arabic word Majus, which means a Magian adherent of Magaaism. Magaaism was a religion similar to Zoroastrianism. Among the Hausa people, some have argued that the Maguzawa form one of the ethnic groups of the Hausa Kingdom and are descendants of Maguji, one of the eleven traditional Chiefs of Kasa Hausa (Hausaland). Presently, some people use the term to refer to those who, even after the Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio in 1804 in the northern part of the country, have refused to accept the new religion and thus either have continued traditional worship or have accepted Christianity. Both Temple (1922) and Smith (1987) have characterized these people as traditional Hausa families (indigenous people) who were untouched by Islam and who escaped the authority of Sarkin Dare. Scholars have also argued that, as a way of avoiding the new religion, the Maguzawa fled to the country's interior while the new religion was established in major cities and created a new aristocratic class of rulers, scholars, administrators, and merchants. Available documents suggest that the Maguzawa are scattered around the Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Jigawa states of Northern Nigeria. Drawing on data from primary and secondary sources, we deploy analytical and narrative historical methods in this article. Our findings indicate that, despite the fact they are constitutionally Nigerians, the Maguzawa have been treated by the ruling elites and aristocrats as second-class citizens because of religious differences. Most often, they have been denied access to certain sociopolitical and economic privileges and have been deprived of rights to essential means of

livelihood. Such deprivations have occurred due to the social, polit-
ical, and economic networks revolving around the new aristocratic
class. In this paper, we posit that this unjust situation has caused
high levels of intolerance, discrimination, and insecurity in that
part of the country. We conclude that this trend obstructs the funda-
mental rights of the Maguzawa by making them aliens in their own
homeland and that the trend can be traced to the early attempts of
particular groups to forcefully dominate others.

Keywords: Maguzawa, identity, national question, citizenship

Many scholars have concluded that Nigeria is a deeply divided state
in which major political issues are vigorously and, at times, violently
contested along complex ethnic, religious, and regional divisions.[1]
This is why E. Oseghae and T. Suberu have suggested that, by virtue
of its complex web of politically salient identities and its history of
chronic and seemingly intractable conflicts and instability, Nigeria
is one of the most deeply divided states in Africa.[2] They have sug-
gested that this notion is reflected in everyday happenings in the
country and particularly through the ways that people relate with
one another along ethno-political and religious lines.

        National question and identity politics are two familiar terms
in scholarship about nation-building, and they are familiar in post-
colonial African countries. In this article, we begin by defining
key terms: *national question*, *identity politics*, and *Maguzawa*. We
address issues around national question and identity politics in
some parts of the northern region of Nigeria. In particular, we
emphasize the marginalization of the Maguzawa people, who are
indigenous Hausas in rural areas and who include traditionalists,
Christians, and Muslims. We divide the article into seven subtop-
ics: (1) an introduction, (2) conceptual clarification, (3) discussion
about the Maguzawa and the loss of identity, (4) discussion about
Nigeria's independence struggle and liberation, (5) analysis of the
politics of dependence and independence among the Maguzawa in
Nigeria, (6) discussion of the implications of ethno-religious polar-
isation for national unity and development, and (7) a conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification and History

Historically, the terms national question and identity politics
have been used to indicate general issues related to nationalities,

nationalism, and nations. The two terms usually refer either to various theories about dealing with national questions or to particular national problems that manifest across the globe. In this paper, we use the term national question to refer to a specific political situation in Northern Nigeria: one where people who have been recognized historically as indigenes and who became Nigerian citizens at independence have become relegated to the background as a result of their religious affiliations.[3]

The history of the term national question, as it relates to Nigeria, is as old as the history of Nigeria itself. This is because the term arose from Nigeria's diversity as a pluralist and multi-ethnic society, and it has come to represent competition and conflict between various Nigerian ethnic groups over the control of political power and of national resources.[4] At the level of national politics, such struggle has occurred and continues to occur between North and South Nigeria. At a more local level, such struggle has also occurred within and between sub-ethnic groups who have sought to dominate the political atmosphere as a way to control power and resources. Thus, the national question is about the erosion of the state and the state's failure to meet the needs of its citizens—particularly state failures related to securing and protecting the lives and the welfare of all groups that inhabit the national space.[5] In a stricter sense, public affairs commentator Johnson Momodu argues:

> The National Question is a composite of several questions, all relating to the challenges of national integration and citizenship rights. Some of the sub-categories of the question include the following: To what extent do citizens and groups feel a sense of identity with the Nigerian State? Does the State protect our interests? Is justice and fairness preserved in the manner in which the State relates to every section of the citizenry? To what extent is justice dispensed in the extraction and distribution of proceeds of resources extracted in certain territories of the State? To what extent is the political leadership of the Nigerian State just in its decisions and execution of matters affecting various groups and constituencies? To what extent are we able to express our uniqueness as a group (culturally, religiously and economically) without being hindered by the structure of power and the State? [6]

Identity politics, in contrast, refers to the process of categorizing and de-categorizing people into groups, such as ethnic, religious, or gender groups, on the basis of presumed shared similarities. Often,

such categorization is based on assumptions and stereotypes rather than on actual traits, attributes, or characteristics. In this way, Identity politics, becomes a major determinant in issues related to rights, opportunities, privileges, and entitlements.[7] Momodu specifically notes that identity and its politics form the basis of contestations around who has access to national opportunities and rights and that many such contestations result in violence. In such conflicts, holders of particular identities, as defined and identified by attackers, are singled out for liquidation or forced to relocate, and their properties are torched. Alubo suggests that the collective nature of the violence perhaps serves to strengthen geopolitical solidarity.[8]

Similarly, scholars argue that issues related to national questions and identity politics are not productive for national development and growth. For example, Momodu opines that if a union of nationalities is to be sustained, each nationality must be given enough political space to exercise its individual political and fiscal autonomy.[9] In other words, Nigeria can survive as one entity only under conditions of strict political and fiscal federalism. Momodu also argues that by clear implication, such fiscal federalism must include a large dose of resource control and derivation in its revenue-allocation arrangement.[10]

The above applies to the situation of specific groups in Northern Nigeria. Thus, we will discuss this issue through general reference to Northern Nigeria and through particular emphasis on *Hausaland*, also known as *Kasar Hausa*—the parts of the country where the Hausa language prevails. In a stricter sense, Hausaland geographically covers the northern part of Nigeria and other states where Hausa is primarily spoken, which includes Abuja.[11] In the article, we note that Hausa is spoken predominantly in the states of Kaduna, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Benue, Kwara, Kogi, Plateau, Niger, Nasarawa, and Kebbi, which are generally not Hausa-dominated but retain some Hausa influence. There are, of course, Hausa settlers in these states. By extension, the historical evolution of the Hausa group is closely linked to that of other ethnic groups located in the region.

Maguzawa and the Loss of Identity: A History of Hostility

Originally, the word Maguzawa came from the Arabic word *majus,* which means magician. This name was given to a group of

non-Muslim merchants and mercenaries as a sign that they were a protected people. Because Muslims were not allowed to deliver products from pagan areas, they created a Muslim state in West Africa and to spread their religion and culture. That way, Muslims were able to trade with protected people and to deliver products all the way to other Muslim states.[12] Scholars thus argue that the Maguzawa became historically relevant because of the inability of the Uthman Dan Fodio forces to conquer them and to gain their allegiance. While Dikwa Kawu suggests that Hausa tribes were originally known as Maguzawa, Murray Last argues in his analysis that the Hausa society is a composite of different groups and that the Maguzawa are unique, since they are identified by their religion.[13] Both F. Besmer and M. Last assert that Maguzawa is a term often used for all non-Muslims, and it sometimes refers to the "original Hausa" culture, while current Maguzawa culture is considered a relic of ancient religion before the arrival of Islam.[14] Both authors further state that the use of Maguzawa as a label is a consequence of specific historical relations between non-Muslims and Muslims who started to trade.

According to M. P. Gaiya, scholars generally believe that the Maguzawa are a remnant of the Hausa and provide a reflection of pre-Islamic Hausa society.[15] Scholars have also established that, after adopting a non-violent attitude toward Hausa Muslims who tried to force them to convert to Islam, the Maguzawa have always migrated to the geographical fringes of Hausaland. As a result, they have always been on the move and have registered at the bottom of virtually all social measurements in the region, including urbanization, religion, power, and status; they have been treated with contempt by their neighbors.[16] Maguzawa have historically lived in wards and have appointed leaders called *ward heads*. The ward head is often appointed by a supervising Muslim village who supervises their ward. The ward head's functions are to collect taxes from his own people and to serve as a marriage counselor and peacemaker. The Maguzawa have always tried to limit their contact with Muslim leadership, and their strategies of geographical retreat and internal problem-solving have supported this goal.

Notably, Northern Nigeria has the largest concentration of minorities who practice traditional religions. Over time, some of these have become Christians, but the majority of the Hausa-Fulani are ardent Muslims.[17] Because of their history, we suggest

that the Maguzawa are a major group of non-Islamized Hausa people who retain a social identity distinct from their Muslim surroundings. Although heavily influenced by Islam, their culture and especially their marriage customs retain much of their indigenous brilliance and color. During the colonial period, the British administration did little to close the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims and rather pursued policies that actually widened it. For instance, they established the Tundun Wada and Sabongari, which were distant settlements to which the British administration restricted indigenous people, displaced inhabitants of cities, and non-indigenous immigrants subject to the native administration; ancient walled cities were meant, instead, for people the administration considered *real* indigenes (i.e, indigene who are Muslims).[18] Gaiya specifically notes that this did not bother the colonial powers, since they were skeptical that Christian teaching would make the Maguzawa disloyal to the Muslims who ruled them, which the colonialists felt would create problem for them as far as governance is concerned. .[19] However, the British administration later approved of the subjugation of the Maguzawa by the Hausa Muslims and refused to allow the liberating and empowering messages of Christianity to be preached to the Maguzawa.[20]

The Independence Struggle and the Liberation of Nigeria

The struggle for national independence in Nigeria aimed to make all colonial subjects within the territory citizens. British colonial adventurers had conquered the pre-colonial polities of Nigeria and had taken control of not only the land and minerals but also the people, who they then incorporated into the British system. As the sovereign power, the British assumed full control through the Niger Lands Transfer Act No. 2 of 1902 and the Native Rights Act of 1916. Section 3 of the Native Rights Act of 1916 declared that all native lands and the rights of the inhabitants were controlled by and subject to the disposition of the governor. In addition, Section 3 of the Minerals Act of 1916 unequivocally stated that the entire property and control of all minerals and mineral oils under or upon any land in Nigeria and in all rivers, streams, and water courses throughout Nigeria belonged to the Crown.[21]

These acts made every person in Nigeria colonial subjects. Their rights were only recovered through the struggle for

independence, which was conducted not by ethnic or religious groups but by Nigerian nationalist organisations. Through the 1916 Act individuals, regardless of religion, creed, or tribe, became citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1960, which granted them equal right and privileges. Y. B. Usman and A. Alkassum argue:

> The winning of the independence was part of a worldwide movement for national liberation, in the context of the victories of which, we ceased to be colonial subjects and became Nigerian citizens. Moreover, the constitutional conferences at which the constitutional arrangements for decolonisation were worked out, were conferences between the British and delegates representing, not any ethnic or religious community, but Nigerian political parties, which, even when they were regional, or, local in scope, attended these conferences as part of national alliances. On 1st October, 1960, the sovereign rights seized by the British were recovered by the government of the Federation of Nigeria on behalf of the people of Nigeria, and not on behalf of any ethnic, or, religious community.[22]

Although their argument depicts the outcome of normal circumstances, this has not been the case for the Maguzawa, who, until recently, have been treated as traitors to their Hausa identity. In this article, we suggest that in a genuine condition of independence (as in the case of Nigeria) constitutional provision clearly and comprehensively delineates the notions of rights and privileges in a way that ensures the rights of all citizens. It decisively outlines the relationship between citizens and the state in terms of mutual rights, duties, and obligations. According to the constitution, citizenship is a form of participation in the running of the state and of society. As defined in the Constitution of 1999, people who became citizens on 1 October 1960 include the following:

- Every person who, having been born in the former Colony or Protectorate of Nigeria, was on the thirtieth day of September, 1960, a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or a British protected person shall become a citizen of Nigeria on the first day of October, 1960: Provided that a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this subsection if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in the former Colony or Protectorate of Nigeria.

- Every person who, having been born outside the former Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, was on the thirtieth day of September, 1960, a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or a British protected person shall, if his father was born in the former Colony or Protectorate and was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or a that date, was such a citizen or person at the date of his death or would have become such a citizen or person but for his death) become a citizen of Nigeria on the first day of October, 1960.[23]

In the constitution, there are also provisions about people who can become citizens and those who can become naturalized. It contains a section that guarantees the right of every citizen to freely associate with anyone the citizen desires. As such, there is no discrimination under any guise.

Dependence in Independence: Politics and Maguzawa in Nigeria

Even after independence, some people in the country still completely depend on others for survival. In the case of the Maguzawa, their relationship with the ruling class hinges on a kind of Marxist ideology in which the ruling class determines the form and content of the means of production and the distribution and consumption of national wealth. In summary, the ruling class controls state power and exercises authority as it deems fit. S. O'Brien suggests that in this unjust structure in the Hausa area, Islam has initiated political and social changes that have also affected the identities of the Hausa.[24] Despite their marginalization in politics and economy, the Maguzawa have never demanded an independent state; instead, they have been willing to migrate to other places when faced with conflict.

The discrimination the Maguzawa have experienced has been widespread. For example, most Maguzawa have been denied official permission to build schools in their communities. In addition, it is not only religious differences that separate Muslims and the Maguzawa but also differences in living patterns. For instance, while Muslims live in walled villages or cities, the Maguzawa live in rural areas, and agriculture is their main source of income.[25] C. Ibe, I. Jibrin, and M. P. Gaiya point specifically to the situations in areas

like Katsina and Kano to highlight the discrimination the Maguzawa have experienced and to underscore how they have been denied development opportunities because of their religious affiliation.[26] Some scholars consider this type of discrimination a strategy that a certain section of the oligarchy has used to maintain control over minorities in Northern Nigeria. More specifically, scholars observe that the Maguzawa, like many other ethnic minorities across the country, lack adequate access to educational opportunities. This problem has been compounded by the fact that primary schools deliberately have been built outside of Maguzawa settlements by the government and leaders in order to deny children basic education. In terms of infrastructure, the horrible conditions of the schools and the incessant teacher strikes have made learning almost impossible. For those who can afford education, their children walk two to five kilometers to attend school. Scholars have also established that after six years of primary education, most children graduate from school illiterate and are unable to read even Hausa in the Roman script.[27] M. P. Gaiya observes that after three years in rural junior secondary schools, few of the graduates are equipped for success. Because of this, many rural parents regard attending Local Government Authority primary schools a waste of time, and large numbers of Muslim children from poor households prefer obtaining their primary education in Koranic Schools.[28]

In response to this type of discrimination, members of some communities have made provisions for their own basic infrastructure. For instance, at Katsinawa, a village of 300 inhabitants in Tudun Wada, a local government area, people have levied themselves to ensure that the village's school continues to function. This is also the case at Sanusi, another village one kilometer away. There, most village children had attended primary school in Katsinawa and Sanusi, but, as a result of poor conditions in the schools, the community instituted their own village tax to employ qualified teachers from Kaduna state, which is two hundred kilometers away. The tax covered the teachers' allowances and accommodations. Teachers who live in the community are responsible for training all children in the community, including those who attend the school in Sanusi. This is the pattern most of the Maguzawa Christian settlements have adopted. In some other instances, religious bodies, specifically the Catholic and Evangelical Churches of West Africa, have been actively involved in the

provision of basic amenities. Thus, Christian churches, particularly Catholic ones, have engaged in aggressive educational development programs to help communities overcome any educational backwardness that has been caused by their deliberate marginalization by the government and local leadership. In a number of villages where churches are reasonably well established and where demand for church members' active collaboration exists, Classes for Religious Instruction (CRIs) have provided primary schooling up to Class Three. These schools are not officially recognized and often face constant threats of closure by the government. Because the government considers them a threat to the existing order, some of these schools have been shut down altogether.[29]

During our fieldwork in the region, we confirmed many of these observations.[30] As a way to resolve such problems, communities appealed to affiliated religious bodies and organizations for aid. In most cases that we witnessed, such appeals attracted positive responses, which led to the construction of schools. However, these school facilities were often not recognized by government authorities and, in many cases, the government diverted them for other uses. Government officials considered such construction an attempt by minorities to progress beyond the expectations of the ruling class. This supports M. P. Gaiya's earlier argument, for which he offered the following practical example:

> The Catholic Church built a modern primary school at Rahama Rawun in Kiru Local Government staffed by qualified teachers. Not only did the Kano state government refuse to recognize the school, but the government closed it down. Other Classes for Religious Instructions (CRIs) spread -all over the Maguzawa Christian settlements meant to provide them with the basic knowledge of their faith and good background to primary schools are no longer in existence as stated above. The interesting thing is that the primary school- at Rahama Rawun was not exclusively for Christian children, but was opened to Muslim children where it was expected to provide a solid educational background to enable the children proceed to pursue secondary education.[31]

Much earlier, and in line with Gaiya's example above, C. Ibe argued that when the Islamic North realized that Western education was necessary for modern administration, they deliberately placed a policy of curtailment on the educational advancement of the

Maguzawa in the region.[32] Ibe further stated that since the government in Kaduna controlled permissions to establish new schools and to award scholarships, the government shifted emphasis toward developing the children of aristocrats. In time, the government even assumed control of schools established by missionaries and by voluntary agencies, which were then renamed after Muslim figures in order to efface the vestiges of Christian memories from them.

Some scholars consider the frustrated self-help efforts of minorities to be part of the government's campaign to marginalize people by making sure they are denied basic necessities such as education, fertilizer, and industry.[33] In some cases, the children of these underprivileged people have been denied access to other facilities, even when they have been acknowledged as indigenous to the area and as legally and constitutionally entitled to the facilities. A common problem in the region is that Maguzawa children with Christian names experience great difficulties securing admission to secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. They are often told that they cannot simultaneously be Hausa indigenes of Kano *and* Christians.[34]

In the case of health facilities, missionary bodies, most notably the ECWA and the Catholic church, have made clinics and dispensaries available in Maguzawa settlements. These facilities are well-stocked materially and are also well staffed. For example, the Evangelical Church of West Africa and the Catholic Mission have established and maintained fourteen clinics in the Kano and Jigawa states. These facilities provide services to all people in the area without discrimination. However, some opposing forces have threatened and harassed the trained staff and religious sisters of one of these clinics—at gunpoint. Eventually, the trained sisters in Rahama Rawun had to abandon their calling because of threats to their bodies and to their lives.[35] As a result, people in the area have been exposed to diseases that ordinarily would have been handled easily. For instance, in 1996, a major epidemic of Cerebral Spinal Meningitis (CSM) struck some parts of Northern Nigeria, and the Maguzawa area was affected the most. More recently, the health situation has grown so dire that many northern states are ranked first in the country for infant mortality. In 2013, the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey assessed different stages of pregnancy loss across the country over a period of five years. Pregnancies that ended after seven months were classified as stillbirths, and infant deaths that

occurred within the first seven days were categorized as early neona-
tal deaths. Both stillbirths and early neonatal deaths were grouped
under one classification: perinatal deaths. The table below shows
that northeastern and northwestern regions of the country recorded
the highest numbers of stillbirths and neonatal deaths.

Table I: Record of Infant Mortality in the Area[36]

Number of stillbirths and early neonatal deaths and the perinatal mortality rate for the five-year
period preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Nigeria 2013

Background characteristic	Number of stillbirths[1]	Number of early neonatal deaths[2]	Perinatal mortality rate[3]	Number of pregnancies of 7+ months' duration
Mother's age at birth				
<20	77	173	52	4,803
20-29	166	427	36	16,638
30-39	119	257	41	9,226
40-49	34	67	65	1,556
Previous pregnancy interval in months[4]				
First pregnancy	101	233	55	6,085
<15	56	210	52	5,082
15-26	79	243	36	8,950
27-38	45	119	28	5,953
39+	115	119	38	6,153
Residence				
Urban	114	265	34	11,240
Rural	281	660	45	20,983
Zone				
North Central	35	112	34	4,375
North East	92	164	45	5,670
North West	164	357	44	11,939
South East	18	84	36	2,859
South South	31	79	37	2,966
South West	55	129	42	4,415
Mother's education				
No education	199	460	42	15,856
Primary	88	201	46	6,215
Secondary	88	218	37	8,298
More than secondary	21	47	36	1,854
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	116	233	46	7,612
Second	107	234	46	7,463
Middle	58	171	38	6,059
Fourth	52	163	38	5,708
Highest	62	125	35	5,383
Total	396	925	41	32,224

[1] Stillbirths are foetal deaths in pregnancies lasting 7 or more months.
[2] Early neonatal deaths are deaths at age 0-6 days among live-born children.
[3] The sum of the number of stillbirths and early neonatal deaths divided by the number of pregnancies of 7 or more months' duration, expressed per 1,000
[4] Categories correspond to birth intervals of <24 months, 24-35 months, 36-47 months, and 48+ months.

This health survey indicates that there are four major factors
that determine infant mortality: place of residence, zone, mother's
education, and household wealth. The two tables below show mor-
tality statistics in relation to these four influential factors.

Table II: Neonatal and Post-neonatal Record in the Area[37]

Neonatal, postneonatal, infant, child, and under-5 mortality rates for the 10-year period preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Nigeria 2013

Background characteristic	Neonatal mortality (NN)	Postneonatal mortality (PNN)[1]	Infant mortality ($_1q_0$)	Child mortality ($_4q_1$)	Under-5 mortality ($_5q_0$)
Residence					
Urban	34	26	60	42	100
Rural	44	42	86	89	167
Zone					
North Central	35	31	66	36	100
North East	43	33	77	90	160
North West	44	46	89	105	185
South East	37	45	82	54	131
South South	32	26	58	35	91
South West	39	21	61	31	90
Mother's education					
No education	44	45	89	100	180
Primary	42	33	74	57	128
Secondary	34	24	58	35	91
More than secondary	30	20	50	13	62
Wealth quintile					
Lowest	45	47	92	108	190
Second	45	49	94	103	187
Middle	39	31	71	61	127
Fourth	37	28	65	38	100
Highest	30	18	48	26	73

[1] Computed as the difference between the infant and neonatal mortality rates

Table III: Death Per 1,000 Live Births[38]

NDHS 2013
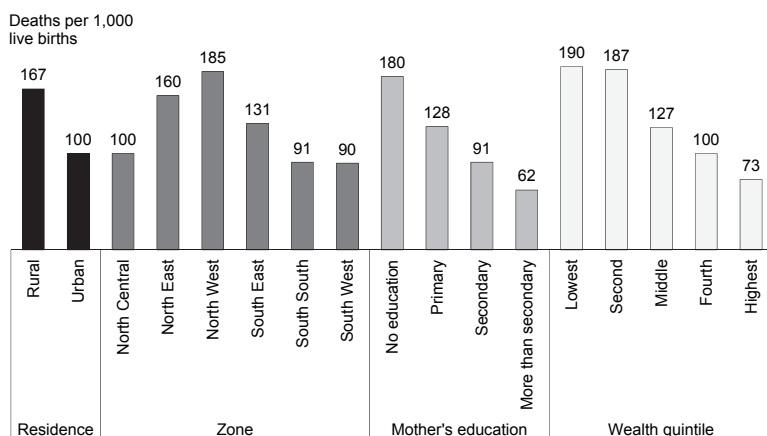
These deaths occurred more in rural areas that lacked basic health facilities and other amenities. Such deaths could have been minimized, if not completely prevented, if an even level of development existed in these areas. According to experts and analysts, national development and integration cannot occur when a particular group considers themselves targets of exclusion from national resources[39]. In addition to describing the continuous marginalization of minority groups in Nigeria, scholars also describe the northern oligarchy's attitude toward minorities in the area. Specifically, the oligarchy has presented its actions as protectionist measures against economic and political tampering in relation to its interests. For instance, M. H. Kukah notes how the government's policy of exclusion against non-Muslims has turned Kaduna into a political mecca and has laid the foundation for the unnecessary and sad religious tensions that endure in the state.[40] In Kukah's view, routine changes, such as a deputy governor taking over from a governor, have generated ripples across the country and have created the climate of anxiety, fear, and suspicion that has destroyed the foundations of Christian-Muslims relations. In more specific terms, M. H. Kukah argues the following:

> From the creation of Kaduna State in 1987, the Northern ruling class, by policy seemed to have erected an invisible sign that read: No Christians Need Apply to enter what would later be called Kashim Ibrahim House or represent the State at the highest levels. Despite the fact that all states were opened to Christian military officers, it was only Kaduna and perhaps Sokoto states that were never governed by non-Muslims.[41]

This claim supports the argument put forward much earlier by R. L. Sklar, who observed that injustice has been the bane of the northern power against the minorities. In most cases, non-Muslims have been compelled to seek justice under the Shari'a legal system, even though they know nothing of the system's operations.[42] Sklar further argued that under this system, a male Muslim was treated with more dignity than any non-Muslim. Until recently, this situation has persisted in the northern part of the country—a part in which the manipulation of religion and the deliberate neglect of the Maguzawa have adversely affected the region's overall development.[43]

Implications for National Unity and Development

A critical analysis of the discourse so far clearly shows that some states in Northern Nigeria are polarized along ethno-religious differences. This has caused persistent volatility and recurrent, deadly, and highly destructive conflicts in the region. Clear examples of this include the Kaduna, Zamfara, and Kano states, which have histories of violent ethno-religious conflicts and radicalized civil societies. Specifically, Kaduna, a cosmopolitan northern state, has long been polarized along ethno-religious, regional, socioeconomic, and political fault lines. This polarization has consistently pitted the state's Muslim Hausa-Fulani politico-economic power group, which is based mainly in the northern zone of the state, against the southern Kaduna people.[44] Consequently, in an attempt to restore peace, some state governments have carved out "Shari'a-free zones." This has been the case in the town of Zuru in the Kebbi state, in some parts of southern Kaduna (including the southern parts of Kaduna city), in Kano, in Katsina, and in Niger states. In essence, in these states, areas that are dominated by or that contain a significant population of non-Muslims are largely exempt from the implementation of Shari'a.

There is no doubt that a history of polarization set the stage for antagonism and strife, which have become daily occurrences in these areas. The end result has been a high degree of unease and mutual suspicion between the Maguzawa Christians and the Hausa Muslims and between the Christian ethnic groups of southern origin and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. The level of mistrust has become obvious over time; Christians and Muslims have increasingly moved to areas that are dominated by people of their own faith in hope of finding safety. In this way, even indigenous people feel more comfortable living among non-indigenous people who practice the same faith. Nigerians tend to name areas according to the religious groups that dominate them. For instance, Muslim neighborhoods are generally referred to as *Mecca*, *Da-Islam*, or *Medina*, while Christian neighborhoods are referred to as *Jerusalem* or *Graceland*.[45]

Conclusion

From discourse in the article, it is clear that issues of national question and identity politics are fundamental in post-colonial,

independent Nigeria. What may have started as a mere sign of segregation based on religious difference has become a permanent seal that determines the sociopolitical status of non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria. The Maguzawa, although originally indigenous to the area, have been and continue to be relegated to the background in state politics. The situation is even more worrisome when considered in context: these unjust structures and policies do not really represent the religious beliefs of the oppressing class but are instead simply calculations and manipulations of religion by members of the aristocratic class, who through the manipulation of the teachings and doctrines seek to control state power and resources. Practices of exploitation and segregation that are based on religious differences are more widespread in Northern Nigeria than in other parts of the country where people practice different religions and intermarry and interact more freely. Currently, oppressed indigenes are not represented in any of the different layers of national government, bureaucracy, and public life. While minority groups are visible in areas such as medicine, education, and other forms of service, they continue to be excluded from public positions such as commissioners, directors, or legislators. Instead, they are often treated as traitors to their identity.

We conclude this article with the thought of Idriss Jazairy, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue who recognises a strong bond between citizenship rights and peace. Jazairy asserts that a nation can achieve peace when it is able to "harness the power of all religions, creeds and value-systems to promote and enhance equal citizenship rights. In other words, equal citizenship rights is another name for peace."[46]

Notes

[1] Marie Symth and Gillian Robinson, *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2001), 66–80; Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis* (London: Penguin, 2002), 144–177.

[2] Eghosa Efosa Oseghae and Rotimi T. Suberu, "A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria," (working paper no. 6, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity (CRISE), Oxford, January 2005), 1-10.

3 Obaro Ikime, "Towards Understanding the National Question," (keynote address, National Seminar on the National Question, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1986), 15.

4 Ibid.

5 Sasay Itse, "The National Question," accessed March 3, 2014, http://dailyinde-pendentnig.com/2014/03/the-national-question/.

6 Johnson Momodu, "The National Question - Jonathan and Political Will," last modified December 6, 2013, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/12/national-question-jonathan-political-will/.

7 Ogoh Alubo, "Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria," in *Nigeria@50 Conference Proceedings* (Lagos: CLEENS Foundations, 2009), 22.

8 Alubo, "Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria," 14; Ogoh Alubo, *Nigeria: Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in the Central Region*, Ibadan Program on Ethnic and Federal Studies, (Nigeria: University of Ibadan Department of Political Science, 2006), 12.

9 Momodu, "The National Question - Jonathan and Political Will," 4.

10 Ibid.

11 George Kwanashie et al., "A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Professor Abdullahi Smith," Vol. 1, Zaria: Centre for Historical Research, 1987: 60–61.

12 Murray Last, "Spirit Possession as Therapy: Bori Among Non-Muslims in Nigeria," in *Women's Medicine: The Zar-Bori Cult of Africa and Beyond*, ed. I. M. Lewis et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 1990), 49–63; Murray Last, "History as Religion: De-constructing the Magians 'Maguzawa' of Nigerian Hausaland," in *L'invention religieuse en Afrique*: *Histoire et Religion en Afrique noire* (Paris: Éditions Karhala et ACCT, 1993), 267–296.

13 Last, "Spirit Possession as Therapy," 49–63; Last, "History as Religion," 282-283; and Ali Kawu Dikwa, *Indigeneship of the North in Nigeria*, n.d., accessed February, 2015, http://www.gamji.com/article8000/NEWS8782.htm.

14 Fremont E. Besmer, "Horses, Musicians & Gods: The Hausa Cult of Posses-sion Trance," Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publisher, 1983: 15 ; Murray Last, "History as Religion," 282-283.

15 Maigamo P. Gaiya, *Religion and Justice: The Nigerian Predicament* (Kaduna: Espeep, 2004), 25.

16 Gaiya, *Religion and Justice*, 25.

17 Jenks Zakari Okwori, "The Patchwork that is Nigeria: Implications and Impact on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability" (paper presented at the Faculty of Arts Seminar Series, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2002), 12.

18 Emmanuel Osewe Akubor and Anthony Akinwale, *Sowing in the Desert: Birth and Growth of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto* (Sokoto: Catholic Secretariat, 2014), 35.

19 Gaiya, *Religion and Justice*, 25.

[20] Cyril Ibe, *Church and Humanization: A Viable Possibility; The Case of the Maguzawa of Nigeria* (Sokoto: Catholic Bishop's House, 1998), 18.

[21] Yusuf Bala Usman and Alkassum Abba, *The Misrepresentation of Nigeria: The Fact and The Figures* (Zaria: Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training, 2000), 22.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1999, II.

[24] Susan O'Brien, "Pilgrimage, Power, and Identity: The Role of the Hajj in the Lives of Nigerian Hausa Bori Adepts," *Africa Today* 46 (December 1999): 3–4.

[25] Last, *History as Religion*, 228.

[26] Ibe, *Church and Humanization*, 18; Jibrin, *Social Provisioning in Nigeria*, 22; and Gaiya, *Religion and Justice*, 50.

[27] Ibe, *Church and Humanization*, 18; Jibrin, *Social Provisioning in Nigeria*, 22; and Gaiya, *Religion and Justice,* 50.

[28] Gaiya, *Religion and Justice,* 50.

[29] Jibrin, *Social Provisioning in Nigeria*, 22; Gaiya*, Religion and Justice, 50*

[30] Fieldwork carried out with Pa Emmanuel Musa, a retired teacher and administrator, age 70+, 2013.

[31] Gaiya, *Religion and Justice, 55.*

[32] Ibe, *Church and Humanization*, 18.

[33] Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis* (London: Penguin, 2000), 143–150.

[34] Jibrin, *Social Provisioning in Nigeria, 30.*

[35] Akubor, *Sowing in the Desert*, 20.

[36] *Nigeria Demographic Health Survey* (Federal Ministry of Health, 2013), 123; James Godswill and Odighe Onome, "Background Variable and Infant Mortality in Northern Nigeria" (paper presented at the National Conference of the Institute for Development Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, October 16-17, 2002).

[37] *Nigeria Demographic Health Survey*, 125; Godswill and Odighe, *Background Variable and Infant*, 20.

[38] *Nigeria Demographic Health Survey*, 121; Godswill and Odighe, *Background Variable and Infant Mortality*, 20.

[39] Ogoh Alubo, *Nigeria: Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in the Central Region*, Ibadan Program on Ethnic and Federal Studies, (Nigeria: University of Ibadan Department of Political Science, 2006), 12.

[40] Mathew Hassan Kukah, "Homily at the Burial Mass of Late Governor Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa, Governor of Kaduna State," (Fadan Kagoma, Kaduna, December 20, 2012), 5.

[41] Kukah, "Homily at the Burial Mass," 5.

[42] Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Enugu: Nok, 1983), 55.

[43] Yusufu Bala Usman, *For the Liberation of Nigeria (*London: New Beacons, 1980), 78–91.

[44] Emmanuel Osewe Akubor, "Civil Unrest in Northern Nigeria: Beyond the Literal Boko Haram," *The Constitution* 11 (2011): 71–83; Shehu Sani, "Boko Haram: History, Ideas and Revolts," *The Constitution* 11 (2011): 17–41.

[45] Emmanuel Osewe Akubor, "Role of Religion in Nation-Building and the Nigeria Situation from c. 1980: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of Christian Religion and Education (JOCRED)* (2009): 124–125.

[46] Geneva Centre (2018) World Tolerance Day: Executive Director of the Geneva Centre appeals to decision makers to sign and endorse 2018 world conference outcome declaration, Inter Press Service News Agency (November 17) http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/11/2018-world-tolerance-day-executive-director-geneva-centre-appeals-decision-makers-sign-endorse-2018-world-conference-outcome-declaration/, retrieved (October 9, 2018).