

RELIGION
AND
THE MAKING OF
NIGERIA

OLUFEMI VAUGHAN



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IN MEMORIAM: Gladys Aduke Vaughan
(Otun-Iyalode, Ibadan), 1920–2014

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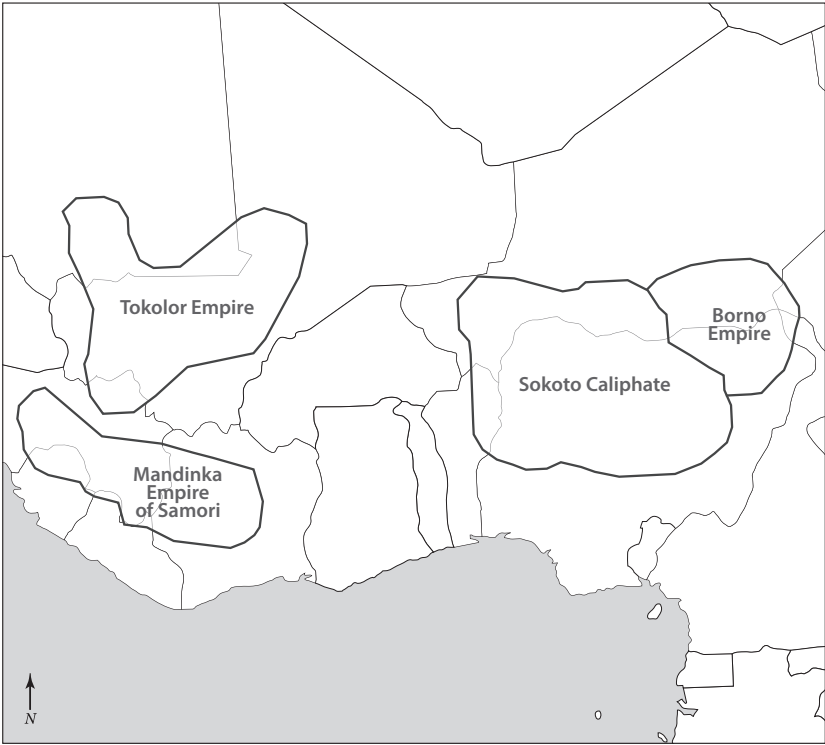
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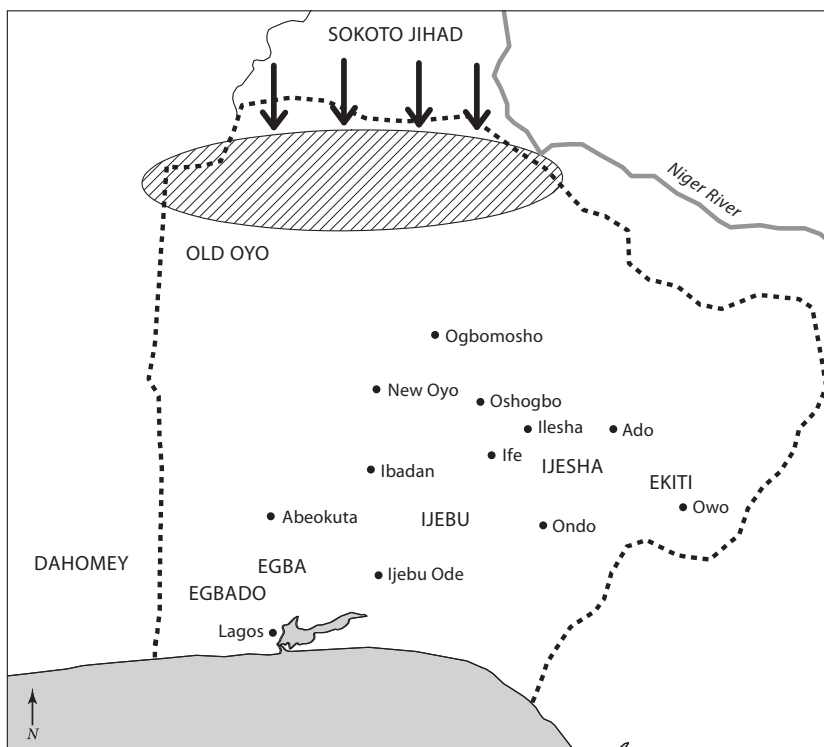
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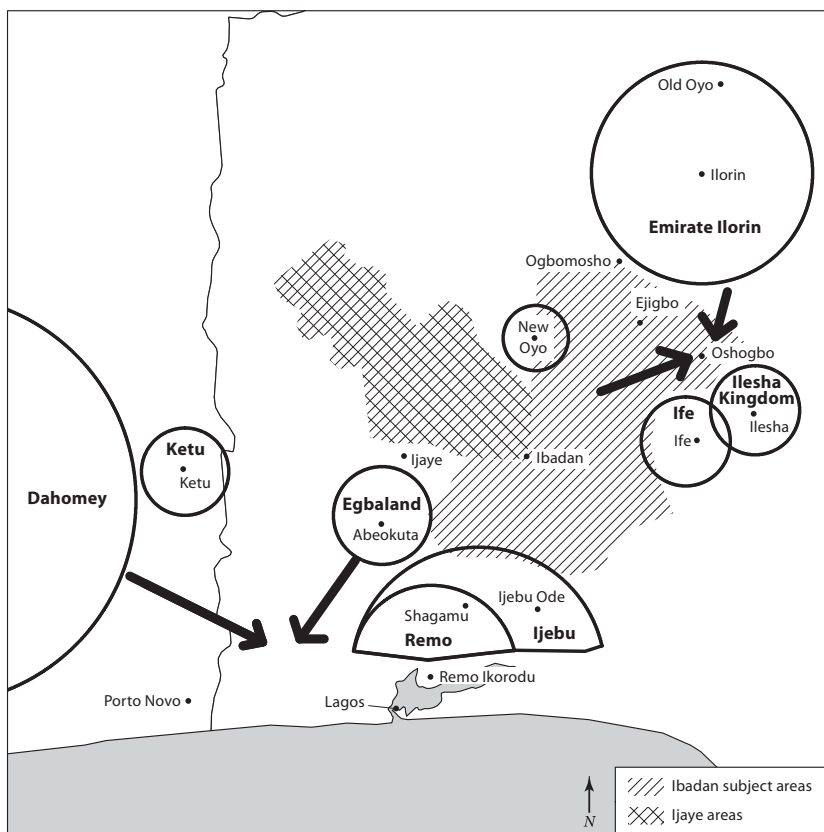
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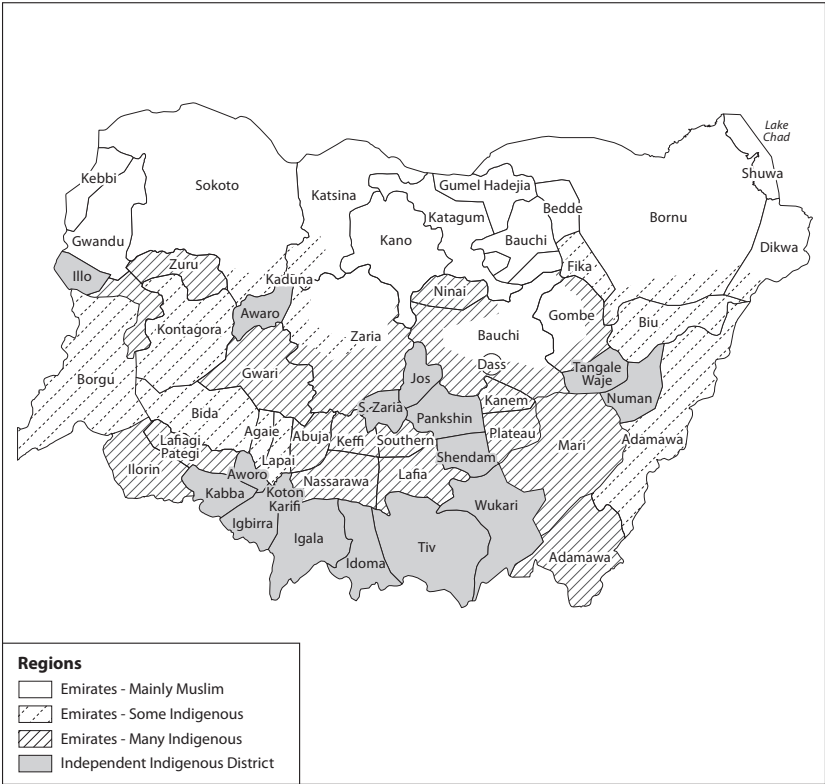
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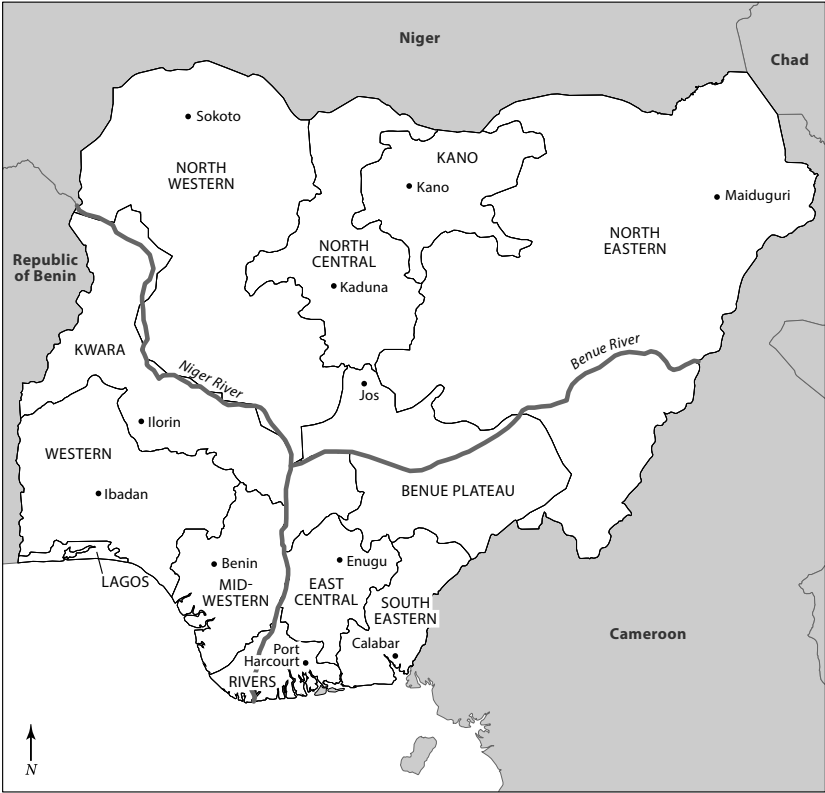
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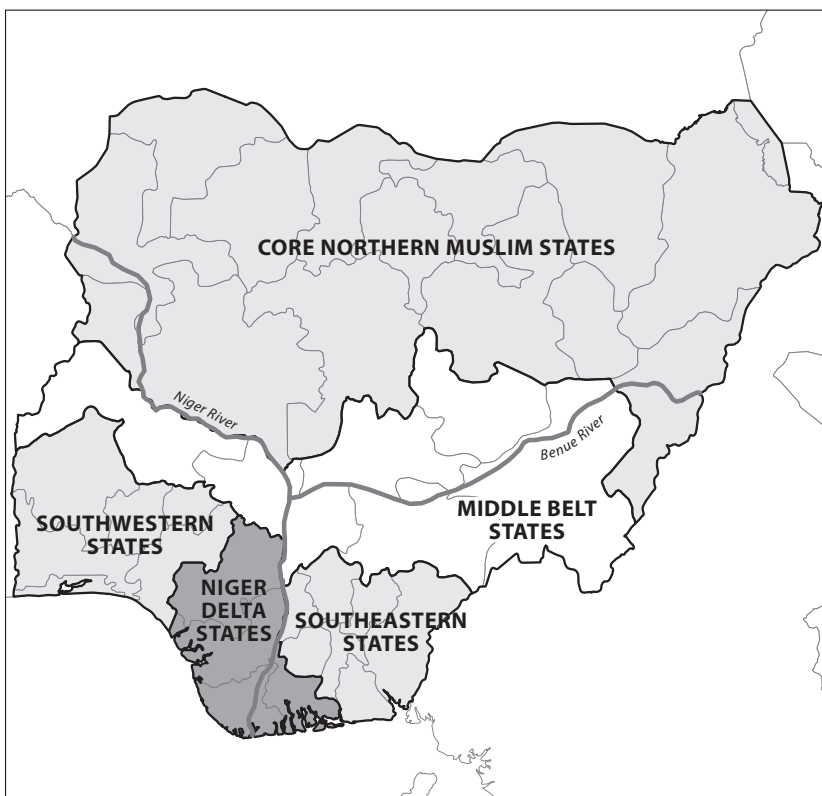
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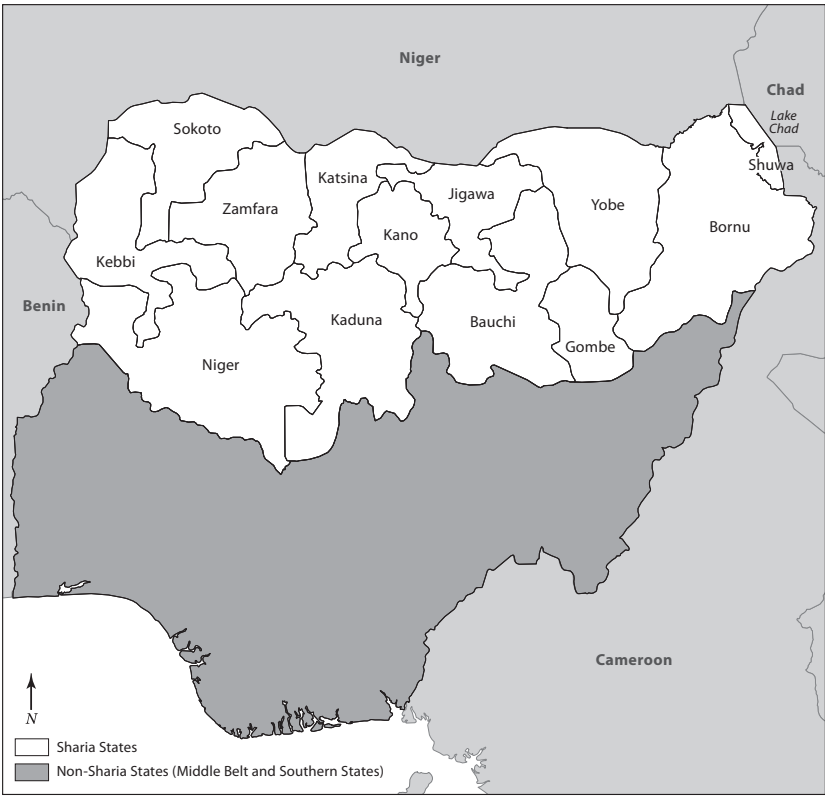
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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria holds political and economic prominence in Africa. A major oil producer with a population of 180 million (in 2015) and more than 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is home to millions of Christians, Muslims, and adherents of indigenous religions. With complicated relations between Christians and Muslims in the Northern and central regions of the country, Nigeria is one of the world's major laboratories for the study of religious-based conflict and reconciliation. While many scholars have focused on recurring Christian-Muslim confrontations as an aspect of endemic sectarian conflict in Nigeria—showing how an obdurate political class exploits ethno-religious divisions to mobilize collective political action¹—I contend that Christian, Muslim, and indigenous religious structures are integral to the formation of the modern Nigerian state and society. Specifically, I will analyze how the underpinnings of religious doctrines, the nature of social structures, and the proclivities of the political class have shaped the evolution of modern Nigeria since the turbulent nineteenth century. I am persuaded that the intersections of these competing religious traditions—Islam, Christianity, and indigenous religions—are decisive in the making of modern Nigeria.

Starting with a major Muslim reformist movement—the Sokoto Jihad—in contemporary Nigeria's vast Northern Region, and a Christian evangelical movement, propelled by the influential English missionary organization called the Church Missionary Society (CMS), in Atlantic Yoruba communities in southwestern Nigeria during the nineteenth century, I argue that Muslim and Christian structures made up the foundation on which the Nigerian colonial state was grafted in the early twentieth century. In what later became the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, the Sokoto Jihad of 1804–1808 transformed not only the Hausa city-states, but also shaped the geopolitics of their neighbors to the south, especially the diverse communities in contemporary central and north-eastern Nigeria (modern Nigeria's Middle Belt region) as well as the Yoruba region in the southwest. As the Sokoto Jihad consolidated a theocratic confederacy (the Sokoto Caliphate) under the control of Fulani Muslim reformers

in the northern Hausa region by the mid-nineteenth century, Christian evangelical movements, fueled by the activities of Yoruba CMS returnees from Sierra Leone, penetrated Nigeria's Southwest, steadily transforming the social structure of Southern and central Nigerian communities by the late nineteenth century. These two world religious currents, along with their entangled social and political histories, set the stage on which Muslim and Christian structures would shape the processes of state-society formation in colonial Nigeria since the imposition of British rule at the turn of the twentieth century. Consequently, Islam and Christianity fundamentally shaped—and have been shaped by—local religious, social, and political structures since the transformative nineteenth century.

Drawing from an interdisciplinary Africanist scholarship, I contend that the impact of these Muslim and Christian movements on Nigerian communities did not simply serve as a precursor to British colonial rule, but provided essential structural and ideological frameworks for the rationalization of colonial society throughout the first half of the twentieth century. My analyses emphasize how these two major religions shaped collective political and social action and complicated Nigeria's tapestry of identities, especially ethnic and regional forms of identifications. Given the transformative impact of these world religious movements on structures of society, I will analyze their manifestations in their broad historical, political, and sociological contexts,² emphasizing the dialectical tensions between local and global forces. This perspective underscores how the persistence of Muslim and Christian structures has consistently produced contending—and competing—doctrines, practices, and ideologies to transform Nigeria's complicated social and political landscape.

The history of the communities in this West African region is characterized by interwoven religious, social, and political strands that reflect entrenched hierarchies of power integrated into communal, kinship, gender, and class identities³ and conditioned by spatial and demographic factors. In this dynamic process, Nigeria's formidable Muslim and Christian structures are at the center of the country's history, expanding Nigeria's chronology to fully incorporate the critical religious, social, and political developments of the turbulent nineteenth century into the processes of Nigerian state formation. Simply put, Muslim and Christian movements have flourished in modern Nigeria because their institutions and doctrines are consistently embedded in the structures of society, shaping social relations and the configuration of power.

Given the decisive impact of these two world religious currents on the diverse communities in the Nigerian region, it is useful to draw on landmark theoretical analyses that explain the conversion of local communities in the region

from indigenous religions to Christianity and Islam.⁴ For more than four decades, anthropologists Robin Horton and John Peel's intellectualist paradigm has shaped the theoretical debate on this conversion process.⁵ Focusing on the cosmological rationale for traditional West African religions to "explain, predict and control" the challenges that confront local people, Horton argues that the processes of conversion from indigenous religions to Christianity must be articulated in a specific nineteenth-century context of rapid social and political change.⁶ Preoccupied with parochial conditions in isolated communities before the complex transformation of the nineteenth century, Horton contends that local deities that underscore *microcosmic* cosmologies essentially dominated the everyday world of local people in small-scale locales. As West African communities took on the more complicated social, political, and economic conditions at the intersection of local, regional, and global forces in a tumultuous nineteenth century, prevailing local cosmologies shifted from their small-scale (microcosmic) preoccupation to large-scale, *macrocosmic* framework that could explain the rapidly changing conditions of the time. In short, Horton stresses that age-old West African cosmologies expanded their scope to accommodate the more complicated regional and global forces unfolding in the region in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, this shift in focus encouraged the macrocosmic worship of the "cult of the Supreme Being,"⁷ opening the door to the monotheistic Christian faith evangelical missionaries introduced along with other far-reaching Western social, economic, and political transformations starting in the early 1800s. While these shifts in religious practice were often characterized as conversion from indigenous religions to Christianity by the turn of the twentieth century, Horton contends that this phenomenon reflected trends that were already in motion in much of the nineteenth century.⁸

In the case of the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, Peel argues that the new emphasis on the "cult of the Supreme Being" was crucial in the conversion experience of Yoruba communities from their indigenous religion to Christianity starting in the second half of the nineteenth century. This complicated process of conversion provided a new narrative that shaped the way the Yoruba embraced the promise of a better future following the cataclysmic upheavals from prolonged regional warfare in much of the nineteenth century. This dialogue that integrated indigenous cosmology to Christianity ultimately explains the remarkable success of the Yoruba Christian church movement, Aladura, during the period of colonial rule in the first half of the twentieth century.⁹

Drawing from Southern African case studies to complicate Horton and Peel's intellectualist theory, historian Terence Ranger argued that the macrocosmic

framework already was prevalent in indigenous cosmologies by the time they came into contact with mission Christianity in the mid-1800s, and that the concept of a Supreme Being subsequently reified in world religions was, in many instances, reflected in microcosmic conditions.¹⁰ For Ranger, indigenous religious systems had long possessed adaptive cosmological qualities to explain larger-scale regional transformations. Consequently, the Christian missionary impact that accompanied Western-induced social, political, and economic conditions should not be seen as the only radical development that expanded the scope of indigenous African cosmologies. While Ranger agrees that the nineteenth century was a critical turning point in African history, he asserts that the radical shifts from a microcosmic to macrocosmic framework starting in the nineteenth century cannot fully explain the conversion of Africans from indigenous religions to Christianity. Ranger concludes that “much of the continuing history of religion in Southern Africa, whether of Christianity or of African religion, lies in the working out of this dialectic between the local and the central.”¹¹ Thus the new Christian doctrines that were embedded in indigenous cosmologies to articulate the rapidly changing social conditions in the early years of colonial rule were following trends that had been established in earlier moments of major transformations in the region. Despite this revision of a paradigm that underscores the integration of mission Christianity to African cosmologies in the context of the rapid social transformation at the turn of the twentieth century, Ranger’s analysis still falls within the framework of Horton and Peel’s intellectualist imperative in the conversion of Africans from indigenous religions to world religions.

In this context, with the imposition of colonial rule in Southern Nigeria, mission Christianity and its trappings of modern education provided appealing religious explanations in an increasingly novel world. The appeal of Christianity, from this perspective, was not simply in its emphasis on the transcendent “macrocosm,” but rather in its relation to and ability to “explain, control, and predict” the dynamic conditions of the time. Indigenous religions, as Jack Goody reminds us, have serious limitations in the modern world because of their inability to generate requisite modern institutions, professional skills and technical expertise essential to navigate the major social, economic, and political developments of the twentieth century—attributes that world religions, especially mission Christianity, possess in abundance because of their long history of transregional networks, scientific engagement, professionalization, and extensive traditions in literacy.¹² Incorporated into indigenous cosmologies, Christianity and Islam provided frameworks for large-scale modes of identity as well as instruments for an “intellectualist paradigm” that reflects the rapidly chang-

ing conditions that were becoming prevalent starting in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹³ “The changing social environment in which conversion so often unfolds is not simply a product of material forces,” Robert Hefner perceptively notes; it also reflects a “sense of self-worth and community. . . . [The] problem of dignity and self-identity in a pluralized and politically imbalanced world lies at the heart of many conversion histories.”¹⁴ This was the dynamic social, political, and economic context in which the world religions—especially Christianity—flourished in various Nigerian communities immediately after the imposition of colonial rule.

Given this dynamic process in the transformation of Nigerian communities since the nineteenth century, my methodological emphasis is at the intersection of historical, political, and sociological analyses. Focusing on the enduring structures of precolonial Nigerian communities, I will emphasize the *longue durée* of Muslim and Christian movements¹⁵ in the making of Nigeria, analyzing how the historical evolution of three major Nigerian geocultural regions—notably the Hausa-Fulani Muslim North, the non-Muslim Middle Belt, and the Yoruba Muslim-Christian crossroads of the southwest—have consistently intersected since the nineteenth century to complicate the formation of the Nigerian state and society.

Following Peel’s contention that precolonial West African political and social relations are shaped by hierarchies of communities,¹⁶ I contend that the Islamic reformism of the Sokoto Jihad established a precolonial state-society system that presided over the allocation of resources such as tributes, taxes, and slaves, and controlled trade routes and markets in a vast and heterogeneous region that included Hausa-Fulani Muslims and adherents of indigenous religions (the so-called pagan tribes of Northern Nigeria). Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, the dominant power of Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers was complicated by the advent of mission Christianity in the southern fringe of the Sokoto Caliphate along the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue. With the growing influence of mission Christianity by the turn of the twentieth century, non-Muslim communities some of whom had been brought under the suzerainty of the Sokoto Caliphate—especially new converts to Christianity—made use of Christianity’s universal doctrines to challenge the dominance of Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers and assert their autonomy under colonial rule. In this intense political environment, conversion from indigenous religions to Christianity by missionary societies was far from a simple religious act; Christian conversion became a crucial medium of collective action against Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers. Nevertheless, since the Sokoto Caliphate provided the framework on which the British colonial system of indirect rule

was constructed, Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers consolidated their power base under British rule during the first half of the twentieth century.

This process in which Muslim and Christian structures were integral to state-society formation encouraged the development of ethno-national identities in Nigeria's emergent geocultural regions. In the Hausa region that served as the epicenter for Britain's Northern Nigerian Protectorate, Fulani Muslim reformism of the Sokoto Caliphate effectively appropriated the dominant Hausa culture and language as the essential structural framework for Hausa-Fulani ethno-religious identity. This large-scale ethno-national identity was instrumental in the mobilization of Hausa-Fulani Muslim consciousness in colonial Nigeria after the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate by the British in 1903. As this process of modern Nigerian state-making unfolded under British colonial rule, Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers consolidated their control over their non-Muslim neighbors as the "pagan"—and consequently the Christian—other throughout the region. While British colonial authorities traced Hausa-Fulani Muslim hegemony to its precolonial status as natural ruler of "backward pagan" vassals, especially those in the southern boundaries of the Sokoto Caliphate, British colonial policy inadvertently encouraged the formation of a new regional sociopolitical identity—Middle Belt regional identity—by the late colonial period.¹⁷ Drawing on highly subjective local and regional narratives and mythologies¹⁸ that sought to legitimate this emergent Middle Belt regional identity in contradistinction to Hausa-Fulani Muslim identity, mission Christianity's modern institutions and doctrines emerged as a formidable medium of "infrapolitics" for non-Muslim communities to resist Hausa-Fulani Muslim hegemony throughout the region.¹⁹ However, since the British colonial system of indirect rule was grafted on the prevailing Hausa-Fulani emirate system, British rule inevitably intensified the structural imbalance between Hausa-Fulani emirates and the non-Muslim communities of the region. This dynamic system that continues to shape Nigeria's geopolitics even to this day is deeply rooted in the enduring structures of Northern Nigeria's fragmented society going back to precolonial times. This political arrangement was predicated on a problematic tributary system that depended on slave raiding and other forms of primitive extraction in the precolonial caliphate era. As Moses Ochonu deftly analyzed, this colonial arrangement was, in part, sustained by highly subjective British ethnographic studies that affirmed the claims of Hausa-Fulani Muslims as natural rulers of their "pagan" neighbors. These British imperial studies were replete with imagined social, habitual, and physical attributes that rationalized the natural order of things under a superior Hausa-Fulani Muslim "race."²⁰

In the Yoruba region, Peel has written convincingly about the transformative role of Yoruba CMS missionaries and early converts—to articulate a pan-Yoruba ethno-national consciousness following the protracted social upheaval from the Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century.²¹ This emergent ethno-national identity, shaped profoundly by mission Christianity by the end of the nineteenth century, was a critical precursor for Yoruba sociocultural and political renewal under colonial rule in southwestern Nigeria. As this pan-Yoruba consciousness emerged, the first generation of Yoruba-educated Christians embarked on a discourse of modern Christian civilization as a counternarrative to the prolonged turbulence that consumed much of the Yoruba region in the nineteenth century.²² Derived from contested histories and mythologies,²³ this complicated precolonial and colonial process profoundly shaped the meaning of power and identity for Yoruba communities within the wider context of modern Nigerian state-society formation.

Following decolonization after World War II and the attainment of Nigerian independence in 1960, these religious structures were essential to the mobilization of collective action by ethno-regional political elites in a rapidly shifting context. With a weak nation-state derived from the imposition of colonial rule, neopatrimonial regimes embraced patronage-clientage networks structured on communal relations as the framework for the distribution of scarce resources.²⁴ Again, this encouraged the recasting of ethno-religious identity—along with other critical modes of communal identity. Amid political uncertainty, insecurity, and instability, Muslim and Christian structures consistently retained prominence from decolonization in the 1950s to the country's civil-democratic government at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Focusing on more than two centuries of detailed historical analysis, I will show how religious forces—especially the dominant force of Islam and Christianity—profoundly shaped the formation of the modern Nigerian state and society since the turbulent nineteenth century. The extensive social science scholarship on Nigeria surprisingly has ignored a methodological approach that focuses on the entangled histories of Islam and Christianity as a pathway for analyzing the making of Nigeria. In this book, I seek to deeply analyze the significant impact of the history of Islam and Christianity on the formation of the modern Nigerian state and society.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section analyzes the impact of Islam and Christianity on three major Nigerian regions where the two world religions consistently intersect to shape the evolution of modern Nigeria from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first century; these three intersecting regions are the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri Muslim North (the region dominated

by the Sokoto Caliphate), the traditionally non-Muslim Middle Belt region (a religious and culturally distinct section of Britain's Northern Nigerian Protectorate in contemporary central and northeastern Nigeria), and the Yoruba Muslim-Christian crossroads in the southwest region of Britain's Southern Provinces. The second section provides detailed analyses of how the recurring crisis of sharia (Islamic law) in postcolonial Nigeria essentially reflects the structural imbalance between emirate Northern Nigeria on the one hand, and Nigeria's Middle Belt and Southern Regions on the other, going back to the amalgamation of Britain's Northern and Southern colonial provinces in 1914. The fierce contestation between Northern Muslim rulers and Christian elites from other parts of the country over the imposition of expanded sharia in predominantly Northern Muslim states were far from straightforward disagreements between Muslims and Christians on matters of religious beliefs; rather, they were emblematic of deep structural imbalance that evolved with the formation of the modern Nigerian state under colonial rule. The persistent call for expanded sharia by the Northern Muslim political class has consistently intensified this structural imbalance along ethno-religious and ethno-regional lines between the Muslim north and the rest of the country during the post-colonial period.

Specifically, the book explores four major issues of importance to the critical roles of Muslim and Christian movements in the formation of the modern Nigerian state and society: the role of Islamic reformism and mission Christianity in the transformation of precolonial Nigerian communities in a turbulent nineteenth century; Islam, Christianity, and colonial rule in Nigeria's Northern and Southern Provinces; Islam, Christianity, and the political transformation of the Northern and Middle Belt regions during Nigeria's decolonization process; and Islam, Christianity, and the crisis of the postcolonial Nigerian nation-state.

Chapter 1 proceeds on the understanding that the Sokoto Jihad in the Hausa region and the emergence of mission Christianity from Atlantic Yoruba communities in the nineteenth century were pivotal in the transformation of the Nigerian region before the imposition of colonial rule at the turn of the twentieth century. Specifically, the chapter analyzes the institutional and theological basis on which the Sokoto Caliphate was constructed in the nineteenth century. In a similar vein, starting in Nigeria's coastal southwest region, this chapter discusses how mission Christianity set the stage for the social and political transformation of Southern and non-Muslim Northern Nigeria, providing a framework for social change in these regions during the colonial period. This chapter is not a prelude to modern Nigerian history. It deeply examines how

Islam and Christianity were essential in framing social and political relations among Nigeria's diverse communities in the critical decades before the imposition of British colonial rule.

Chapter 2 analyzes the complex interactions between Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers and British colonial rulers from 1903, when the Sokoto Caliphate and Kanem-Bornu Empire came under British rule, to the 1950s, when British authorities started the decolonization process in Nigeria. Using the case-study analytical approach, this chapter examines Hausa-Fulani emirate structures' broad influence on colonial state formation in the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, and how the structures of this Northern Muslim confederacy were woven into the colonial system of indirect rule. The political implications of the interactions among Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers, non-Muslim communities, and British colonial policies are analyzed against the backdrop of evolving power configurations in the Northern Nigerian Protectorate—as these were expressed by Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers and their Muslim subjects, Hausa-Fulani Muslim potentates and their non-Muslim “subordinates,” and Hausa-Fulani Muslim “metropolitan” centers and “tributary” communities.

The outcomes of the interactions between mission Christianity and colonialism in diverse communities in Southern and Northern Nigeria are dissected in chapter 3. Although Christianity, unlike Islam in the Northern emirates, did not play a formal political role in colonial administration, the objectives of Christian missionary groups nevertheless advanced British interests, while paradoxically, challenging the hegemony of Hausa-Fulani emirate rulers in non-Muslim areas of the Northern Provinces, especially in the Middle Belt region. Christian missionaries and colonial administrators worked creatively to deploy complementary doctrines of Western training and enlightenment to advance colonial imperatives. While local structures of society remained resilient—revealing the depth of indigenous cosmologies in various communities—Christian missionary impact was far-reaching. Paradoxical relationships consistently were revealed in the everyday life of local people: they were played out in the objectives of colonial authorities and Christian missionaries, reflecting contending and competing forces between the temporal and the spiritual, between colonial state power and the power of Christianity.²⁵

The main focus of chapter 4 is the importance of Muslim and Christian structures in Nigeria's decolonization process. Analyzing that process in the context of rapid political change after World War II, I explore the critical role of Hausa-Fulani emirate structures in the regionalization of state power in the Northern Nigerian Protectorate. The prevailing Hausa-Fulani Muslim structures were incorporated into hierarchies of power that sustained an emergent

modern political system during decolonization in the 1950s. The social transformations of Southern Nigerian Provinces—and the Middle Belt region—by Christian missions intensified the imbalance between Muslim Northern Nigeria and the rest of the country during this time. Mission Christianity was a decisive factor in the Yoruba Muslim-Christian crossroads of the Southwest, transforming Yoruba ethno-national consciousness during the late colonial period, and it provided ideological and structural frameworks for a Christian identity in non-Muslim communities in the Northern Provinces. In the Middle Belt region and among non-Muslim minorities in Northern emirate society, overarching institutions and ideologies derived from emerging mission Christianity—and subsequently independent African church movements and Pentecostal movements—provided a way for disparate ethnic groups to resist Hausa-Fulani Muslim domination in local, regional, and national politics, from decolonization on.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the nature of Nigeria's Muslim and Christian movements during the struggles by ethno-regional and ethno-religious elites for control of state power in the postcolonial period. The configurations of power at regional and national levels are analyzed in the context of the evolution of Nigeria's ethno-regional, neopatrimonial political system through the policies of various civilian and military governments—from the attainment of independence in 1960 to the outbreak of the sharia crisis that overwhelmed Nigeria during the Fourth Republic at the turn of the twenty-first century. The chapter highlights several features of the relations between Nigeria's problematic nation-state and its deeply divided society, emphasizing how dynamic Muslim and Christian movements repeatedly were reconstructed, reimagined, and redeployed to complicate the contestation for state power by ethno-regional political classes, while seeking to respond to the day-to-day concerns of local communities in an environment of endemic political crisis. The major politico-religious conflicts of the postcolonial period, notably the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the 1978 sharia debate, the controversy over Nigeria's membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the 'Yan tatsine riots in the 1980s, are analyzed in detail in this chapter.

A wave of new Pentecostal movements starting in the 1960s transformed the inner core of Christianity in Nigeria, and the resulting changes are analyzed comprehensively in chapter 6. The significance of this huge religious movement in Nigerian society is examined in the context of the deepening crisis of the postcolonial state, viewed through the prism of growing statism, neopatrimonialism, and neoliberalism in the age of globalization. Consequently, this Pentecostal revolution is analyzed in the context of the complex political, social,

and economic transformations that have engulfed Nigerian society throughout the postcolonial period.

Chapter 7 maps out the history of sharia since the colonial period, including Hausa-Fulani Muslim advocates' imposition of expanded Islamic law in twelve predominantly Northern Muslim states at the turn of the twenty-first century. I do not pretend to present an objective analysis of the major constitutional and political issues unleashed during the highly contentious struggle over expanded sharia during Nigeria's fourth attempt at democratic government (the Fourth Republic); instead, my analysis suggests that Northern Muslim protagonists of expanded Islamic law were, in some ways, effective at starting a discourse around sharia that reflected multiple religious and regional identities, even as the crisis of the state deepened and the structural fault lines between the Muslim North and the rest of the country widened. Conversely, the limitations of expanded sharia during this period of political turbulence reveal the complicated process of the configuration of power in postcolonial Nigerian politics. Overall, this chapter underscores the paradoxical and contradictory role of expanded sharia in Nigeria's religious and ethnically diverse society.

Chapter 8 analyzes the constitutional and political arguments that were advanced and strategies deployed by religious and regional opponents of expanded sharia (Southern, Middle Belt, and Northern-minority Christians). All told, religious, regional, and ethnic structures were critical in shaping alliances to sustain the politics of sharia in the Fourth Republic; and this intense resistance to expanded sharia, especially from the intelligentsia of the predominantly Christian Southern and Middle Belt states, as well as from Northern Christian minorities, further deepened the structural imbalance between Hausa-Fulani Muslim society and other regions of Nigeria.

Chapter 9 underscores the severity of the constitutional and political crisis that consumed Nigeria during the critical years of democratic transition at the beginning of the twenty-first century, further exposing structural divisions between the Northern Muslim hierarchy and the dominant Southern, Middle Belt, and Northern minority Christian elite. Diverse problems that profoundly affected religious and regional relations are evaluated, such as factors that led to widespread support for expanded sharia in the Northern Muslim states; bitter conflicts surrounding sharia in Nigerian politics since decolonization in the 1950s; and the extent to which the political crisis precipitated by the sharia crisis is embedded in Nigeria's religious, regional, and ethnic configurations. Political, social, and economic factors that ultimately undermined the sharia policies of the twelve Northern Muslim states are also examined in this chapter.

These critical issues with important public policy implications prompt pertinent questions that are analyzed throughout this book. To what extent did the expanded sharia policies of the twelve Northern Muslim states pose serious constitutional challenges to the authority of the Nigerian federal government? What are the causes and consequences of religious alliances between Nigeria's ethno-regional political classes and their local constituencies? How might we assess the political roles of Muslim and Christian movements in Nigeria's deeply divided society? What are the implications of enduring political and social roles of these formidable religious movements for the legitimacy of the Nigerian nation-state? How have the complicated relations between Christian and Muslim groups shaped governance and development in contemporary Nigerian society? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the local and national conflict-resolution mechanisms used to address Nigeria's recurring religious crises? In addition to their scholarly objectives, I hope that the analyses in this book will provide some thoughtful reflection for those interested in the important public policy dimensions of the critical role of Christian-Muslim relations in the governance of Nigeria. Overall, this book attempts to address these critical questions through a comprehensive analysis of relations between state and society, and the political struggles between Hausa-Fulani Muslim society and other regions in the country.

The conclusion brings the issues analyzed in the book together. The persistence of religion-based conflicts in Nigeria underscores an urgent need to devise viable constitutional and political mechanisms to mitigate recurring religious violence in Nigeria's Northern and Middle Belt communities. Finally, whether through the dominance of Islam and Christianity in local communities or in the resilience of indigenous religious beliefs, it is clear that religious structures have not only been remarkably adaptive to rapidly shifting social and political conditions in Nigerian society since the turbulent nineteenth century but also, more importantly, have been central to the making of modern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria*; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*.
- 2 Braudel, "Histoires et sciences sociales."
- 3 Davidson, *The African Genius*.
- 4 For landmark anthropological and sociological studies that provided critical theoretical foundation for the study of religion in African societies immediately after independence in the 1960s, see Horton, "African Conversion"; Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion: Part One." Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion: Part Two"; see also Peel, "Religious Change in Yorubaland"; Peel, "Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies." For further anthropological analysis in historical contexts, especially in a southern African experience, see Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*. I would like to thank Deji Ogunnike for sharing his superb knowledge on conversion from indigenous African religions to world religions with me. My brief reference to the extensive scholarly discussions on this subject by leading Africanists has more to do with the limited relevance of this subject to my own interest at the intersection of religion and state making, and does not do justice to Ogunnike's critical insight on these important works.
- 5 It is instructive to note that Robin Horton and John Peel were teaching as young scholars at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria, when they made their theoretical breakthroughs in the 1970s. Their theoretical works were informed by a careful critique of the dominant anthropological scholarship on African indigenous religions in the immediate postwar period. Their interdisciplinary works in the humanities and the social sciences drew on rigorous readings of philosophical, anthropological, sociological, and historical studies, as well as on extensive field research in Southern Nigerian communities.
- 6 Horton, "African Conversion," "On the Rationality of Conversion: Part One," and "On the Rationality of Conversion: Part Two."
- 7 Horton asserts that prior to the rapid social, economic, and political transformations of the nineteenth century, the worship of the "cult of the Supreme Being" had been largely distant to most local people in their simple and isolated milieu in earlier moments in history. See *ibid.*
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Peel, *Aladura*.

- 10 Ranger, "The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History."
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*.
- 13 Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*.
- 14 Hefner, "Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion," 25.
- 15 Braudel, "Histoires et sciences sociales."
- 16 Peel, "Inequality and Action."
- 17 Moses Ochonu's book, *Colonialism by Proxy*, is the most authoritative study on the history of Middle Belt consciousness in the making of modern Northern Nigeria.
- 18 A. D. Smith, "The Nation, Invented, Imagined, and Reconstructed."
- 19 Patricia Williams shows how prominent Christian missions in the Northern Nigerian Provinces, notably the Sudan Interior Mission and the Sudan United Mission, aided the formation of the regional political party that articulated the interest of Christian minorities in the Northern Region in 1950. See Williams, "The State, Religion, and Politics in Nigeria," 269–270; see also Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*. For an insightful comparative example based on resistance politics in the African American experience, see Kelly, *Race Rebels*.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*; see also Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians*.
- 22 Johnson, *History of the Yorubas*.
- 23 For insightful historical and theoretical studies, see Robertson, "Histories and Political Opposition, Ahafo, Ghana"; Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited."
- 24 Joseph, *Democracy and Pre-Bendel Politics in Nigeria*.
- 25 Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

CHAPTER 1: ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE MAKING OF MODERN NIGERIA

- 1 Although these underlying communities had acquired Hausa culture and language over the years, they were not considered "legitimate" Hausa communities by the seven original Hausa city-states. For a detailed account, see M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800–1950*.
- 2 Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 24.
- 3 Umar, "Hausa Traditional Political Culture, Islam, and Democracy," 180.
- 4 Gusau, *A Case for Shari'ah in Nigeria*.
- 5 Umar, "Hausa Traditional Political Culture, Islam, and Democracy."
- 6 Ibid., 182.
- 7 Kendhammer, "Muslim Talking Politics," 61.
- 8 Larémont, *Islamic Law and Politics in Northern Nigeria*, 41–43.
- 9 Lubeck, "Nigeria," 254.
- 10 For detailed discussion, see Hunwick, "The Nineteenth Century Jihad."
- 11 Umar, "Hausa Traditional Political Culture, Islam, and Democracy," 181.