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Tahir Haliru Gwarzo

## Activities of Islamic civic associations in the Northwest of Nigeria: with particular reference to Kano State

### *Abstract*

Islamic civic associations have been in the vanguard for the reclamation and reassertion of people's power in Northern Nigeria. The relationship between the state and Islamic associations is not uni-linear; rather it is characterized by varying currents. Radical Islamic civic associations, for example, can connect and disconnect with the State without necessarily being compromised. Islamic civic associations lack the capacity to raise funds from within, thus they tend to rely on non-institutionalized philanthropy and handouts from the State. These associations do not receive any substantial funding from international or bilateral aid of Arab countries, as is generally thought by outsiders. Islamic civic associations engage in advocacy work to promote legitimate interests of the Islamic world in Northern Nigeria. The range of activities spreads from promoting good governance or girl-child education to women empowerment. These civics in Kano state do not possess the capacity, skills and training for social or general administration. Nevertheless, even community policing has been promoted by associations like Hisbah through its instrumentality in the detection of crimes, and the rule of law has been greatly helped with its formation. However, critics of Hisbah equate it with extra-legal justice, and certainly it has the potential to degenerate into that if care is not taken.

### *Keywords*

Nigeria (Northwest), Kano (State), political Islam, Muslims, relationship social groups – state, religious association, non-governmental organization, aims/programs of institutions/associations, self-help (development policy), Islamic law, women, colonial policy

## Introduction

A culture of authoritarianism, occasioned by an authoritarian pattern of state rule in Nigeria, has produced a variety of regimes to which many Islamic civil society groups have equally

responded. Some responses have been cooperative or collaborative even consensual, while others have been conflictual. The nature of state deployment (or withholding) of resources to either the Islamic civil society associations or even the generality of the populace may have motivated such a variety of responses. Research on civic associations in Nigeria has largely been focused on those in urban areas (as a result of which these studies are either elitist, publicity seeking, etc.) or restricted to the southern part of the country. Therefore, there is a limited understanding of the rich variety, features and dynamics as well as the problems of civic associations in Kano state in general and of Islamic civic associations in particular.

Islamic civic associations abound in Kano have engaged the state or its representatives in various issues. The following study will answer specific questions, notably, why have the different Islamic civic associations been in conflict with the State? What has been the nature and form of these encounters or challenges? How have the different civic associations addressed social, economic and political issues in the community? In addition, the study provides empirical data upon which the various undercurrents in the relationship State-/ Civic associations (Islamic) can be measured. As this is the first empirical investigation into this subject, it provides baseline data for subsequent studies in this field.

## On the history of Islamic associations in northern Nigeria

The British colonial empire viewed Northern Nigeria as belonging to peculiar circumstances (cf. Sulaiman 2001: 1). The term reflected a profound sense of consternation and frustration felt by the colonial power in its policies towards the Shariah Islamic law in Northern Nigeria. The colonial power had to contend with two realities. First, nowhere in the non-Arabic world was Shariah more extensively applied than in Northern Nigeria. Second, despite sixty years of colonial administration and in contrast to the general expectation that the process of modernization would definitely and conclusively seal the fate of Shariah, forcing it to wither away, there prevailed everywhere in Northern Nigeria, throughout the colonial and post-colonial era, a zeal for the restoration of the Shariah to its full extent. Beside Egypt, Nigeria has the largest concentration of Muslims on the African continent, even in the Arab world.

On attainment of political independence, Nigeria was economically marginalized. In part, this was due to the fact that colonialism had created a rent-seeking elite of consumption rather than an elite of productivity.

“The post-colonial Nigerian elite was more adept at making money than creating wealth ... the Nigerian elite had learnt the techniques of circulating money without a talent for creating new wealth. The colonial impact in Nigeria had generated urbanization without industrialization, had fostered western consumption patterns without western productive techniques, had cultivated among Nigerians western tastes with-

out western skills, had initiated secularization without the scientific spirit.” (Mazrui 2001: 4)

While Nigeria as a whole was on the perimeter of the world economy, Northern Nigeria formed a periphery within that perimeter being even less developed with regards to economy, infrastructure, and formal education. Northern Nigerians rejected being economically marginal, but also insisted on their cultural authenticity, due partly to Islam and partly to the colonial policy of indirect rule. Through its divide and rule strategy, the colonial government accommodated Islamic law and education in Northern Nigeria, but not in the Southwest which also had a substantial Muslim population.

In order to provide Western education with Islamic content and orientation for Muslim children, Muslim missionary societies emerged in South western Nigeria and were characterized by an active participation of women.

“Each missionary society had a vibrant women wing, which complemented the efforts of the men morally and financially. The women paid attention to tarbiyah (upbringing of children), fund-raising activities ... some enlightened ones among the women even engaged in talks over the radio on topical issues. The schools established by Muslim missions were open to both boys and girls.” (Okunnu 2001: 3)

The same did not apply to Northern Nigeria where, in general, girls and women were denied access to both Western and Islamic education. Thus, half of the population of the Muslim Ummah (community) remained in a state of ignorance, most vulnerable to poverty and oppression, and consigned to the fringes of life. This was condoned by the generality of *ulama* (Islamic religious and legal experts), despite statements by the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholar and founder of the Sokoto caliphate, Usman bin Fodio, who had advocated the (religious) education of women.<sup>1</sup>

Secular education became established with the advent of colonial rule in Nigeria. The initial opposition by Muslims to the secular educational system gradually declined even in Northern Nigeria, with the opening of more schools, including those to girls. An organization called Muslim Students Society (MSS) was founded in Lagos in 1954 to act as an insulator to Muslim adolescents from what was perceived as the negative aspects of secular education, especially an alleged decay in morale. At the same time, the MSS was to counter the Scripture Union (SU), a Christian organization and in addition to stop what was seen as the indoctrination of Muslim

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1 In his *Nur-Al-Bab*, Usman bin Fodio stated: ‘Most of our educated men leave their wives, their daughters and their captives morally abandoned like beasts, without teaching them what Allah prescribes should be taught them and without instructing them in the articles of law which concern them. Thus, they leave them ignorant of the rules regarding ablution, prayers, fasting, business dealings and other duties which they have to fulfil and which Allah commands they should be taught.’ (Okunnu 2001: 4). Bin Fodio thus advised: ‘Muslim women, do not listen to the speech of those who are misguided ... they deceive you when they stress obedience to your husband, without telling you of obedience to Allah and his messenger. They seek only their own satisfaction and that is why they impose upon you tasks which the law of Allah and that of the prophet have never especially assigned to you such as, preparation of food, the washing of clothes and other duties which they like to impose upon you, while they neglect to teach you what Allah and the prophet have prescribed for you.’ (ibid.)

children into Christianity by missionaries, especially in the Southwest. During the 1970s a 'hard-core extremist leadership', based in the Northern universities of Zaria, Kano and Sokoto, took control allegedly fuelled by Iran's revolution (Williams / Falola 1995: 178). The MSS membership spread throughout Nigeria and was effective as an organization that rallies Muslims, especially youths. So vibrant was the MSS that in secondary and tertiary institutions it gave impetus to other post-secondary and post-graduate organizations and movements to meet the challenges of the time. In a way the MSS provided the launching pad for the development of modern Islamic civic associations and movements.

### Civil society in the Northwest: an overview

Civic associations in the Northwest of Nigeria manifest a peculiar duality. Civic associations can be located in the traditional or in the modern sphere; some of them straddle both spheres. Associations in the modern sphere are determined and upheld by the modern and universalistic characteristics such as shared interests, occupation, commitment etc. Associations in the traditional sphere are brought into existence and sustained by the communal nature of social cohesion and underpinned by shared particularistic features such as religion, ethnicity, social status, occupation, gender, etc. (See White 1994: 375-390, Young 1994: 45). The colonial and post-colonial states show tendencies to intervene in the regulation and activities of civic associations in both spheres.

There was a clear divide between traditional and modern civic associations in pre-independence Northern Nigeria. One major distinguishing feature of the modern civic associations is that they were led by western educated elites who challenged the colonial administration through advocacy and the raising of political consciousness of the masses. A major initiator in enhancing political consciousness in the then Northern Region of Nigeria was the Kaduna Old Boys Association, formed in 1939. Thus, for example, the late Malam Aminu Kano, then a student at the college, staged an interesting play in Hausa depicting business transaction at a Kano market to entertain the visiting old boys. Colonial authorities viewed the play as being politically inspired, capable of doing more harm than good to the stability of the region (Imam 1989: 162). The play was probably the reason behind shelving the activities of the association for a while by the colonial authority. Aminu Kano was also instrumental in the formation in 1948 of the Northern Teachers Association.

Similarly, the late Malam Sa'adu Zungur who had progressive ideas about the improvement and development of Nigeria in general, and Northern Nigeria in particular, began to organize and later formed in 1940 an association called Zaria Friendly Society. Among other things, the association was to agitate for social reforms in the Northern Region, and to enlighten the Region's people on political issues. Furthermore, members of the Northern educated elite led by Dr. R.A.B. Dikko founded a cultural association in 1948, called *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa*. Later, its

Hausa name gave way to an English name, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) (ibid.: 168). Since the association was not declared a political party, the colonial authorities tactfully reminded the civil servants, who were members of the association, of the provisions stated in the relevant government orders.

In 1945 Abubakar Imam founded a cooperative society called Take-Care of the Pence Society in Zaria. The aim of the association was to teach its members and Northerners in particular, thrift and frugality. The members of the association contributed one shilling monthly. With the collected funds a sort of cooperative shop was operated where members could buy commodities at reasonable prices (ibid.: 189). The history of modern civic associations in the Northern region during the pre-independence period, therefore, is almost analogous to the history of the accomplishments of the Western educated elites of Northern Nigeria. Civic associations were also active and vibrant in the traditional sections. Among them were the traders' associations, as well as village and community associations as well as the powerful kola and groundnut traders associations, for example, the Kano Citizens Trading Association founded by Alhassan Dantata as early as 1912 (Lovejoy 1980). That association provided interest-free credit for younger traders. It should be noted that such associations are primarily commercially oriented.

The 1970s was a period of oil boom and development fervour in Nigeria. In that period the community based organizations (CBOs) and cooperative societies in Northern Nigeria became important conduits to ensure that some of the oil revenues trickled down to the grassroots, though substantial amounts still found their way into private pockets.

The most fundamental changes that impacted on the nature and development of civic associations in the Northwest, and indeed in the whole of Nigeria, took place in the 1980s. It was a decade of increasing intervention by the state into both the traditional and modern spheres of civil society. The Nigerian state, ruled by a military dictator, General Babangida, sought to negotiate with critics and adversaries and to assert its legitimacy by creating and supporting selected civic associations both from the modern and traditional spheres. Thus General Babangida's government supported traditional institutions such as the Association of Traditional Rulers and Women's, the *Jam'iyyar Matan Arewa* (JMA) and the Association of Northern Women and the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS). At the same time, it opposed and even banned associations of workers, Muslim students and religious movements.

The government of General Abacha (1993-1998) further politicized civil societies. In the Northwest, as everywhere in the country, traditional rulers were courted or coerced to support government programs and objectives, especially General Abacha's self-succession programs. An allocation of 5 percent of government's disbursement to local government councils was set-aside for councils of traditional rulers. General Abacha's government took politicization of civil society a step further by cultivating and supporting a number of organizations, which advocated his self-succession under the regime's transition program. At the same time, however, the regime clamped down brutally on associations it found disagreeable, such as the Muslim Brothers of Ibrahim El-Zakzaky and the *Jama'at Tajdidul Islam* of

Abubakar Muhammad Mujahid.

With the return of the country to free elections and the swearing in of a democratically elected president (1999), the country in general is witnessing a proliferation of civic associations of all shades and character. Especially in the Northwest the promulgation of Shariah law led to an increase of Islamic associations.

Today, the states of the Northwest – a zone based on agriculture, characterized by poverty, with Hausa as the majority language and Islam the dominant religion – share common forms of civic associations. These include, for example, religious organizations, which engage in advocacy, social provisioning and literacy work. Non-institutionalized philanthropical and self-help development associations and cooperative groups are the main forms of community-based organizations. Additional features of commonality are the strong involvement of Emirate Councils and other traditional institutions in development issues. The Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) has emerged as a pan-northern Christian association providing health care, socio-psychological and welfare services to the substantial minority of Christians in this zone. The Islamic civic associations apprehend their objectives and activities from within Islam as the culture and traditions of the North, for instance are practised through informal philanthropy, i.e. social provisioning is based on Zakkat in which the wealthy pays to alleviate poverty. In addition the Islamic dictate 'be your brothers keeper' and the responsibility of a wealthy person towards his neighbour etc. are major issues of advocacy of Islamic civic associations. These associations enjoy tremendous legitimacy in civil society and so possess the potential to become agents of social change. Furthermore, after the withdrawal of the state from provisioning and other social services such as health care and education, Islamic associations have succeeded in providing education (western and Islamic) and other social safeguards to the less privileged and socially marginalized. To the poor of the Northwest, therefore, this is a sign of commitment towards alleviating material poverty and poverty of knowledge.

The Northwest also has a variety of modern civic associations, i.e. the cooperative associations commonly referred to as 'Multipurpose Cooperatives' and 'Self-Help Development Associations', which are found both in the rural and urban areas. One of the positive characteristics of these groups is that they do not practice gender segregation; in fact, their activities can hardly be executed successfully without the active participation of their female members. Furthermore, self-help development associations work closely with the state (specially the local government councils) and have strong links with the grassroots. Their activities range from renovation and building of drainages to conflict resolutions and the building of schools and mosques, whereby the state provides the logistics and other implements. The state mobilizes these groups to support its programs, for example immunization programs or the registration of voters.

Other manifestations of modern civic associations are the more formal Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which are mainly supported by western international donor agencies. The majority of these groups focus on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS control and prevention. The success of their engagements is often affected by their poor links

to the communities where they are located. Generally people that are not indigenous to the communities and have little grassroots support run most of these NGOs. To complicate matters, some NGO projects usually take place in a very sensitive area, i.e. reproductive health. As these NGOs are usually regarded as lobbyists for family planning, the community is very suspicious of them. The fact that the leaders of these NGOs are mostly Christians does not simplify matters. A survey of formal and most dominant health NGOs in Kano, Kebbi and Jigawa States supported by western donors reveals that NGOs react to community hostility by simply switching their attention to the non-indigenous population living in the North. This practice takes place despite the fact that the legal wording of grants specifically identifies local communities as the prime beneficiaries (Hashim / Walker 1999: 17). Furthermore, the democratic credentials of the leaders of these NGOs are suspect. In fact, these associations are more of NGIs i.e. Non-Governmental Individuals rather than NGOs, for example, some of these NGOs have it written in their constitution that the office of the president of the organization is for life, and in some others the organization is staffed by relatives or family members. A keen observer would notice that such organizations are run by the same people year-in-and-year-out without any change of leadership of the organization. A fundamental problem faced by western supported NGOs in the Northwest is the community's suspicion of Western precepts and models of development. Many people view the Western model of development as simply an attempt at westernization. Especially Islamic associations tend to mobilize against the forces of globalization and their westernizing influences. Most officials of civic associations in the Northwest work part-time, although holding full-time jobs with either the state or local government. This trend is more pronounced amongst self-help development associations, cooperative groups and old boys associations. Such divisions of loyalty impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of these associations.

Despite the commonalities of civic associations in the Northwest, differences exist between the states. In Kano, Jigawa and Sokoto, for instance, conservative traditions pose great obstacles to civic associations that seek to reach women. This contrasts with the more open states of Katsina and Kaduna. Furthermore, resistance to western donors support is less intense in such states as Kaduna and Birnin Kebbi, probably due to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of those states.

## Resurgence of Islamic reform activities

Since the late 1970s, Northern Nigeria has witnessed a resurgence of Islamic religious movements. This process has culminated in the introduction of the Shariah penal code in 12 Northern Nigerian states since late 1999. Contemporary Islamic religious movements in Nigeria, however, should be seen in the context of Islamic reform activities which galvanized parts of the present day West African sub-region in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries into a series of Jihads. The Jihad, led



by the Islamic scholar Usman Bin Fodio, and supported by a revolutionary vanguard from among the Islamic intelligentsia (in 1804) led to the creation of the Sokoto caliphate, which remains an important point of reference for Nigerian Muslims today.

Up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when British imperialists imposed their rule, the Shariah Islamic law was deeply entrenched as the dominant legal, social and political order in the caliphate which made up a considerable part of today's Northern Nigeria, as well as some neighboring areas. The Shariah came to occupy this position through its efficacy in social transformation and promotion of social justice. When the British conquered their lands at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and imposed their rule, Northern Nigerian Muslims entertained considerable fears about the dangers to which their religion and culture were exposed. This, to a large extent, motivated their resistance and determination to preserve Islam and Shariah.

"The British colonial rulers were fully aware of the religious concerns which motivated resistance, and the extent and level of Muslim convictions in the Sharia and its institutions. They also recognized what serious obstacles these were to their colonial designs, which were not limited to physical conquest but extended to bringing the conquered people under their cultural hegemony. With regards to the Sharia they at first pursued a cautious policy of accommodation, reassuring Muslims of their commitment to preserve Islamic religious institutions. Lord Lugard, the first British high commissioner of northern Nigeria, gave the commitment of the colonial government not to interfere with Islam, and undertook to 'uphold the power of the native courts to deal with native cases according to the law and custom of the country'. British policy was therefore a gradual process of transformation and subjugation. A cardinal aim of this policy was the subordination and secularization of Sharia courts, for which two strategies appear to have been employed. First, ... Sharia courts were expected to gradually imbibe, adopt and assimilate to colonial laws and procedures based on the English law. Through the supervision and tutoring of colonial officers, English law and its legal methods were expected to replace Islamic law in the courts. Secondly, colonial policy aimed to place the administration of the Sharia firmly under the control and supervision of the British colonial courts. The process started cautiously in 1933, and gradually took a more open and determined trend. ... The measures taken undermined the prestige, efficiency and credibility which the Shariah courts hitherto enjoyed. The Alkali courts were debased and demoralized to the extent that at a certain stage many learned and respectable persons avoided being appointed judges. Furthermore colonial policy achieved the total subordination of the Shariah to the appellate and supervisory powers of the British-type courts. Judges of these courts assumed power as the final arbiters on all questions of Islamic law." (Tabiu 2001: 5-6)

Religious movements in the colonial and post-colonial eras have been essentially an outcry against social contradictions arising from political and economic crises in society. According to Chafe (1992), during the colonial period little attention was paid to the activities of religious movements due to, three reasons:

“In the first place, the colonial era disarticulated internal dynamics of social development. Secondly, the failure of the Sokoto caliphate to transform new forms of social relations in the course of the nineteenth century before its conquest by the British colonial aggressors this did create some setback on the fluidity of Islamic reform activities. Thirdly, the colonial policies, largely executed through the same structures created by the Sokoto caliphate, were very apprehensive of the revolutionary character of religious movements, and therefore sought to strategically curtail their influence.” (Chafe 1992: 8)

By religion, history and culture, and on account of holding a set of common aspirations, Muslims in Northern Nigeria form a distinct group. Although in Nigeria individuals claim a variety of concurrent identities, ethnic, religious and regional, for most Northern Nigerian Muslims the Islamic identity is paramount. This is of course in line with the demand of the Islamic faith that believers constitute a single Ummah (community) and which subsumes and stands above all divisions. The assertion of Islamic identity is however more pronounced among Muslims in the Northwest zone of Nigeria, essentially because the religious identity is supported and consolidated by common geographical location, political and cultural background and historical experience.

Islam, and by extension Shariah, is one of the dominant elements which have been woven into the Northwest's distinct identity. The British colonial government took the decision in the 1950s to introduce the federal system as a solution to the problem of co-existence among the different entities that made up Nigeria. This was necessary to avoid conflicts and frictions by allowing sufficient autonomy to the constituent parts to pursue their various local interests and peculiarities. For Muslims in the Northwest zone of Nigeria sustaining the Islamic cultural identity was an important reason for choosing federalism. The opportunity to organize their affairs in accordance with the teachings of the Shariah was at the forefront of considerations for subscribing to federalism. According to Professor Tabiu, for two reasons the Shariah occupies a prime position as a collective concern of Nigerian Muslims.

“The first is the well-known fact that implementing the Shariah to realize its inherent benefits is the dominant aspiration of all true believers. Described as ‘the core and kernel of Islam’, the Shariah is at one and the same time a legal system, code of ethics, a symbol of national identity and a unifying ideal. [It is] offering guidance to humanity in all aspects of life, embodying rules of personal ethics and morality, a scheme of political organization, a program of social justice and guidelines for spiritual advancement. In its various roles, the Sharia occupies a central position in Muslim life, religion and culture. The second reason is the important place that the Shariah occupies in the Nigerian Muslims historical experience.” (Tabiu 2001: 4)

Northwestern Nigerian Muslims and indeed Nigerian Muslims as a whole have never overtly or covertly accepted the triumph of colonial policy in undermining the Shariah and subordinating its judicial system. The changes introduced at independence in 1960 to replace part of Islamic law were not with the free consent of the Muslim Ummah (community) (in the sense that the Northern political elites who took over power from the colonial rulers did not consult the people before

embarking on such a venture). In all subsequent occasions of drafting or approving a constitution for the country Muslims have voiced their aspirations to see the Shariah being reinstated in the areas where it was displaced. This was the case in the 1977/78 debates that preceded the 1979 and subsequent constitutions. This captures the persistent struggle of Muslims to reverse the deeds of the colonial imperialist policy and to remove restrictions that impede the meaningful administration of the Shariah.

In the post-colonial era, in the late 1970s, Northern Nigeria began to witness the resurgence of Islamic religious movements. By this period internal conditions as well as external events began to influence the growth and proliferation of Islamic reform activities. Internally, political developments between 1978 and 1983 were generating large-scale corruption and political thuggery among elites, while at the same time these conditions were promoting social acrimony and economic emasculation among the lower classes and socially excluded groups. As the process of political and economic crises were deepening internally, the Islamic revolution in Iran introduced a fundamental external impetus on the nature and organizational structure of Islamic reform activities. The success of the Iranian revolution also facilitated an ideological split among leaders of the emerging religious groups. As a result the politically active members of youth wings emerged into a formidable pro-Iranian group.

It is important at this juncture to clarify the fundamental distinction between Islamic religious movements and Islamic civic associations. Islamic religious movements are revolutionary, seeking to establish a new social order articulated in consonance with the provisions of Shariah though on a varying degree of ideological inclination and tactical approach. On the other hand Islamic civic associations engage in social provisioning, advocating good governance and also acting as pressure groups that seek to influence government to carry out certain activities be it social, political or economic. Our focus is on Islamic civic associations.

## Islamic Civic Associations in Kano<sup>2</sup>

Kano derived its name from the ancestor of the Abagayawa (the earliest settler), who migrated from Gaya in search of ironstone and chemical (Booth-Musa 1988). Hausa is the most widely spoken language. The early settlers were traditional animists whose lives were centered on the shrine of Tsumburbura (Zahraddeen 1983). The state's population is predominantly

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2 This part of the article is mainly based on the author's fieldwork since 1998 and forms part of a larger on-going research work. The author conducted a profiling of civil society organizations in Kano state in 1998 while working on the CRD/ICSAG research network. He also was the program officer for the CRD/ICSAG profiling exercise in Nigeria. In 1999/2000, he and Sulaiman Khalid carried out a research on the activities of civil society organizations in the northwest zone of Nigeria. The research was funded by CRD/ICSAG governance project. The author is currently undergoing a doctoral degree in the area of State-Islamic civil society relationship. Most of the current information and interviews in this article came from his field work.

Hausa and Fulani; the Nupe and Kanuri natives occupy distinct tracts of the old city. Yorubas and Igbos are many in the state. The Lebanese and Arab communities have been more easily assimilated into the culture of the Kanawa because of their affinity in trade and Islamic background. The state was first created under this name on 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1967, when Nigeria assumed the 12 state divisions. In terms of its administrative structure the state has 44 local government areas with Kano as the capital. Its administrative machinery revolves around the executive, the legislature, the local government councils and the traditional administration. The traditional authority is executed by the Emirate council with the Emir as its president. The role of the council includes: harmonizing the activities of the local government councils through discussions of problems of mutual concern, to determine religious matters and customary laws, make representation and express opinions to government and other organizations on matters of importance to the Emirate or brought to the Emirate council by government or other organizations (Ibid: 5).

In their everyday life Muslims in Kano State are getting guidance on various aspects of their lives from Islamic groups and associations or from Islamic leaders. The issues that are selected for discussions, those that are condemned or ignored and the contents of the suggestions or interventions are always based on religious precepts and beliefs. The Kano state has a predominance of Islamic civic associations. The main focus of Islamic civic associations in the state is that of securing for their members the right to freedom of worship and expression, their right to decent lives and their political and social empowerment.

One major distinguishing feature of Islamic civic associations in the state is the divide between orthodox and pro-state, and radical and anti-state factions. However, there are a few associations that straddle the two extremes.

Groups such as the Council of Ulama, Fityanul Islam, Islamic Foundation, Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya brotherhoods are traditional and pro-state. The Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya Tariqas are the only Sufi brotherhoods of importance in Kano. Their development and struggles against each other had a decisive influence on the formation of Islam in Nigeria. Whereas the Qadiriyya Tariqa had been present in Hausaland for several centuries and had played an important role in the Jihad of 1804-08, the Tijjaniyya Tariqa was introduced only in the nineteenth century (Loimeier 1997: 19). The Tariqa's activities were mainly aimed at the revitalization (*tajdid*) of the religion of Islam. This quest for the *tajdid* influenced the development of Islamic society in Hausaland since Islam reached this region.

Through the Jihad, the Sufi brotherhood of the Qadiriyya was established as the quasi-official Tariqa of the Sokoto empire (Brenner 1988: 47). All leaders of the Jihad were followers of the Qadiriyya, Abdul Qadir Jailani was their "patron saint" and till today all followers of the Qadiriyya see Jailani as their "patron saint". The most renowned scholar and leader of the Qadiriyya in Nigeria, from the 1950s up to his death in late 1990s, was Nasiru Kabara, whose house is directly opposite the Emir's palace in Kano. Qaribullah succeeded his father as the head of the Qadiriyya Tariqa. In the course of the Sokoto Jihad settlement the Qadiriyya Tariqa did not assume the function as the official ideology center for the empire

(Ibid: 44).

Al-Hajj Umar Tal Al-Futi introduced the Tijjaniyya Tariqa into the present day Northern Nigeria. On his way back from the Hajj (pilgrimage) he stayed in Borno and in Sokoto from 1831/32 to 1838 (Robinson 1985: 97). The Qadiriyya Tariqa lost its spiritual monopoly with the introduction of the Tijjaniyya Tariqa. It was however the weakening of the central authority, as a result of the conquest of the Sokoto Empire by the British, that led to the expansion of the Tijjaniyya Tariqa. The British in Nigeria originally mistrusted the Tijanis on account of their collaboration with the Sultan of Sokoto (Attahiru). Because of their bad experiences with the Mahdi in the Sudan the British in the early twentieth century were suspicious, as the work of Garba (1983) shows, and saw "mahdist" machinations behind almost every religious movement which resisted them or did not collaborate with them openly. Rufai in his work stated that out of the twelve Emirs from the former Sokoto empire imprisoned by the British after 1903 in Lokoja, six were affiliated with the Tijjaniyya Tariqa, only one with the Qadiriyya, another with the Mahdiyya, whereas four were not affiliated with any Sufi brotherhood (Rufai 1986: 155).

The growing influence and acceptance of the Tijjaniyya Tariqa can be understood within the context of the internal development of Kano during that period. Many religious scholars condemned the new habits practised after the British conquest, for instance increasing consumption of alcohol and the use of the English language as a means of communication. All these innovations were regarded as signs of an increasing westernization of the young, not to mention the new institutions of education and administration where a new generation of Malaman Gwamnati (Islamic scholars that tow the official line) clerks were being raised (Anwar 1989: 29).

Until his death, Ibrahim Inyas was the leader of the Tijjaniyya Tariqa in Nigeria though he himself was a Senegalese. Since then no scholar in Nigeria has achieved such an uncontested authority as a leader of the whole Tariqa in Nigeria. A multitude of locally competing networks emerged after the death of Inyas. The centers of power presently within the Tijjaniyya are grouped essentially around the following: In Kano, the scholar-trader Isyaku Rabi'u is the leader, though some factions dispute his claim. Besides him, there is also Khalifa Ismaila Ibrahim. Outside of Kano, in Kaduna there is Dahiru Bauchi who originally was based in Bauchi, but the Tijjaniyya members persuaded him to move to Kaduna in order to counter the influence of the late spiritual leader of the Izala movement, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi. Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi from time to time now takes up residence in Kano, most probably to also counter the teachings of another anti-Tariqa Islamic scholar, Dr Ahmad Ibrahim Bamba, whose public teachings have gained tremendous acceptance in Kano in the past nine years. In Maiduguri, there is a network under the leadership of Ibrahim Salih and Al-Miskin. The breakup of the Tijjaniyya Tariqa since the late 1960s into numerous competing networks on the one hand and the death of Kabara with the subsequent imposition of his young son over older scholars as the Khalifa (heir) of the Qadiriyya has thrown the two Tariqas into a serious crisis. This crisis was made worst with the formation of the Izala movement.

The Jama'at Izalatil Bid'a Waiqamatus Sunnah (movement against negative innovations and for orthodoxy) was formed by the late Ismaila Idris and Bala Sirajo in 1978 in Jos, Plateau state. It was the first time that an organization of this magnitude had been formed without the assistance of popular scholars in the country or among the traditional rulers (Gumi 1992: 158). The Izala (as it popularly came to be known) was from its formation an anti-Tariqa group with its aim the revitalization (*tajdid*) of the religion of Islam and its membership made up mainly of youths wanting to unite Muslims, in accordance with the true teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Izala's influence spread rapidly especially in Northern Nigeria. As a consequence of its teachings people began to question the thoughts of the Tariqa leaders. What is more, youths were rebelling against the religious positions of their parents, a situation which continues till today. Prominent amongst its leaders are: Ismaila Idris (Jos, now late), Mallam Bawa Maishinkafa (Jos, now late), Mallam Abdullahi Pakistan (Kano State) and Mallam Yakubu Musa Hassan (Katsina State).

The pro-state groups have a close and cordial relationship with the government which involves these associations or their leaders in almost all of its activities and programs. Furthermore the State makes use of these associations to legitimize its programs or projects and in times of social crises or ethnic/religious conflicts by getting the leaders to speak to the people on the issues involved through the mass media and other communal forums or during the Friday sermons in mosques. In addition the government involves the leaders of the traditional religious associations in almost all its committees set up and most especially those on questions of Hajj (pilgrimage), the Zakkat and the Shariah. These religious leaders enjoy perquisites from being members of these state committees by way of financial benefits, free trip to Makkah during pilgrimage with allowances paid in hard currency. In addition they enjoy state largesse during the religious festivities and Ramadan (fasting) periods. The state distributes to religious leaders (especially those that have a cordial relationship with the state or state actors) rams, rice, milk, sugar and other beverages. It is little wonder that these leaders are referred to in the community as 'Malaman Gwamnati' i.e. government spokesmen. During military regimes these religious leaders (especially during Babangida's regime 1985-93) received gifts of Peugeot 505 new cars and cash, all in an attempt to build legitimacy especially at the peak of the regime's endless transition program. The relationship between these associations and the State is therefore one of cooperation and cooptation. These associations hardly engage in the developmental projects in the community.

The other side of the dualism of Islamic civic association is the radical and anti-state associations. Within this group there are variations in their relationship to the State. Often the issue at stake is what determines their method of engagement. For instance, groups such as the Muslim Brothers (Shi'a) and Jama'at Tajdidul Islam tend to always have conflictual relations with the State. They question the legitimacy of the government to the extent of claiming not to recognize it. However, associations like Sabilur Rashad Islamic Association, and Usman Bin Affan Islamic Association for instance, cooperate with the government and accept their offers of assistance or from State institutions/agencies (teaching materials or renovation of

classes in their schools), while on the other hand being critical over what they see as non-implementation of the Shariah or the seeming reluctance of the State to vigorously enforce the Shariah dogma. These associations intervene and establish their programs or projects from the perspective of Islam. Most associations in this category are involved in developmental programs or intervene in social fields ranging from providing assistance to the needy and disadvantaged groups, such as widows and orphans. They visit the sick in hospitals most especially hospitals with indigenous patients, rehabilitation centers and prisons, the aim being to provide comfort to the sick and inmates who have no relatives in the city. Groups that are very prominent in this aspect include Al-Birr, Sabilur Rashad, and Usman Bin Affan Islamic Trust.

It is in the area of education where the visibility and vibrancy of these associations are most felt. Groups such as Da'awah, Sabilur Rashad Islamic Center, Usman Bin Affan Trust, Bilal Islamic Center, Masjid Sahaba, Hudaibiyya Islamic Center and Muslim Sisters Organization exhibit more of the features of secular modes in their structure, orientation and activities (building of schools for women, literacy work and advocacy. They support girl-child education, organize seminars on scientific discoveries as they affect or relate to Islam e.g. cloning of human beings).

Another area of conflict between most groups and the government is where the fulcrum should be. Advocacy is really touchy as far as the State is concerned especially on questions over good governance and accountability, the clamor for Shariah dogma or the issues of secularism and human rights abuses. Usman Bin Affan, for instance, is the most consistent and articulate group in calling for good governance, transparency and the accountability by public officers. The leader of the association Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam advocates for fair representation in appointment into political offices and for elected representatives to ensure good governance and transparency in their official duties. These groups advocated for the electorates in the 2003 election, to vote only for candidates that would implement the Shariah fully and they also threatened to sponsor candidates to contest for political office in the 2003 elections. Though no religious group had sponsored any candidate during the last elections, it is interesting to note that the person who was elected as governor of Kano, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, is a person who enjoys tremendous support from Islamic groups. He is known to belong to a number of Islamic organizations such as Hudaibiyya Islamic foundation where he is on the board of directors and is a patron of both the Muslim Students Society (MSS) of Nigeria and of the Muslim Corpers Association of Nigeria, the Kano branch. In addition, he is also on the governing board of the National Islamic Center, Zaria, whose governor is on the board of trustees of the Islamic Development Network of Nigeria. Islamic groups have therefore played a major role in the past elections especially in the gubernatorial and presidential elections where they overtly campaigned for the candidates they supported and also acted as pooling agents for their candidates. Members of the Hisbah (see below) overlooked and escorted the ballot boxes right up to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices to ensure that they were not tampered with. The radical

Islamic groups demonstrated their newfound engagement in political activities by arguing that governance of the society should not be left to be destroyed by irreligious and morally bankrupt politicians and bad governance. These groups also attack secularism and what they say as the “satanic” character of the State. These and similar methods of advocacies are what bring the State and these associations into conflicts. In the past, these disparities took on violent traits resulting in the State resorting to using violence to suppress these groups and run them underground. The Abacha regime for instance hunted and killed many of the members of Jama’at Tajdid group. The leader of the Muslim Brothers Ibrahim El-Zakzaky and some of his followers were incarcerated only to regain their freedom after the death of Abacha in 1998.

The radical Islamic groups also advocate girl-child education and women empowerment (through education). These associations have made a major breakthrough in women's education through training and encouraging women preachers and teachers to become acquainted with Islamic knowledge and the translation of the Qur’an. It is interesting to note that the State, in this instance, is supportive of the efforts of these associations in those areas, while the traditional religious groups, the conservative Ulama and a conservative section of the community are against such efforts. Some conservative husbands are known to have divorced their wives for attending such schools.

The radical Islamic associations also play a major role in settling domestic disputes between marriage partners especially as urbanization has disconnected people from their traditional communities. In Kano, a commercial town with a large number of migrants, strong efforts are made in resolving domestic quarrels, especially so if one or both parties are members/followers of these associations. These associations even arrange marriages, whereby interested persons send a letter to the leader of the association stating his/her wish. The leader then announces this to the members, usually during class sessions, and interested candidate(s) are then asked to see the leader for more information. Most of those seeking help tend to be women. This may be owing to the fact that the traditional method of matchmaking is no longer possible as a result of urbanization, and the fact that culturally, women in the society, unlike men, do not have the freedom to mix freely with men or to be very visible.

It is important to acknowledge the fact that most of the radical Islamic associations were formerly linked to the Izala Movement, which was the most vibrant and expanding Islamic religious movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Gumi 1992, Chafe 1992, Sulaiman 1985 and Loimeier 1997). The late Malam Ismaila Idris (an ex-service man), Malam Sidi Ali Sokoto and Malam Abubakar Tureta founded Izala in the city of Jos, in 1978. The Izala movement started its activities initially as an anti-Sufi/anti-Tariqa organization. It advocated a return to the true teachings of Islam and rejected all religious innovations and mysticism, which are the main objectives of the Tariqa/Sufi brotherhoods. During the 1980s, the Izala expanded its Islamic platform, spreading to all the Northern Nigerian cities and towns. The Izala was responsible for securing educational sponsorship for a number of the students that were ex-



pelled from institutions of higher learning, particularly from the Ahmadu Bello University, during the 1978 students demonstrations (Chafe 1992:12).

The Izala pioneered the cause for radical approaches to Islamic scholarship. It puts more emphasis on relevant questions and encourages social analyses with the intention to expose contradictions arising from customary practices, which, more often than not, complicate simple religious modes on social conducts. What is meant here is that the Izala group advocates for a return to true Islamic practices and discourses rather than resorting to mysticism, saint worship, incantations and religious liturgies which the Tariqa/Sufi brotherhoods encourage. Furthermore the Izala leaders accuse the Tariqa leaders of discouraging their followers from asking probing questions and added that the attitude of the Tariqa leaders discourages scholarship. The Izala aims to eradicate religious innovations (*bid'a*), i.e. to do away with all non-orthodox Islamic ways of life by promoting a return to the interpretation based solely on the Qur'an and Sunnah (teachings of the prophet Muhammad). The late austere Saudi Islamic scholar Sheikh Abdulwahab influenced the Izala movement, thus the Tariqa followers call them Wahabiyawa (followers of Abdulwahab). In Nigeria the late Islamic scholar sheikh Abubakar Gumi was Izala's role model and spiritual leader though he was not a member of the group. The main objective of the Izala was and still is to disqualify Sufi scholars operating within the confines of the Tijjaniyya and Qadiriyya brotherhoods and the Muslim Brothers (Shi'ites).

In the early 1990s there was a split within the Izala group between those who went abroad, in particular to the universities of Madinah (Jami'at Islamiyya) and Makkah, and the Izala leaders at home. The bone of the contention was on certain pronouncements or *fatawa*, i.e. legal opinions given by an *alim* (an Islamic scholar) pertaining to Islamic law, which the returnees felt were wrong. They called for revision or abrogation of these fatawa, interpretations and ideas and for those concerned and others who do not share the movement's perceptions excommunication or apostasy (*takfur*). Most important, the returnees are generally more articulate and have a large following amongst the Muslim Ummah. The former and some dissident groups were being forced to accept the schism and therefore left and founded groups such as Usman Bin Affan Islamic Trust, Sabilur Rashad Islamic Center, etc. These groups were more concerned with issues of development of the Muslim Ummah through education, women and men literacy programs, social provisioning, and advocacy for good governance. It should be noted though, that they also engage the Tariqa and Muslim Brothers (Shi'ites) in debates condemning their practices but unlike the Izala group they do not make this their sole objective.

Another important feature of the Islamic civic associations is in the area of security and provision of relief and assistance in the event of disaster or outbreak of disease. Their First Aid Groups (*yan aqaji*) activities were transferred, with the introduction of Shariah, to Hisbah Groups. In the past the Aid Groups generally concerned themselves with giving first aid in times of disaster, assisting potential pilgrims at the airports and in Makkah (some members are sponsored by

the State to Makkah to assist pilgrims), directing traffic and acting as security guards for vehicles during Friday prayers, public lectures or religious gatherings.

The introduction of Shariah in the year 2000 resulted in the formation of Hisbah as it took over all the activities of the Aid Groups and in addition, sought and received an expanded mandate. The guidelines on the arrangement, functions and operations of Hisbah outlined in the mandate of Hisbah, thus:

“to uphold justice and equality, uphold brotherhood of faith, advocate against interest, usury, hoarding and speculations, to encourage deeds of charity, advocate on the importance of marriage institution and to redeem the institution from western influence, preach kindness to animals and to advocate for quest for knowledge.” (Guidelines; 2000:6-9)

With the formation of the Hisbah security and crime emerged as major issues in which these groups attempted to get involved, but to address the question of immoral life styles.

The formation of Hisbah groups came as a result of the introduction of Shariah. It was civil society groups especially religious groups that came together and formed Hisbah groups in communities and local government areas to support and facilitate Shariah implementation (Interview Mallam Rabi'u Afghani, Jan. 2003 and Mallam Rabo Abubakar, Jan. 2003). When the State realized that the initiative had been taken from it, it quickly mobilized, using prominent and traditional *ulama* to call for a unified Hisbah. The State began by setting up a committee, which drew up guidelines for the operation of Hisbah with rules and regulations governing membership, mandate and a modus operandi, etc. The State's aim was to control the proliferation of Hisbah groups, which were functioning in earnest. The criteria that were used by the committee to select members of Hisbah were seen by people, especially by religiously conscious and radical Islamic groups, as an attempt to deny them the right to belong to Hisbah and as an attempt by the State to take control of Hisbah activities. The result of this was the organisation of 'independent' Hisbah by groups that were not recruited by the State selection committee and others who chose not to have anything to do with the State Hisbah, viewing them as organs of the State.

The formation of the 'independent' Hisbah may also be a result of the general suspicion by Islamic civil society members of the State's perceived weak commitment towards Shariah implementation. In the state of Zamfara for instance, there is no 'independent' Hisbah, but just the State Hisbah groups. The main reason for this is that whereas Shariah implementation in Zamfara was controlled by the state, that of Kano was conducted by Islamic civil societies. These 'independent' Hisbah groups in Kano have on several occasions accused the State and the police of not cooperating with them, for instance they contend that whenever they report any anti-social activity to the police, the latter would find one reason or the other so as not to accompany them to make arrest. They also accuse the State of not assisting individual Hisbah officials or members who, in the course of carrying out their duties, get into trouble with either the community or criminal elements. The government Hisbah, on the other hand, they argue, does not encounter these problems. For instance, at the height of the Shariah implementation drive, the government Hisbah organized a raid on brothels and beer parlours in the state with full support from the

police, and even the Deputy Governor of the state went with them. This clearly proved the 'independent' Hisbah's accusations that the State is biased in favour of the 'official' Hisbah groups. There are a number of differences between the two groups of Hisbah.

1. In terms of commitment, the zeal to carry out its activities and vibrancy demonstrated by the 'independent' Hisbah is higher than that of the government Hisbah.
2. In terms of the character of the leadership of the two groups, the government Hisbah is made up mainly of pro-state ulama, ex-public servants, pro-state community leaders and has a female ex-public servant at the apex. By contrast, the 'independent' Hisbah has a leadership that is not pro-state, independent, young and whose means of livelihood is generally in the informal sector.
3. With regard to recruitment and membership procedures, the government Hisbah is more formal and less public, while recruitment into the 'independent' Hisbah is less rigid and more open. In the government Hisbah an allowance is given by the State to its members, as well as for the maintenance of offices and logistics. Furthermore, it is easier (from the state's point of view) to control and monitor a small organization located at particular areas in the community. Although the 'independent' Hisbah is financially weak, it has offices in thousands of communities within and outside Kano city, which makes it extremely difficult to monitor and coordinate the activities of each community by the headquarters.
4. Another area of difference between the state and the 'independent' Hisbah is in the composition of their board of directors and the management committees. Nine out of the 15 members of the state Hisbah board are government appointees including the chairman, and its management committee members are senior government officials or from the intermediary supporting staff. By contrast, the 'independent' Hisbah has a board and management committee that is made up solely of civil society members.

Vigilante groups (community policing) is another issue that the 'independent' Hisbah groups have problems with. They argue that whereas vigilante groups are encouraged by the state (providing them with torch lights, rain boots for patrol work and police cooperation) to arrest criminals and anti-social elements in the society, the same state prohibits their members to do the same. This they see as a case of double standards. This is why some of the 'independent' Hisbah groups are prepared to make arrest or physically disperse social gatherings that they feel are not Shariah compliant and thus face the consequences thereafter. Two examples will suffice. In March 2003 the chairman of the 'independent' Hisbah committee Mallam Rabo Abubakar threatened to sue the Kano State police command for attempted murder of one of its members in the cause of

carrying out Hisbah activities<sup>3</sup>. In June 2003 dozens of 'independent' Hisbah members stormed the Hotoro police station in Kano in an attempt to free members arrested by the police for alleged trespass and disturbance of public peace. The incident that led to the arrest of the Hisbah members followed the storming of a wedding ceremony in Hotoro by Hisbah members following what they called anti-Shariah practice<sup>4</sup>.

Notwithstanding the differences between the two groups of Hisbah, they however share certain commonalities.

1. They are all guided by the same principle or motto, which is taken from the Qur'an: 'let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong' . (Al-Imran: 104).
2. Both groups adopt similar approaches towards stopping anti-social activities through community policing. Both groups recognize the fact that their roles are not solely in making arrests but to advocate against anti-social behaviours such as drug abuse, illicit sexual behaviour, prostitution etc.
3. They all subscribe to a three-pronged strategy of stopping anti social behaviours. The first step is to use polite advocacy, as a means of stopping anti-social behaviour to the parties involved, for example, drug abusers. Where pleading fails the second strategy is to inform the police. The last option is to physically disperse or arrest the culprits. It should be noted that it is on using this last option that the 'independent' Hisbah gets into trouble with the community, the police (as they attempt to stop a social function) or culprits (drug abusers especially youths). It is also that option that is very contentious between the Hisbah on the one hand and the police and state functionaries on the other. Whereas the police will argue that Hisbah has no mandate to make arrest, the Hisbah argues that after following the process of stopping anti-social activities as outlined above they have the mandate to make arrest or to physically disperse celebrations that are not Shariah compliant. The chairman of the 'independent' Hisbah stated that the police command refuses to make any arrest on the sale of alcohol because according to him "the Kano police command encourages the sale of alcohol by assigning policemen to escort vehicles that transport alcohol into the state".

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<sup>3</sup> *Daily Trust*, March 19, 2003: 23

<sup>4</sup> *The Triumph*, June 5, 2003: 1

4. Both the state Hisbah and the 'independent' Hisbah encourage polygamy and see monogamy as the cause of prostitution. For instance, the guidelines of the formation, functions and operations of Hisbah stated thus:

"... the adherents, especially the women in Hisbah must embark on re-orientation of women on virtues of polygamy ... they should counter the western tendency and propaganda that view polygamy as outdated ... this action, besides being unlawful, it creates extra-marital relations, prostitution and excessive emotional strains and stress on the teeming pious spinsters." (Guidelines 2000: 9)

The above position explains the reason why almost all Islamic civic associations, irrespective of whether they are conservative or radical, are suspicious of any program on reproductive health be it birth-spacing, family planning, women's reproductive rights, maternal health etc. Any undertakings on these issues are thus seen as western/Jewish conspiracy against Islam.

The leaders of Islamic civic associations are distinguished by a number of features

1. Almost all the leaders of the radical groups are university graduates with advanced degrees and in one or two cases holding PhDs (Dr. Abdullahi Jibrin of Sabilur Rashad Islamic Group, Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam and Sheikh Abdulwahab of Usman Bin Affan Islamic Trust, and Dr. Aminudeen Abubakar of Da'awah Group).
2. The leaders of radical Islamic associations access the Internet and have no inhibitions to watching cable stations. It is little wonder that in their sermons on Fridays, during class sessions or during advocacy sessions (public lecture) they tend to be well informed on any area they decide to speak on.
3. Radical Islamic civic associations exhibit the tendency of being multi-focused thereby taking on multiple subjects ranging from education, social provisioning, advocacy, arranging marriages to settling domestic disputes. By contrast, the traditional Islamic associations mainly focus on proselytization within their close ranks, teaching of liturgies and the virtues of saint worship. They also occasionally get involved in conflict resolution (most of the time on the invitation of the State). Tariqa leaders are also involved in giving legitimacy to government programs especially those that tend to be controversial, i.e. the current anti-polio immunization of children (see below).
4. Among radical Islamic associations there are groups that are always in conflict with the State. It is also significant to note that these groups tend to be more concerned with political issues. Muslim Brothers and Jama'at Tajdid fall into this category. Furthermore, their acceptance in the community is weak; their strongest base

is in tertiary institutions and the cosmopolitan areas in the community. In addition Muslim Brothers are seen in the community, as being Shi'a followers while the majority of the Muslim community are Sunni followers. By contrast, the traditional associations, especially the Tariqa brotherhoods, are located in the old city. The Qadiriyya has its headquarters in Gidan Qadiriyya and the Kabara's quarters is close to the Emir's palace. The Tijjaniyya has its headquarters located in the vicinity of their leader's house i.e. Sheikh Isyaku Rabi'u. Since the death of Uba Ringim (leader of Tijjaniyya in Nigeria) in 1999 the group has been embroiled in leadership crises with some factions aligning with Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi and another group supporting Sheikh Isyaku Rabi'u. The Isyaku Rabi'u group has more supporters, perhaps because Isyaku Rabi'u is not only an Islamic scholar, he is also a very wealthy businessman. In addition he is an indigene of Kano and resides in Kano city. On the other hand Dahiru Bauchi is from Bauchi town (Northeast) and resides in Kaduna. The other radical associations, which are generally non-violent, have their headquarters outside the old city where their activities are generally conducted. This is not unconnected to the conflict-ridden relationship between followers of the Tariqa brotherhoods on the one hand and these associations on the other hand. The Tariqa followers see those groups as pretenders and rabble-rousers while the radical group condemns the Tariqa for what it sees as its penchant for saint worshiping and deviations from the teachings of true Islam. Hardly would these groups meet without engaging in violence. The old city is generally more conservative, and radical groups are not given the leverage to operate there. At the same time, many of the youths from the old city are followers of the radical associations. Several young men have had serious disagreements with their parents as a result of their being members of the radical associations or attending their activities.

5. In terms of membership, the traditional associations tend to attract older and conservative people and consequently their leadership is equally made up of old people. By contrast, the radical associations attract the young and middle aged of all classes and statuses but also the progressive elites. Their membership is made up of persons in their late 30s and early 40s.
6. In terms of their internal structure, the traditional associations can hardly be called democratic. They have life-time leaders, and whenever these leaders die their sons are pronounced their heirs. This situation is very common amongst the Tariqa brotherhoods and expectedly provides a major source of friction and factionalization within these groups. The radical associations have fairly democratic practices. Committees run these associations and most of them have board members/advisers, western educated and in some cases with leading government bureaucrats in their ranks.

7. Gender representation: In Kano there are very few women Islamic civic groups. Apart from Muslim Sisters Organization (MSO) one can hardly find another vibrant and visible group that is committed to women issues only. The MSO is an Islamic association that is membership and gender based and was formed about eight years ago. The MSO is a national association with its headquarters in Kano. Committed Islamic women activists run the association whose activities are centered mainly on women's education, advocacy over women issues and social provisioning for disadvantaged women. The Federation of Muslim Women Association (FOMWAN) is a national association of Muslim women with the following aims: provide a forum for Muslim women's views to be expressed at national and state levels, establish a framework for national cooperation and unity among women Islamic associations, educate Muslim women in the teaching of Islam and encourage Muslim women to establish groups for educational purposes (Okunnu 2001: 5). Unlike the MSO, FOMWAN seems to exist only in name (as far as the Kano state is concerned), as it is very difficult to locate its office and officials and much less to assess its impact or activities. However, that some state branches of FOMWAN i.e. Kaduna and that of Kebbi are very vibrant, a reflections of the commitment and hard work of such state leaders. The Ansaruddeen group is an Islamic association of the Yoruba Muslim migrant community in Kano state. The association has a women wing, an appendage of the men's faction. Unlike Hausa Muslims, Yoruba Muslims have no problems with men and women belonging to the same association and even mixing socially. In terms of their activities and willingness to undertake developmental programs, the Ansaruddeen is by far the most successful. It raises its finances from its members residing in as far off places as Europe. It is also one of the oldest Islamic associations in Nigeria. One could therefore say, that it is not rooted in the Kano community. The implication of the above therefore, is, that women's issues such as education, reproductive health and rights, economic and political empowerment and other social issues are left in the hands of the Muslim Sisters Organization, the comatose FOMWAN and a few male dominated radical Islamic associations.

Kano has very few international Islamic NGOs; apart from Al-Muntada Islamiyya and Ahmadiyya. Al-Muntada is an international Islamic NGO with headquarters in London employing both foreigners and Nigerians although a foreigner heads its office in Nigeria. Its Nigerian headquarters is in Kano from where it runs its activities which are mainly concentrated in the Northwest of Nigeria. These activities are limited to *da'awah* (inviting people to Islam), building mosques, Islamic schools and providing social provisions during the month of Ramadan. Al-Muntada employs Nigerian scholars and teachers to run their mosques and schools and the organization has on its payroll some Islamic preachers or *da'iyah* i.e., those who are

engaged in *da'awah*. These preachers are made to fill in claim forms on a monthly basis showing areas and activities executed. The Al-Muntada is viewed with suspicion and distrust by the Tariqa brotherhoods who consider the engagements of Al-Muntada as encouraging Wahabism and promoting a Saudi brand of Islam which, as was said earlier, their organisation opposes. Furthermore, the Tariqa groups accuse Al-Muntada of supporting the radical group's version of Islam especially the Izala groups and their offshoots. It should be noted that Al-Muntada was founded by Saudi nationals studying abroad, and the suspicions of the Tariqa groups may well be true. Ahmadiyya Islamic association is another international NGO with presence in Kano. The group has very few followers because many regard it as being an un-Islamic group, due to the pronouncement of the association that its founder, Ahmad Gulam, is a prophet. To the average Muslim, this statement amounts to apostasy, as the belief amongst mainstream Islam believers is that the prophet Muhammad is the last messenger of God. Notwithstanding this state of affairs, Ahmadiyya runs a hospital (commercial) and is patronized by the Muslim community and also has an excellent secondary school which is recognized as such by both the state and the Muslim community. While Al-Muntada's activities are mainly centered around *da'awah* (proselytization), those of the Ahmadiyya concentrate on the provisions of social services. Furthermore, Al-Muntada's engagements serve both the Kano metropolis and the rural areas while Ahmadiyya's activities are limited to Kano's capital.

## Conclusion

The major characteristic of the social crisis in Kano is the precariousness of life. There is serious pressure on the modes of livelihood, both formal and informal. The breakdown of the social fabric and family bonds is producing a lumpen culture characterized by crime, drug abuses, violence, urban gangs and other similar vices. The conditions created by urbanization and social transformations have created ideal conditions for the proliferation of informal as well as formal Islamic civic associations and their need to provide many survival services, social, economic and medical support that neither the family can nor the state is providing in these times of crises.

This article tried to underline that all Islamic civic associations strive to see and are involved in improving the life of the Muslim Ummah by increasing prosperity and supporting the Shariah being fully implemented in the state, even though having differing interpretations and emphases. For instance the Muslim Brothers would like to see an Iranian model being installed, while the Radical groups would have no problems with politicians who urge the return to the traditional Shariah. The Tariqa groups would prefer their leaders to be in the driving seat for the return to Shariah. This was why when the radical groups forced ex-governor Kwankwaso to declare the implementation of Shariah in Kano, Tariqa leaders condemned it as "Izala Shariah". We should note however that at no time did any group in Kano



state ever criticize the need to return to Shariah. What is at issue is the means and methods of achieving such a state and the precise models. For instance, the Muslim Brothers complain that politicians who are not Islamic scholars cannot bring about Shariah and they support their positions by citing the Sokoto Jihad which was led by the Islamic scholar Usman Bin Fodio.

Furthermore, the article has described the different relationships that Islamic groups have with the state. For the pro-state groups for instance, cooperation or cooptation with the State seems to be their chosen path and their methods of advocacy are always conciliatory. By contrast, within the radical groups some chose to allow the issue to determine their position; they would, for instance, cooperate with the state in the area of educational development, civic duties and other social services but will be against the state when it comes to issues of good governance and transparency, corruption and be scathing in their criticism of the State over non-implementation or luke-warm approach towards Shariah implementation. Other groups such as Muslim Brothers and Jama'at Tajdid have always found cause to be anti-state, and their relationship with the State is characterized by conflict and confrontation. Their form of advocacy is usually combative and their instruments have equally varied, from bloody clashes between, for instance, the State and Muslim Brothers or Jama'at Tajdidul Islam writing advertorials in newspapers/press releases, for instance Hausawa Muslim Forum on the 'Miss World Beauty Pageant'.

All Islamic groups in the state would like to see social changes in the society but the question is: What direction are the changes going to take, and, conversely, who will bring about the Islamic state? It should be noted that despite the differences amongst Islamic groups and their followers no group or their followers has ever stated that it is opposed to living under either an Islamic state or to be governed by the Shariah. This is because one cannot call oneself a Muslim unless one subscribes to the tenets of Shariah which can only be fully implemented in an Islamic state. Therefore, what is debatable amongst Islamic groups is the issue of strategy or method of bringing about the Islamic state and being governed by Shariah.

The desire of the ultra-radical groups such as the Muslim Brothers to see an Iranian type of revolution has led the organization into violent confrontation with the State with the resultant blood shed. Other radical groups such as Izala and their co-travellers are also advocates for an Islamic state but they expect the State or a populist government/leaders to bring about this change. This is demonstrated by these groups agitating and promoting individual politicians whom they see as being pro-Shariah. These groups see the Saudi model as more ideal rather than the Iranian example, probably due to the fact that most of their leaders have studied at universities in Makkah, Madinah, Egypt and Pakistan – all Sunni states. At any rate, these leaders and indeed the majority of the Nigerian Muslim population are also Sunni followers.

On the part of the Tariqa brotherhoods it is really problematic to understand how the Islamic state will crystallize, because for them, neither the Iranian nor the Saudi models are

ideal. First, the Iranian model does not appeal to them simply because the Tariqa followers are Sunni. Secondly, because the Tariqa is pro-state they do not subscribe to the Muslim Brothers method of operation and their anti-state stance. Thirdly, though Tariqa followers are Sunni like the other radical groups and the Saudis, they are at the same time anti-Saudi because of what they call Wahabism and the Saudis support of the radical groups and most importantly the Saudis disagreement over saint worshiping, which is a cardinal principle of Tariqa. Fourthly, the Tariqa's spiritual centers are based in Baghdad (Qadiriyya), Kaolack in Senegal and the Maghreb (Tijjaniyya). These are countries that are not Islamic states or governed by Shariah law. They are secular states and, therefore, the Tariqa brotherhoods tend to be silent as to which model of an Islamic state they are advocating. Their call for an Islamic state is thus always made in a vacuum. In fact at the height of the Shariah discussions and the demands by Islamic civic associations in Kano, the Tariqa leaders were scathing in their criticism of what they call 'Izala Shariah'. What the Tariqa leaders mean is that the Shariah was being interpreted to the understanding of the Izala/radical groups. However the radical Islamic groups were the main force behind the pressure that was exerted on the former governor Kwankwaso to introduce the Shariah to the state.

One could safely conclude that apart from the ultra-radical Muslim Brothers no other group has a clear and articulate position on the direction of these social changes and who is to be the vanguard of the Islamic state projects. Actually only the Muslim Brothers seem to have recognized the fact that it is necessary to take over the state machinery, army, police and judiciary for the Shariah to be fully enforced and that it cannot be implemented on the basis of promises by politicians whose mandates are limited. This may be the reason why only the Muslim Brothers have not come out to support states that have adopted the Shariah. What is more the Muslim Brothers consider the whole Shariah project to be untimely and strategically faulty, especially its hudud (criminal) aspects in those states. (see interview of Zakzaky in *Al-Mizan* 14 Jumada Akhir No. 378: 4 and M. Turi's public lecture at Talatar Mafara, Zamfara State, on 27 August 1999, Ibid: 12). The Muslim Brother's conceptualize the Shariah as an entity i.e. the Shariah is to be implemented in the whole country because what is envisaged is an Islamic revolution in Nigeria, not to be constrained by state boundaries. By contrast, other groups conceive the Shariah being applied only to Muslims in those states that have adopted the Shariah law, and at the same time they advocate it as appropriate to Muslims even in states where it has not been adopted, a notion not given much attention. One could attempt to explain the position of the other Islamic groups as preferring a gradual approach to bring about an Islamic state rather than through a violent revolution. This approach may also explain the other group's understanding and appreciation of the concrete situation or reality of the plurality of the Nigerian nation by recognizing the fact that Nigeria as an Islamic state is not feasible.

Despite the numerous differences among them, Islamic civic associations in Kano share certain commonalities.

1. Most Islamic civic associations suffer from lack of adequate resources. They all tend to rely on handouts from wealthy members or sympathizers and other forms of non-institutionalized philanthropy. Though the radical groups charge tuition fees in their schools and for literacy programs the fees are far too low and the rate of default in payments is very high. This attitude by parents and the community reflects the traditional culture of purporting that Islamic education and its activities/programs should be free or charity work. This impacts negatively on the capacity, sustainability and performance of the associations.
2. Another point of commonality is that of gender representation, or rather the lack of it. Islamic civic associations irrespective of their principles or objectives are completely male dominated associations.
3. All Islamic civic associations see the national elites as disappointments for having failed to provide social welfare and education to the poor, and most important for not being transparent and accountable for their actions. They have become, in their eyes, the lackeys of westernization and secularism whose only achievement is the emasculation and exploitation of the citizens.
4. All Islamic groups tend to avoid discussing health issues such as family planning, safe sex, reproductive rights, abortion, HIV/AIDS and sensitivities on reproductive health beyond the normal sermons against fornication and adultery. The few groups that do discuss reproductive health issues tend to link it up with what they call Jewish or western conspiracy to discourage Muslims from procreation through family planning. Some groups go as far as to discourage people from taking their children to the on-going polio vaccination centers, saying that it is an attempt to render the children impotent.
5. Another area of commonality of Islamic civic associations in Kano concerns their internal democratic structures. The democratic credentials of almost all Islamic civic associations in Kano are suspect.
6. The neglect of the media in communicating with those outside their circles. Apart from the ultra-radical groups which have newspapers (the Muslim Brothers with *Al-Mizan*, the Jama'atul Tajdidul Islam with *At-Tajdid*), no other Islamic association in Kano has a periodical, newsletter or newspaper. Thus their potentials to reach out and extend their advocacies and also to correct the distorted pictures being portrayed of them by their adversaries are minimized.

7. More often than not, the recruiting of members or their socialization by Islamic associations is based on partisan considerations and not on the merits of the issues. The member is more biased towards the association than towards the truth. In a manner of speaking, he is not taught to think freely; rather, he is shackled by biased opinions and viewpoints (this is more pronounced amongst the Tariqa followers). This makes it difficult for him to deal openly with others, particularly those outside his own association or with non-Islamic minded persons because he is not trained to examine issues objectively.
8. In terms of advocacy, Islamic associations tend not to crystallize or prioritize their demands. Most groups think that an immediate, totally perfect and a purified version of Islam is achievable on demand. They confuse the mental belief in the totality of the message of Islam with the gradual application of its teachings in real-life situations.
9. Almost all Islamic civic associations appear to stifle ideological dialogue. This is done on three levels, internally among its members, with other Islamic organizations and finally with non-Islamic groups, religious or secular. This resulted in nurturing utopian and idealistic concepts among its members and allowed theoretical and puritan ideas to remain untested for their practicality. This lack of dialogue produced a static intellectual atmosphere, which did not provide the enrichment needed for maturity within the associations. Concurrently, this stagnant atmosphere generated a lack of understanding among various factions in the society.

We can in summary say that Islamic civil society actors are social agents that provide meaning for the new and difficult conditions in the towns; new forms of bonding, and new social networks to supply comfort and emergency relief to those in distress. The Islamic civil society in Kano is an arena open to a wide range of participants and a broad spectrum of social projects.

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### *Zusammenfassung*

Islamische zivilgesellschaftliche Vereinigungen sind führend bei den Bemühungen um die Wiedergewinnung und -behauptung der Macht des Volkes in Nordnigeria. Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Staat und islamischen Vereinigungen sind vielschichtig; sie sind durch verschiedene Strömungen gekennzeichnet. Radikale islamische zivilgesellschaftliche Vereinigungen können, zum Beispiel, auf einem Feld mit dem Staat zusammenarbeiten und ihn auf einem anderen Feld bekämpfen, ohne sich notwendigerweise zu kompromittieren. Islamische zivilgesellschaftliche Vereinigungen sind nicht in der Lage, sich selbst zu finanzieren, sie sind daher in der Tendenz auf die gelegentlichen, nicht institutionalisierten Zuwendungen von Gönnern und dem Staat angewiesen. Entgegen der gängigen Auffassung Auß entstehender erhalten diese Vereinigungen keine substantielle internationale oder bilaterale Finanzhilfe durch arabische Länder. Islamische zivilgesellschaftliche Vereinigungen setzen sich für die Stärkung legitimer Interessen der islamischen Gläubigen in Nord-Nigeria ein. Die Bandbreite der Aktivitäten reicht von der Stärkung von good governance über die Schulausbildung junger Mädchen bis zur Frauenförderung. Die zivilgesellschaftlichen Vereinigungen im Staat Kano besitzen weder die Mittel noch die Ausbildung für die Ausübung sozialer und allgemeiner Verwaltungsaufgaben. Dennoch engagieren sich Gruppen wie die Hisbah sogar in der kommunalen Polizeiarbeit, indem sie bei der Verbrechensaufklärung mitwirken und damit die Rechtsstaatlichkeit erheblich fördern. Kritiker werfen der Hisbah jedoch Selbstjustiz vor, und sicher gibt es dazu ein Potenzial, wenn die notwendige Aufmerksamkeit ausbleibt.

### *Schlagwörter*

Nigeria (Nordwesten), Kano (Bundesstaat), Politischer Islam, Muslime, Verhältnis gesellschaftliche Gruppen-Staat, Religiöse Vereinigung, Nichtregierungsorganisation, Ziele/Programme von Institutionen/Vereinigungen, Selbsthilfe (Soziale Gruppe), Islamisches Recht, Frauen, Kolonialpolitik

### *Résumé*

Les associations islamiques de la société civile sont à la tête des efforts entrepris pour redonner et asseoir le pouvoir du peuple dans le nord du Nigeria. Les relations entre l'Etat et ces associations islamiques sont complexes ; elles sont marquées par de nombreuses tendances. Les associations islamiques radicales par exemple peuvent coopérer avec l'Etat dans certains domaines et le combattre dans d'autres sans nécessairement se compromettre. Les associations islamiques ne sont pas en mesure de s'autofinancer, elles doivent donc compter de temps à autre sur l'aide non institutionnalisée de bienfaiteurs et de l'Etat. Contre l'opinion courante, ces associations ne reçoivent pas d'aide financière substantielle, internationale ou bilatérale, provenant des pays arabes. Les associations islamiques luttent pour le renforcement des intérêts légitimes des croyants musulmans dans le nord du Nigéria. Le spectre de leurs activités s'étend de la good governance en passant par la formation scolaire des jeunes filles jusqu'au soutien des femmes. Les associations dans l'Etat de Kano n'ont ni les moyens et ni les qualifications pour exercer des tâches administratives courantes et sociales. Cependant des groupes comme les Hisbah s'engagent même dans le travail de la police communale en apportant leur aide à l'élucidation des délits. Ce faisant, ils renforcent considérablement l'Etat de droit. Néanmoins, certains leur reprochent de se faire justice eux-mêmes. Il y a un potentiel réel pour cela qui pourrait prendre le dessus si l'attention nécessaire faisait défaut.

### *Mots-clé*

Nigeria (nord-ouest), Kano (Etat), islam politique, musulmans, relations entre groupes sociaux et Etat, association religieuse, organisation non-gouvernementale, objectifs/programmes d'institutions/d'associations, autoassistance (politique de développement), droit islamique, femmes, politique coloniale

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