

THE JIHADI EXTERNAL INFLUENCE IN NIGERIAN PRE-COLONIAL CONFLUENCE AREA, 1809-1900

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Events with far-reaching consequences made the nineteenth century history of Nigeria quite intriguing. There were struggles for political control or commercial supremacy; Islamic and Christian Missionary movements were common. Some of these events destabilised the erstwhile pre-nineteenth century societies while others effected gradual changes in the people's patterns of life. This study examined one of the events, the jihad, which greatly affected the socio-political history of not only the confluence area but the entire Northern Nigeria. Specific attention was given to the socio-political changes and challenges created by the two Nasarawa and Keffi sub-emirates of Zaria. This study has found out that by 1812 the hegemony of the non-Muslim polities had been overthrown and replaced by Fulani authority. New administrative reforms were introduced in line with the new political dispensation. By this, the Hausa and Fulani state builders swung the pendulum of relationship and planted the seed of ethnic contestation.

KEY WORDS: *Jihadi, Nasarawa, Keffi, Confluence Area, External Influence*

BERKELEY RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS INTERNATIONAL
*Bayero University, Kano, PMB 3011, Kano State, Nigeria. +234 (0) 802 881 6063,
Website: www.berkeleypublications.com*

Introduction

The nineteenth century was quite eventful in Nigerian history because events with far-reaching consequences took place. In Sokoto, Kukawa (Alkalawa) Calabar, Lagos, Confluence area, amongst other towns, there were struggles for political control or commercial supremacy. Trade rivalries, Islamic and Christian Missionary movements were common. Some of the events destabilised the erstwhile pre-nineteenth century societies while others effected gradual changes in the people's patterns of life.¹ Hence this study is devoted to the examination of one of the events, the jihad, which greatly affected the socio-political history of not only the Confluence area but the entire Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century. Specific attention was given to the socio-political changes and challenges created by the two Nasarawa and Keffi sub-emirates of Zaria.

The Concept Jihad

The term 'Jihad' has become complex and controversial for several centuries as Muslim jurists have varying views regarding the meaning. To some it literally means "striving" or determined effort" and in so many contexts it has become synonymous with "fighting". The description of warfare against the enemies of the Muslim community as *Jihad fi Sabid Illah* gave a sense of religiosity to an activity that otherwise might have appeared as no more than tribal warfare endemic in pre-Islamic Arabia. For the jurists, Jihad fits a context of the world divided into Muslim and non-Muslim zones, Dar al-Islam (Abode of Islam) and Dar al-Harb (Abode of War) respectively. One would definitely agree that the Jihad has an explicitly political aim: the establishment of Muslim rule, which in turn has two benefits: it articulates Islam's supersession of other faiths and creates the opportunity for Muslims to create a just political and social order.

In Sub Saharan Africa, the authoritative proponent of militant Islamisation in the form of Jihad was the fifteen century Tunisian jurist, Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, regarded as a militant activist and whose anti-Jewish stands led to the massacre of Jews in Tuwat and Gurara in the fifteenth century. Al-Maghili left an enduring legacy that was to become a central motivational factor to later Jihad movements throughout West Africa. Al-Maghili's influence on the then Sudanese rulers later resonated into jihadi movements in West Africa. By late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century for instance, a Fulani cleric, Uthman Dan Fodio, who has got some tutelage from Al-Maghili, launched a Jihad

in Hausaland in present day Northern Nigeria, This Jihadi protest movement against the adoption of non-Muslim lifestyles by an increasing number of Hausa people and the ruling class in Hausaland led to the establishment of what is popularly known as Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria. Sokoto Jihad was the first successful Islamic protest movement in the history of northern Nigeria and has since become the ultimate goal of subsequent jihadi activism in most part of the region. Emirates emerged in the region as a result of this movement which were/are answerable to the Caliph of the Sokoto Caliphate.

Historical Perceptions

Turaki has shown the nature of socio-political responses of the people of the central Nigeria to the political development in northern Nigeria.² He used his personal and direct experiences as son of the soil to discount some of the methodological fallacies expressed about the central Nigerian people especially in colonial and Islamic literature. These Islamic and colonial fallacies include that the Fulani have superior intelligence and are empire builders as against the peoples of central Nigeria area. Literature abounds on the political development of Central Nigeria prior to the jihadi era. Kingdoms such as the Nupe, Ikereku of the Bassa, Kwararafa of the Jukun and Opanda of the Ebira were among other political initiatives of the people of Central Nigeria area. Mangwat³ and Zuwaqhu⁴ have also, using the Marxist-historical approach, highlighted some of the major assumptions that guided Hausa and Fulani hegemony. They also pointed out the subtle manipulation of religious sentiments that laid the foundation for the development and exploitation of the peoples of this region. They were subjected to raids from the Fulani and Nupe during the trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic slave trades and later in the early nineteenth to mid-nineteenth century jihads.⁵ In fact it was a fallacy of supposition to postulate that the Bassa, Gbagyi and a host of other indigenous groups were not known for political initiative, or that the region was always a recipient of outside civilisation and always under alien, superior external control

The Jihadi Experience

Hausaland experienced tumultuous events in the early nineteenth century in the form of jihadists' wars. According to Usman Dan Fodio, the leader of the Jihad, the aim was to reform Islam as a means of correcting societal ills which were very common in Hausaland during this period. In his words, "the purpose

was to bring Islam back to its original orthodoxy and restore the faith to its purity in the line with what obtained during the life of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and that of the four caliphs".⁶ These wars lasted in the core Hausa region between 1804 and 1809 but continued in other areas up till the mid-nineteenth century. By 1811, the jihadists were in control of major states and capitals in Hausaland and beyond.⁷

About A.D 1809, it was recorded that Mohama or Makam, also called Makau, the 55th and last Habe ruler of Zaria, having been completely defeated by the Fulani revolutionary force led by Mallam Musa, first emir of Zaria, fled southwards. The expulsion of Makau from the throne in Zaria brought him to Zuba among the Koro. After he has firmly established himself at Zuba, "Makau gathered around him many more of his former Zaria office-holders and retainers with their households and slaves, and was, thus, enabled to continue to enforce the annual tribute formerly sent to him at Zaria" by the Koro and Gwari vassals.⁸ As he waxed in power, he enlarged his influence and even adventured as far as Lapai where he besieged the chief of Lapai, Dauda Maza. Makau was killed in the encounter with Dauda Maza at the gates of Lapai in about A.D 1825.

On Makau's death, his followers retreated from Lapai and were led back to Zuba by his son Jatau, nicknamed "Abu Ja", Abu, the "Red", from his fair complexion, who then became chief and built a large walled town which became known by the nickname of the founder, Abuja. Makau's other descendants established Suleja and Abaji.

Emergence of Keffi Emirate

Keffi, traditions collected by Kasimu Judde, indicated that Abdul Zanga, the conqueror of Keffi polities, is said to be a Fulani of "Dangawa stock of the Yan Tumaki from Katsina".⁹ Following the death of his father at Yan Tumaki, there was succession dispute. Zanga set out to found a kingdom of his own. According to the tradition:

He first settled at Bagaji around 1765 but latter grazed his cattle southwards to the region of Keffi and decided to build his permanent home there. This was in c.1770 and hence, he became the founder and first emir of Keffi. This place was later used as a springboard for Islamisation and conquest of the non-Muslim districts of Gbagyi, Afo, Gwandara, Bassa, Toni, Koro, Yeskwa, Mada and Eggon.¹⁰

Another tradition has it that before Abdul Zanga's adventure into the area, nomadic Fulani herdsmen had long visited the area and began to settle at the end of the eighteenth century.¹¹ It was found out, however, that before the outbreak of the Jihad, Muhammadu Gani, a Fulani from Zanga, used to bring his herds from Katsina every dry season to graze in the area. This annual cattle grazing was continued by his son Abdullahi Zanga, who then decided to settle permanently. He eventually persuaded his Fulani kinsmen to live under him. They finally settled in 1802, built a stockade village and named it Keffi, "stockade". Zanga then appointed Umaru his deputy.¹²

When the jihad broke in Gobir in 1804, Usman Dan Fodio sent messages to all Fulani leaders and Abdullahi Zanga decided to go to Sokoto to obtain a flag for himself. But, Malam Musa (1804-1821), the first emir of Zaria obstructed him and compelled Abdullahi Zanga to accept authority from Zaria. On conceding to this demand, Malam Musa made it clear to Zanga that the area around Keffi and beyond was granted to him (Musa) as fief by the Caliph, and therefore by accepting the authority from Zaria, Keffi became its vassal.¹³ Hence, the relationship of Keffi with Sokoto throughout much of the jihadist period was circumscribed by Zaria, the most powerful southern emirate.¹⁴

During his forays, Abdul Zanga met some Gbagyi and Bassa settlements, which he subdued, amalgamated and ruled them. There were several factors that checkmated the speedy urbanisation of Keffi during the era of Abdul Zanga. The process of establishing Keffi through conquest and slave raids of the surroundings by Zanga and his people discouraged fast urbanisation of Keffi.

Other accounts noted how the Fulani ruling class and intra-house struggle, the attack of Keffi by Zaria and Zaria's war with Abuja, disharmony between Keffi and Nasarawa and Keffi's attack of neighbouring non-Hausa and Fulani, must have combined to disable the rapid growth of Keffi.¹⁵ Perhaps, Keffi urbanisation was part of the general transformation of central Nigerian area in the 19th century. Both oral traditions and European eye-witnessed accounts were very clear that the 19th century marked a turning point in the settlement patterns of the whole of central Nigeria, and attributed such phenomenon such to the jihadist's activities and the European interest in trade. The process of state formation and urbanisation in the central Nigerian area in the 19th century was complex. This vassal emirate of Zaria, as aptly pointed out by Filaba:

It brought several changes like reduction in size of some autochthonous kingdoms, depopulated some parts, urbanised and culturally diffused some

parts, increased production and trade relations, emerged new polities and new balance of power and evolution of new alliances, which with the intervention of the Royal Niger Company culminated into the colonial conquest by 1900.¹⁶

The changes were partly influenced by the attempt of the heterogeneous polities to survive some pressures, check some group monopoly and also established more accommodative social relations of production. In this respect, the Sokoto jihad movement was not merely wars and slave raids over-emphasised in colonial historiography. The jihad added impetus to settlements and the jihad pushed some fugitives from Hausaland into central Nigeria, thereby increasing its demography and subsequent cultural and economic transformation from which Zaria sub-emirates such as Keffi, Nasarawa, Nupe (Bida), Jema'an Darroro, Lafia, Doma, and Wase emerged.¹⁷

Immediately when Zanga got some followers, he started to raid the region of his hosts which destabilised the polities. Some sought refuge in Bagaji, Kurape, Karu, Ikereku, Nasarawa and other places. Afterwards, Zanga then built a new stockade around "Pebiyi or Kepii and became the first Sarki".¹⁸ Filaba went further and added that, "During the reign of Zanga, Keffi was battling to survive. It was attacked by Kurape, Kurudu, and Abuja and also by Zaria under Mallam Musa who burnt and destroyed its heavy stockade".¹⁹

Before the death of Zanga in circa 1820, the influence of Keffi was felt mostly among the Gwandara and Mada to the east, Koro, Jabba and Yeskwa people to the north and Bassa, Gbagyi, Gade and Egbura to the south-west, but remained Zaria sub-emirate.

The shaky relationship between Keffi and Zaria also influenced Keffi to quickly establish friendly ties with Bagaji, Kupan Gwari, Garaku, Kokona, Gwagwa, Tattara and Ninkoro, which sometimes aided Keffi to withstand Zaria.²⁰ The successive emirs battled to safeguard Keffi and as well incorporate more villages into the emirate. It was further stressed in the traditions that the challenges Keffi faced from Zaria, Abuja and Jema'an Darroro forced it to come to temporary peace with these settlements.

Keffi became a popular town in the region because of its location. The land there is fertile and thus boosted agricultural and green for pasture. The trade routes passed through Ninkoro and gradually shifted to Keffi and it became the major trading centre. Its market was filled with products from the surrounding Gbagyi, Bassa, Mada, Gwandara, Yeskwa, Jabba and Gade villages. Its *karofi*, (dye pits) became the dominant centre of dyeing in the whole area. Keffi came to have a

concentration of weavers, dyers, carvers, butchers, guilds of all sorts more than any other town in the area. Most of the Hausa artisans and traders that brought trans-Saharan goods stationed in Keffi.²¹

The integration of some of the villages which had owned allegiance to Keffi was not only by conquest, but also through economic and cultural ties such as trade relations and intermarriages. The ruling house intermarried with the indigenous groups. Keffi intermarried with Nasarawa, Marmara, Laminga and Keffi-Shanu, (Goya). This was further reflected in the nature of the emirate administration and Keffi town whereby the palace officials also comprised of representatives from various wards and ethnic groups, but with special preference for Muslims. This type of cultural and political composition further strengthened the integration of their neighbouring groups.

Another factor that strengthened Keffi was its ties with other emirates. Our sources indicated that Keffi emirs used to send some yearly *gaisuwa*, tribute, to the neighbouring emirates of Awe, Lafia, Jema'a, Zaria, as well as to the Caliph in Sokoto at times of peace. These usually comprised of food-stuffs, textiles, iron implements, crafts and slaves. Except Zaria and Sokoto, these emirates reciprocated by sending some goods to the emir of Keffi.

It should be mentioned that the rise of Keffi saw the coming of new groups, particularly the Hausa and Fulani. Before the rise of Keffi, the number of Fulani and Hausa in the region was insignificant. But Keffi conquerors encouraged the coming of their Fulani and Hausa kinsmen. With time, some economic relations came to exist and encouraged interdependence between the Fulani cattle bearers and the indigenous population as some indigenous farmers asked some Fulani to settle in their farms for animal manure to bring higher yields. The economic relationships between the Fulani and indigenous groups increased. In an interview with Walid Jibrin (Sarkin Fulani, Nasarawa), Filaba found out how "Gbagyi in Particular gave some cattle to the Fulani for grazing, after which the Fulani were paid. Also, only the Fulani remained as the sole supplier of beef and milk, which augmented the dietary intake of the whole region".²²

The Emergence of Nasarawa Emirate

Makama Dogo (tall man), according to a version of the traditions, was a migrant from Ruma near Katsina. He first attached himself to Usman Dan Fodio during the jihad and became a mercenary and helped Musa from Katsina in the conquest of Zazzau in 1804 where he stayed for two years. The tradition further

added that he later moved to spread Islam when he incidentally met Abdul Zanga and Gunki at Zanga, and with approval of Zaria, he helped Abdul Zanga to found Keffi.²³ He also helped Abdul Zanga to conquer the Ninkoro chiefdom and the Afo to the east.²⁴ This bravery earned him the title of *Makaman Keffi*, meaning the conqueror of Keffi and leader of Keffi army. Later on, Nasarawa became a splinter emirate.

Another version has it that the founding of Nasarawa emirate had its origin in a quarrel that arose at Keffi between emir Jibrilu and Umaru Makama Dogo, the commander of Keffi army. In the course of the quarrel between Jibrilu, the third emir of Keffi, and Umoru took Jibrilu to Abdul Karim's court, the then reigning emir of Zaria for appeal. Abdul Karim, jealous of Keffi growing powers, supported Umoru's independence of Keffi. The role of Zaria in these affairs can be clearly expressed in this quotation:

Abdu Karim of Zaria, jealous of the growing power of Keffi, determined to detach Makama Dogo's party from the Keffi chiefdom, and offered Imoru Makama Dogo the Igbira Kingdom of Panda, then at the height of its power and still unconquered. The crafty move of Abdul Karim was a double one; if Makama Dogo could subdue the Igbira, a large slice of country would thus be added to the Zaria Emirate; if the Igbira proved too strong for Makama Dogo, the latter's party would be much weakened but still detached from the Keffi Emirate; and the Caliphate was attempting to capture the confluence area in order to have direct supply of European fire-arms through the Niger trade.²⁵

However, when Umoru Makama Dogo failed to enter Keffi, with his following, he went south of Keffi and pitched his camp at Yankadi. Here, Umoru cast about for a place to settle in and build his headquarters. He bethought him of a certain stretch of grassy town situated near a large river, where Abdullahi, his old chief, always pitched his camp on his forays into the Afo and Bassa country. As the tradition continued, he remembered that on each occasion, he (with Abdullahi) had encamped here, they had returned victorious, and he therefore proceeded to this place and in due time built a settlement. The victories that he won in these areas influenced him to name his settlement Nasarawa, meaning "the victorious".²⁶

Another tradition has it that "Imoru was a Katsina Fulani (escaped) slave and when Abdul Zanga (Abdullahi) established himself at Keffi in 1802, Imoru took service under him".²⁷ Arguments emanating from Nasrawa emirate today

disputed this servile origin of Makama Dogo. According to the source Umaru Makama Dogo could not have been a slave because:

The man who Abdullahi claimed had come to Abdul Zanga labelling Umaru a run-away slave belonging to his wife was said to have come from Katsina as well as Umar. ...if Umaru was a run-away slave, he would not have gone as close as he did to Emir Musa of Zaria, neither would he be accorded recognition by Dan Fodio, nor would they send him southwards to spread the Islamic faith which subsequently led to the founding of Keffi jointly by him, Zanga and Gunki. Furthermore, if he were a slave, he would not have been conferred with the title of Makama and later Madakin Keffi by Abdu Zanga. These two titles were and are still reserved for the heirs.²⁸

These arguments and many others, according to the above source, were aimed at ridiculing Nasarawa as an appendage of Keffi and by so doing portrayed Keffi as better polity.²⁹ However, by 1835, Nasarawa emirate, through series of forays by Makama Dogo's forces and destruction of the indigenous polities, was established.

Impact of the Emergence of Nasarawa Emirate on the Polities of the Area

The growth and popularity of Nasarawa were first and foremost, due to its successful conquest of the Afo, Bassa and Ebira.³⁰ It should be noted that Nasarawa was not as successful as it is portrayed in the recorded traditions. This shall become clearer as we proceed in this discourse. Makama Dogo was declared Sarki Kwatto. Dogo could not effect this by raiding and harassing the neighbouring areas in order to force them to submission.³¹ Up to the end of the 19th century, Nasarawa could not have any significant success on the south-western side of its border, which is Bassa country. Despite the fact that it allied with pockets of Hausa settlements and some Gwandara-Gade of the area, Toto and other settlements, Nasarawa could not capture Ikereku kingdom of the Bassa lying to the south-west of Nasarawa. Ohiare noted that Nasarawa people had difficulty in conquering the Gbagyi, Bassa, Gade, Afo and Ebira to south and east of Nasarawa because these people engaged in a struggle against the jihadists based at Nasarawa and Keffi, who made their area slave raiding ground.³²

Series of Fulani attacks on the Bassa and their neighbours, however, led to the desolation of their environments and settlements. William Balfour Baikie,

Samuel Crowther and T. J Hutchinson, to mention but a few, attested to this fact. W. B. Baikie for instance noted that:

We got many particulars of the attack of the Fulbe (Fulani) on Bassa, which, with what we learnt before, enabled us to form a tolerably correct idea of the whole affair. It commenced by the refusal of the people of Afo named also Ekpe, living on the borders of Bassa, to pay their usual tribute. Adama, king of Bassa, not feeling himself sufficiently powerful to coerce them, requested assistance from the Fulani, and accordingly Ama Dogo; or more correctly Makama Dogo, meaning "tall man" a Fulbe chief of Zozo came with an armed band for that purpose. Afo being subdued, a quarrel arose between Ama Dogo and Senami, brother of the king of Bassa, and chief of Akpata, which, led to a general attack on the whole country. Ikereku, the capital, about fifteen miles from Eruko, was sacked and rendered desolate, and many of the people were slain or made captive, and thus the cupidity of the king led to the desolation of his territories³³.

Again T.J. Hutchinson in his *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda and Binue Exploration, 1855* described the event of the destruction of the capital of the Bassa Kingdom thus:

Some people living at Ousha, in the direction of Doma, but in the Bassa kingdom refused to pay tribute to Adama, king of Bassa. To punish them, Adama invited or employed some Filatahs (Fulani) from Zaria, which, is the capital of Zeg-zeg and over which Mohammed Sani is ruler, to come and subdue the obstinacy of the people of Ousha. The Filatahs, ever ready to fight, accepted the invitation, and punished the Ousha gentry to their hearts content.³⁴

The work of Macgregor Laird compiled by Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther in a book titled, *Journal of An Expedition up the Niger and Tshadda Rivers, 1854* stated how the king of Bassa, Adama, employed mercenaries to punish those who refused to pay tribute to him.³⁵

Again, Crowther while still writing on the Bassa, stated that "They were at one time the dread of their neighbours, to whom the Agatus, a tribe of Doma, were once tributary of Ikereku. Ikereku had been twice attacked before by the Filanis, but they were repulsed".³⁶ Temple O. in his book, *Notes on the Tribes of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, wrote that, "The Bassa of Tawari successfully repelled the attacks of the Fulani and gave shelter to the people of Koton Karfi (the Igbirra) who were less fortunate"³⁷. Samuel Crowther again noted that from Abuku, in Loko District "is said to be the beginning of Bassa country" and at "Oruko Baikie met chief Adama who is the chief of all Bassa country".³⁸

Similarly, the Gbagyi and Gade people of Ara that aided Nasarawa later suffered raids from Makama Dogo.³⁹

In fact, the challenges of the balance of power in the region started gaining momentum with the establishment of Abuja, Keffi, and Nasarawa as the sub-emirates of Zaria. The nature of diplomacy and alliance system towards the end of the 19th century was not simply the emirates versus the autochthonous kingdoms. It was very complex and fluid. This was so because the relationship between Zaria and Sokoto on the one hand and the sub-emirates of Abuja, Keffi and Nasarawa, among the non-Muslim communities at the confluence area on the other was fragile and changing. Zaria sometimes laid siege of some of these sub-emirates whenever their rulers refused to bring *gaisuwa*, in form of taxes, and booties, *ganima*, to Zaria, and whenever they rejected Zaria imposed prince. In such circumstances, "The emirates allied with the "pagan states" of Kurape, Karu, Ikerekwu, Doma against a neighbouring "Pagan State" to survive".⁴⁰ Abuja, for example survived Zaria onslaught by relying on the surrounding Gbagyi, Bassa and Koro polities. The complexity of the nature of diplomacy and alliances and changes that characterised relations are well described in the words of Ohiare who stressed that the Confluence area in the 19th century:

was characterised by political instability, social unrest, tenuous relationship between the groups and classes, and economic dissatisfaction. This state of affairs manifested itself in various ways such as succession disputes which factionalised the society into antagonistic groups each of which was ever ready to team up with a third force to oust the other not caring, whether such a third force favoured the cooperate existence of the state.⁴¹

The British traders, based at Lokoja, exploited this type of revolutionary situation by first taking side with the most powerful groups such as the Nupe and Fulani rulers who promised breaking the stiff trade barriers put by the autochthonous states. According to Filaba:

The British made allies trading agents and excluded 'Pagan' kingdoms of Ikerekwu, Kurape, Kurudu and Karu. After the British had succeeded in using the Nupe, Ebira and Fulani rulers to establish wide-trade-network and to check the German and French competitors, the British turned round to instigate the 'Pagans' to rebel against the Nupe and Fulani rulers in order for the British to appear as the sole monopolist.⁴²

Most clearly and based on the evidence at our disposal, the Confluence area has undergone series of changes from the 17th century onwards as a result of both

internal and external factors. The evidence revealed that a continuous motion, interactions of internal and external forces and contradictions which were beyond the control of an individual or group, and this further exposed and integrated the region to the global system. The direction of changes was towards growth of larger polities and increased inter-group relations.

It is obvious from the preceding analysis that the Bassa had their own independent kingdom, not semi-independent as assumed by some scholars.⁴³ In fact, it was a fallacy of supposition to postulate that the Bassa, Gbagyi and a host of other indigenous groups were not known for political initiative, or that the region was always a recipient of outside civilisation and always under alien, superior external control.⁴⁴ In fact all evidence point to the obvious fact that the Bassa were independent people; with their forces, they repelled series of attacks from the Fulani.

The Bassa history of resistance has long antecedents. These earned the Bassa the reputation of being a warlike group who employed poisoned arrows and who destroyed towns and villages in Panda, and even to the westwards of Panda, beyond the confines of their districts, which lie to the eastward of Panda.⁴⁵ Kirk-Greene noted emphatically the political prowess of the Bassa, thus: "As a result of their strong defensive position and their political skill, they were able to preserve their political independence both of Nasarawa, Epira Koton Karifi and Nupe".⁴⁶ This assertion is supported by information contained in the Intelligence Reports in the National Archives, Kaduna⁴⁷.

However, the victories of Makama Dogo were attributed to the number of mercenaries he had. It is on record that Nagwamatse, the notorious slave raider of Nupeland served as a mercenary captain, and helped Dogo to conquer important town of Toto.⁴⁸ Other mercenaries, to some of whom Dogo gave titles in order to help him achieve his scheme, were Umar Manashi from Katsina as *galadima*, Jatau Azaga from Bida as *wambai*, Audu Bayaraba a Nupe from Ilorin as *barde*, a platoon commander. Others were Kwatari from Katsina, Maikaita from Kaita, Mazawaje Mohammed from Ringin Kano, Isa Gado from Kusede in Katsina, Musa from Katsina and Maitarewa from Hadeja.⁴⁹ Makama Dogo also used some of his Gbagyi, Gade, and Bassa captives as his mercenaries in his forays in Afo country. These captives were also used to raid the Gbagyi, but were unsuccessful in capturing Kurape, Karu, and Kurudu confederations.⁵⁰ Thus, it can be stressed that Nasarawa sprang so quickly due to the great support she got from Zaria-which wanted Makama Dogo to check the popularity and

excesses of Keffi, and to extend Zaria control to the kingdoms in the confluence.⁵¹

The contradiction in the region also contributed to the initial success of Nasarawa. The Egbura kingdoms of Igu and Opanda were struggling over territory and economic dominance in the Benue with the Bassa kingdom of Ikereku. In these contradictions, traditions of both the Bassa and Egbura in Toto and Umaisha have it that the Bassa people invited the Nasarawa people against the Egbura and acceptance of this invitation by the latter led to the conquest of Opanda Kingdom in 1854.⁵² It is also related that some Bassa soldiers were war commanders in the army of Makama Dogo. Unfortunately for the Bassa, Makama's imperial ambition did not spare them; their settlements were equally destroyed later.⁵³

Arising from our sources, Nasarawa's relationship with Zaria depended largely on the personality of the ruler. Sources had it that Zaria confronted Nasarawa immediately after the death of Makama Dogo. Keffi at the later age of Makama Dogo assisted Nasarawa to attack Jenkwe of Doma kingdom. The Doma tradition portrayed that Jenkwe, Agaza and Udeni areas of Doma kingdom were conquered by Makama before he died,⁵⁴ however, our sources maintained that Makama failed to establish permanent administration over them, and that in the raid that led to the death of Makama, Afo sought the support of Alago who claimed to have taught and given the Afo a mythical spear pegged on a mythical *gammo*, ringed straw, with which they stroke and killed Dogo. Afo tradition claimed that they buried Dogo there and piled stones on his grave, purportedly to march with the terrain of the scene of his burial, while his horse tail was still used as the royal fan of the kings of Angewa.⁵⁵ However, another source claimed that Makama died of old age, at 72 years in c.1858.⁵⁶ The last claim is more plausible since the current palace of Nasarawa emirate house the grave of Makama and some of his paraphernalia. The claim of Angewa could be referring to any strong commander in the army of Makama they killed and believed it was Makama himself.

However, the relationship between Nasarawa and their neighbours was not only that of raiding. The new emirate overlords married their host communities' daughters while they refused to give their daughters in turn to these communities whom they looked down upon as "pagans".⁵⁷ Similarly, Nasarawa emirate lords married their daughters to their kinsmen at Maramara, Laminga

and Keffi, so much so that the lineage chiefs of these settlements now claim the same ancestry.⁵⁸

The economic factor also served as an important impetus to the growth and development of Nasarawa. Nasarawa market was attended on Mondays and Fridays, days which the colonial administration later scheduled for treating leprosy cases in the area. Again, the position of Nasarawa on the banks of rivers Uke (Kurape) and Hadari influenced its profession and population. Many Nasarawa people were gardeners, fishermen, hunters and farmers.⁵⁹ But it has less number of artisans than Keffi. Keffi town was larger, with more number of blacksmiths and more integrated into the indigenous society than Nasarawa. This integration was measured in terms of free association, inter-ethnic mixed settlements, cultural relation and the spread of Keffi people among the villages such as Yarkadi, Gauta, Gindin Mangoro (now called High Court Area), Angwan Ka'are, Angwan Kwano among others.⁶⁰

Incorporation of the Indigenous Polities Into the Emirate System of Northern Nigeria

Evident from the preceding scenario, Fodio set out to make Muslims of all in the northern region of Nigeria. However, economic and political considerations in the established Islamic society complemented religious goals and subsequently de-emphasised religion. With time and space, as conquest and expansion got further away from the core-Islamic centres of the revolution towards the other areas of the north, the central Nigerian groups increasingly became defined as peripheries to be exploited. As noted by Logams:

Whatever were the religious motives in the establishment of the Islamic society in the 'North', the revolution of Dan Fodio was another phase in the historical oppression of some of the M-Belt groups, one factor in the complex range of systemic oppressive forces that set in motion the underdevelopment of the M-Belt areas, when the religion of the Islamic society degenerated into something indefinable as it raided both friend and foe alike.⁶¹

By a political process which carefully selected religious and military leadership rooted in the indoctrination of some of his personal students, in order to fulfil Islamic objectives in the north, Dan Fodio gave political orders directed at the Islamic Hausa City-States as well as on the non-Islamic groups and societies with the urge "...to spread the faith and oust the Habe and Kafiri rulers".⁶² To each of the leaders, Dan Fodio gave an Islamic 'Green-Flag' as the symbol of

authority directed by him.⁶³ The acceptance and blessing of flags of authority from Dan Fodio showed that the leadership of the scattered Fulani communities among the different groups and societies became formally acknowledged under one central political and religious authority of Dan Fodio. This move by Dan Fodio suggested political plot masqueraded under the guise of religious purification to install the Fulani on the political positions of the Hausa and non-Hausa Habe kings. In other words, ethnic political considerations played in the Islamic Reformist Movement and were determining factors in the establishment and political domination of the Islamic society with “Islamic ideological consideration taking secondary influence in the contest to control power in all of the Hausa-City States”⁶⁴ and even beyond. This means that there was political timing of a previously existing plot developed from religious teaching of Dan Fodio to his pupils rather than spontaneous political activity. Thus, “...when they heard of Dan Fodio’s uprising they went back to him for acceptance and blessing”.⁶⁵

By 1817, the Caliphate had expanded the political boundaries of the Hausa States to include the Yoruba of Ilorin and the Nupe Kingdom. By this action, Logans aptly noted, “Usman dan Fodio created an emirate system of government on most of Hausaland and subsequently went beyond the Hausa kingdoms and created about 30 emirates in addition to numerous sub-emirates all over a centralized Islamic system of government and religious authority in Sokoto”.⁶⁶

From Sokoto therefore, a political power and authority radiated to other regions of northern Nigeria. The society was, of course, held together by the Islamic institutions and by the personality of Dan Fodio himself. He established a “remarkable ascendancy and authority over his appointed rulers”.⁶⁷

What obtained in the pre-colonial period, then, in terms of the confluence engagement with Caliphal expansion, were a series of complex stalemates, fluid accommodations, and tense, frequently violated treaties of co-existence that John Nengel calls the *amana*.⁶⁸ These pre-colonial relationship tensions created ambivalences of resentment and fear-inspired accommodations among north central Nigerian people. Kukah sums it up this way, “Around the Middle Belt, the (Hausa-Fulani) Jihadists seemed more preoccupied with slavery, economic and political expansionism than the spread of the (Islam). As a result, all forms of alliances came into being, but economic considerations were paramount.”⁶⁹

Although, as Kukah argued, the winning of converts to Islam in the Confluence Area gradually took a backseat, the spread of Islamic, Hausa and Fulani cultural influence did not. And although, this was truer for the frontier non-Muslim communities of the Southern Kaduna and Bauchi corridors than it was for the Benue Valley, the fate of Doma and Bagaji (in Keffi area) in the southernmost part of the Confluence showed that Jihadist aggression and Caliphate influence spread to all the areas of the Confluence. In fact, Doma and Bagaji became satellite vassals of Zazzau in the mid-19th century by a combination of military defeats and strategic self-preservation through the acceptance of Caliphate influence and quasi-control.⁷⁰ This was so because, theoretically, the emirates recognised and accepted the independence of the non-Muslim polities as they were left to run their internal affairs without any interference, in practice however, the payment of tribute, *haraji*, by the latter to the former as a fundamental requirement for the maintenance of the peaceful co-existence, was construed by the emirate powers to mean that the non-Muslim societies were politically subordinate to them, a view that was not shared by all the Non-Muslim polities. The Caliphate administration and policing of its culture were assured in the Confluence area because of the influence and military might of the southern Fulani sub-emirates of Keffi, Suleja, Lapai and Nassarawa, and because of the presence of numerous other enclaves of garrisoned Hausa and Fulani settlements in the confluence area of Nigeria.⁷¹

By the creation of Nasarawa emirate for instance, the Fulani created particular patterns of social and political process of incorporation of the non-Muslim Bassa and Gbagyi socio-political and economic life into Islamic culture. By 1845 most non-Muslim Bassa, Gbagyi, Afo, Gwandara, Egbura and Gade political structures had been overthrown and replaced by Fulani authority. New administrative reforms were also introduced in line with the new political dispensation. The entire area was brought under Caliphal authority with headquarters in Nasarawa sub-emirate. Each of the conquered areas was constituted politically into emirate appointees. The emirs, having obtained flags from Uthman Dan Fodio, continued to swear allegiance to Uthman Dan Fodio and his successors as the commander of the faithful.⁷² Apart from this, they sent a part of their tax proceeds to Sokoto and contributed an annual levy of troops meant to continue the jihad. They also accepted the right of appeal to the Sokoto court and the Caliph's authority to confirm them and some of their subordinates in office.⁷³ The creation of the Nasarawa sub-emirate has, therefore, profound

effects on the non-Muslim Bassa, Gbagyi, Gade, Egbura, Afo, Alago, Gwadara and a host of others on the Niger-Benue Confluence area. These jihadist relationships created ambivalences of resentment among communities in the Confluence area. It was this pre-existing, rather complicated cultural and religious corollary that the British encountered in the late nineteenth century in the confluence area. The situation however, did not prevent the British from establishing colonial administration in the area.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the greatest interaction of the internal and external factors led to the emergence of polities with well established bilateral ties and trade alliances. In fact, prior to the coming of the jihadists, there were cultural and religious links and festivals across ethnic groups and each ethnic group host the others. The study demonstrated also how the success of the jihad led to the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate and the Zaria sub-emirates of Keffi, and Nasarawa among others. By 1812 the hegemony of the non-Muslim polities in the confluence area had been overthrown and replaced by Fulani authority. New administrative reforms were also introduced in line with the new political dispensation. The entire area was brought under Caliphal authority with headquarters in Keffi and Nasarawa sub-emirates. Each of the conquered areas was constituted politically into emirate appointees. By this, the Hausa and Fulani state builders swung the pendulum of relationship and by this act, planted the seed of ethnic contestation in the area.

Endnote

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