

Effect and Consequences of Religious Sectarianism in the Metropolitan Kano State, Nigeria

Ibrahim Badamasi Lambu, Bello Gambo, Tasiu Rilwan Yalwa

Department of Geography, Bayero University, Kano

&

Ismail Ibrahim Yakudima

Department of Geography, Aliko Dangote University of Science & Technology, Kano

ABSTRACT

The paper elucidates on the evolution of Islamic religious sects and corresponding spatial spread of places of worship in the study area. Panorama for places of worship, tracing evolutionary trends, their affiliation to particular religious sect and emergence of newer religious behaviours are some of the major task confronting the study. Some communities in the urban areas are studied in relation to their preference to particular sect in order to establish spatial relevance and sphere of influence of the beliefs on locational decisions pertaining the conduct of religious services. Geographical Positioning System (GPS) is used to pick the coordinates points for mapping of the spatial distribution of mosques. Structured interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are utilized to captured the historical evolution and inter sectarian differences as well as choices and challenges being faced by each denominations. The study discovered more pronounce sectarian affiliation in the peri-urban areas. Sharp competition exist between Izala (combined ahl sunna) and Tariqa (Tijjaniya and Kadiriyah) while establishing places of worship. There are clusters of mosques in some places where there is presence of other competing sects. Zone of confluence were depicted around Gadon Kaya with Izala and Tijjaniya Friday mosques at closed vicinity. It can be concluded that rivalry, competition and fight for relevance are the major factors that triggers proliferation of mosques. Sectarianism is accentuated by religious economy where donations from philanthropists and other countries are sought and utilized in erection and maintenance of mosques. The paper recommend that permission/approval to establish new mosques need to be treated with caution so that conflict is avoided between different sects.

Article History

Received: 19 February 2023

Received in revised form: 30 April 2023

Accepted: 15 May 2023

Published Online: 29 August 2023

Keywords:

Sect, Rural, Urban, Mosque, Competition & Economy

Corresponding Author Contact:

Ibrahim Badamasi Lambu

Email: iblambu.geog@buk.edu.ng

DOI: 10.11113/ajeess.v3.n2.409

1.1 Introduction

Religion is derived from Latin '*ligare*' meaning bind or '*relegare*' meaning to unite, to link together in essence it is a set of relationship between man and a transcendent deity conceived as personal being, capable of communicating with believers (Lambu 2012 and 2013). Religion though qualitative and relative in perspective, but represent reality which is expressed by the society as perceived by individual as powerful force greater than the whole society itself. Generally speaking, there is no society or group of people that does not have one form of religious beliefs and the more complex the society or group the more complex

its religious practices (Lambu 2013). The groups that claim to be atheists or pagans, have some beliefs in idol ship that form their religion. It is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to a sacred thing hold or considered by those who adhere to it within a define place of worship (ibid).

Development of religion has taken different forms in various cultures, some religions put emphasis on rituals and spiritual beliefs, while others focus on the subjective experience of the religious individuals with some religious indoctrinations forming the most important part of their faith. Philosophical inquiries are needed to dig deep in

religious sphere to unravel the hidden intricacies that may not appear from superficial studies.

In recent history, practice of comparative religion divided religious beliefs into philosophically defined categories called “world religions”. However, some recent studies have argued that not all types of religion are necessarily separated by mutually exclusive philosophies, and further stated that the utility of ascribing practice to a certain philosophy or even called a given religions, rather than cultural, political, or social is limited. Theory of religion and social constructionist, says that modern concept suggest that all spiritual practices and morality follow a model similar to the Abraham religion as an orientation system that help to interpret reality and define human beings through its teachings (Lambu 2020). Modification from one religious’ leader through disciples lead to transformation and evolution of sects. Sects like cults operate to protect collective interest of members by all means through competition and rivalry.

In Islam, mosque has been the center of intellectual activity ever since then and even became the nucleus of the first university in the Muslim world. It the point of convergence of all followers to perform both ritual and spiritual aspects of the faith. Similarly, mosques serve as the nucleus of religious economy and religious politics. Inside the mosques, there exist various form of orders and hierarchies performing both economic (collection and distribution of charity) and political (leadership and administration) to ensure smooth conducts of the society.

In recent time, with increasing population both internally (natural increase) and externally (migration flow), Kano swells beyond its social carrying capacity. Many mosques core-exist at close vicinity to one another and this lead competition for survival and existence through healthy and a times suspicious operations that may endanger the peaceful coexistence among the communities of faiths. The past experience of Maitatsine riots, Kalakato and so on need to serve Kano a lesson that future occurrences must be checked. So many questions that need attention includes but not limited to why the existence of

mosques sporadically at some places that are characterized with low population? What inform the decision in giving approval to such establishment? Why the code of operation of newer sects tend to vary e.g. prayer timing, tune and style of preaching and so on? How can religious confrontations be minimized? These and many are need to be urgently addressed for the sustainable peace and progress of the area.

Consequently, the study is aimed at evaluating the religious sects in the study with a view to understand the effects of the proliferations for proper surveillance and planning purposes. The objectives include the following which are to: Identify the sects and evolutionary trends in the study area. Map out the spatial distribution of the existing religious sects. Find out point of convergence, sphere of influence and hotspot zones and finally elucidate the characteristics, differences and preference of the sects and the corresponding religious behaviours.

The study is very significant at this time of massive responses from electronic media over trivial issue of lesser importance. Certain sect tends to response more mature than others hence it will help authority to monitor, regulate and control how each leaders and followers of sects handle and involve in any matter arising from economic, religious and political issues

1.2 The Study Area

Kano city (metropolis) has been the capital of the state since its creation in 1967 from the defund Northern Region, located between lat 10°03’ to 12°30’N and long 7°30’ to 9°25’E about 840km from the edge of the Sahara desert. It has a mean height of 472.45m above sea level with average temperature of 14.4°C (range between 15.8 to 33°C). Its mean monthly values for temperature range from 21°C in coolest month and 31°C in the hottest month. The average rainfall in a normal situation is about 1000mm in southern Kano and 800mm around the metropolis (Olofin, 1987).

Kano metropolis is the second largest industrial and commercial centre in Nigeria. It is therefore experiencing a rapid growth rate from pre-

colonial to post-colonial era. In 1932 the population was estimated to be only 83,000. Urban Kano has been subject to rapid growth since 1952 and exorbitant growth from 1958 onwards. By the 1991 census the population had increased to 1.6 million. Based on the natural growth rate of Nigeria's population at 2.5%, the projected population of Kano would be, 1,253,000 in 1985, 1,794,000 in 1995 and 2,480,000 in 2005. The provisional population figure from the 2006 census for Kano metropolis is 2,828,861. This rapid expansion of the city may not be unconnected with historical factors of security (city wall) as depicted in fig.1 below and its commercial status within the Trans-sahara trades. Hausa and Fulani otherwise known as Hausa-Fulani predominantly peopled the state. Other dominant ethnic groups in Kano include the Yorubas and Ibo (accounting for the large segment of the non-indigenous population), Nupe, Tiv, Idoma and many others. The dominant religion in the urban Kano is Islam followed by Christianity mainly by the non-indigenes. The culture of Kano people is Hausa-Islamic culture, in that ethnicity and religion are so interwoven that a distinction is hardly discernible.

It cannot be said with certainty when Islam came to Hausa land and as well to Kano (Ashafa 1982) in Lambu (2013). Barbushe predicted that 'some nation will come and take this land from our hands and build Mosques' (Gidado 1953 as in Paden 1973) quoted by Lambu (2013). Islamic period in the study area dated from 1380-1800 when Wangarawa missionaries from Mali arrived Kano and heralding the onset of Islam in the kingdom during the reign of King Tsamiya son of Yaji within 1349-1385AD (Ashafa 1982). Muhammad Rumfa and his predecessors were the earlier Muslims emirs of Kano as from 1463 to date (Adamu 1999 and Paden 1973) as in Lambu (2013). The early conversion of Islam in Kano involved the Sharifai who involved in the Tran-Saharan Kano-Tripoli

trade route. Mass mobility of Hausa Muslims gave them advantage of social intercourse, inter-marriages with other civilizations (Paden 1973) in Lambu (2018).

2.1 METHODS

It is a cross sectional survey research that seek respondents' views about the evolution, operation and contribution of religious sects. Two types of data are used in the study which includes quantitative and qualitative types of data. Quantitative data in this study includes number of sectarian mosques, date of establishment, income and sources etc. while Qualitative includes data on religious behaviour such as follower preferences, choices and value judgment about each sects etc. Two main sources of data are utilized throughout the research work. Researcher constructed data (popularly known as Primary source of data) which were sourced from survey, interviews, use of questionnaires and Global Positioning System (GPS). On the other hand, documented source of data (Secondary data) were sourced from existing and documented reports such as dissertation on religious landscape and Quranic schools etc. especially information on sectarian fellowship and beliefs.

The research population consists of mainly adult followers of Islamic faith. Religious issues are inclusive and too sensitive that only adults can be interviewed to ensure correctness and exactness of responses with minimum ethical breach. Similarly, the study target male respondents due to Pudah (seclusion of females) and many husbands cannot allow free interaction with their wives. The sample size comprises of eight LGAs but Municipal and Dala LGA are purposively sampled due to originality and heterogeneity of population of sectarian followers. The sampling covers more than 20% of the area which is considered adequate to represent the entire population (Lambu 2011c).

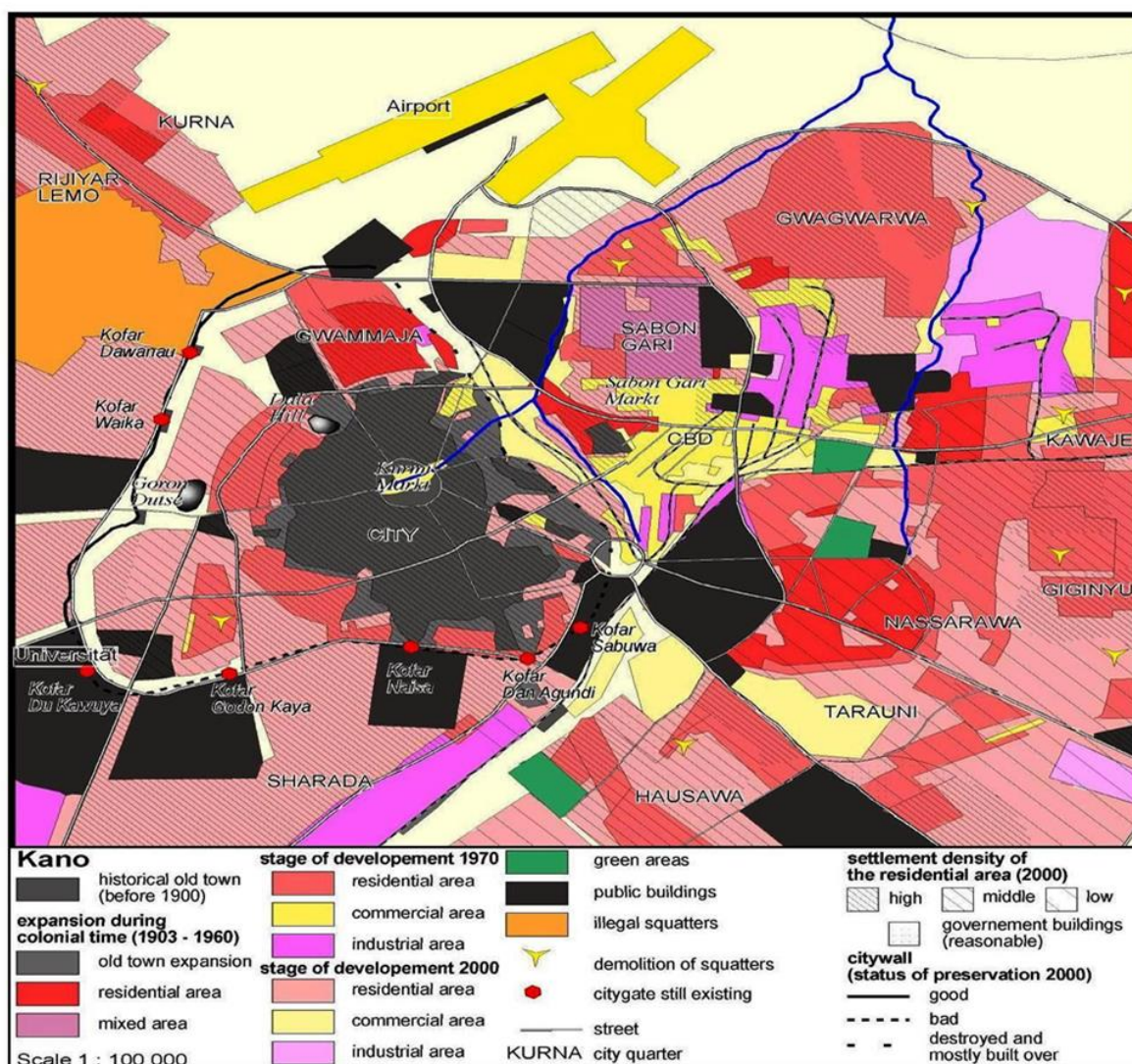


Figure 1: Map of Urban metropolis showing various city layouts and its ancient wall

Source: Adopted from Lambu 2013

Issues related to religious sects and sectarian values are very sensitive and technical in nature hence requiring skills in theology and physiognomy of religion. In a parallel study on religious values and preferences, many are completely ignorant about religious values and preferences in religious sects, hence adopting purposive sampling proved not only realistic but the only way out to ensure success and genuineness. The quantitative data like income through contribution from followers, distances between mosques etc are presented in tables and chats, while temporal trends are displayed on Trend Surface Analysis (TSA)

2.1.1 Method of data collection

The spatial distributions of sectarian mosques in the study area are expected to be randomly distribution considering the different ethnic groups with different religious affiliations. The idea to map out the schools in order to view their distribution using G.P.S instrument to take the co-ordinates points which are exported through the use of excels to AGIS software for Trend Surface Analysis (TSA) mapping. Geo-reference map of the study area is imposed on the plotted co-ordinates. Their impacts and contribution are therefore examined.

To explore the perceptions of the people on the sects and operation in the area, qualitative approach is adopted because perception differs naturally from one individual to another. Place like Nassarawa LGA host large concentration of Muslims from various sects such as Izala Tijjaniyya and Qadiriya affiliation. The personal interview method were used to capture individual perception on mosques' patronage and other challenges facing the sects in the study area.

3.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relatively very few studies were conducted on *evolution, distribution and operation of religious sects* in the study area. In Islamic faith, there are many

regulations regarding the conduct and operation of rituals such as citing and location of Jummuat mosques. Before the advent of sectarianism such as Izala, at least one *jumu'ah* mosque in any giving locality get approval with condition of the validity of certain number of people for the congregation of such *jumu'ah* prayer in *Maliki* jurisprudence. Abubakar 92022) WHO QUOTED Al-sawy (2006) assert that there should not be more than one *jumu'ah* mosque in a particular town. On the other hand, Hambali schoolers like ibn Qudama are of the view that there is no harm for the proliferation of *jumu'ah* mosque if there is need for it and people can maintain decorum (Bn Muhammad, 2014).

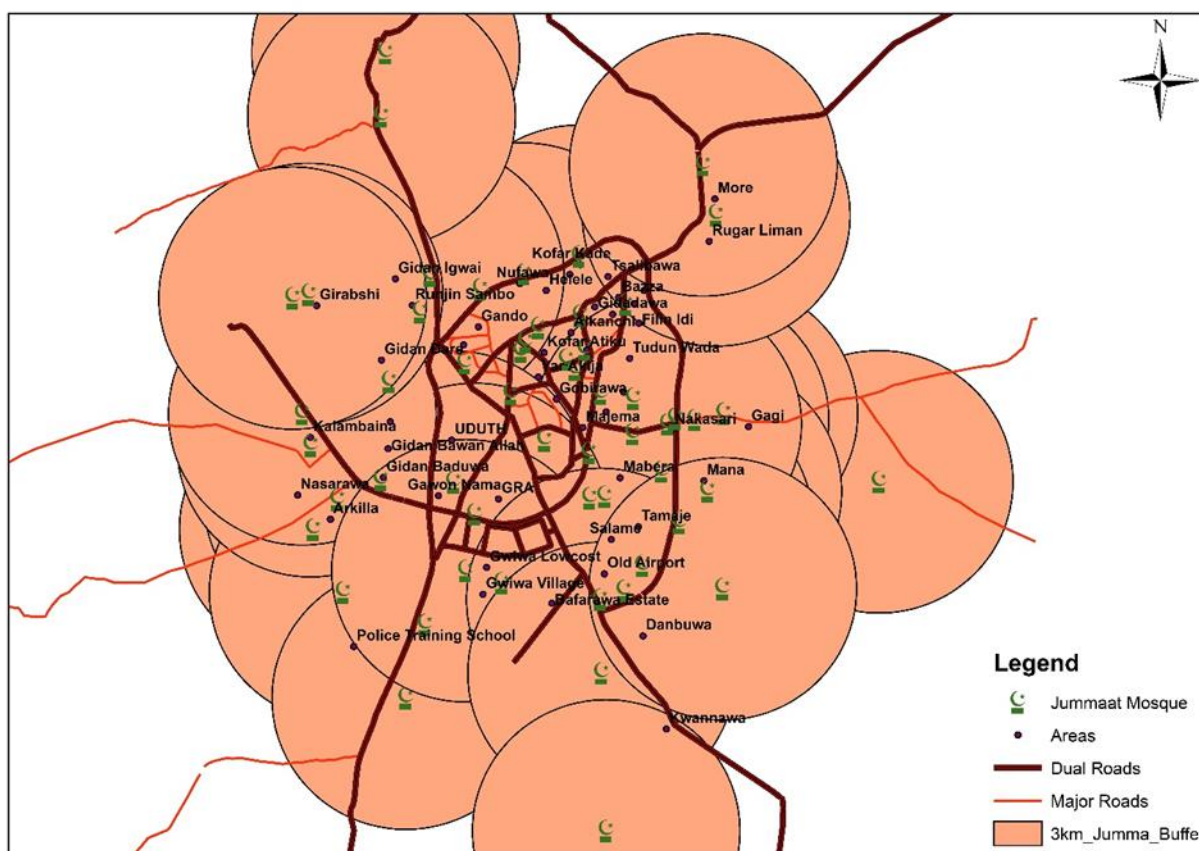


Figure 3. Buffer zone of 3km for jumu'at mosque. Source: (Adopted from Abubakar 2022)

Figure 1, above is indicating the guidelines indicating distance of 3km provided by Maliki school of thought in the past when only Kadiriyyah and Tijjaniyyah were the only sects in Kano which generally pre-dominated in Northern Nigeria (as a standard). Presently it is not observed in the study

area due to evolution of newer sects. When the same data were subjected to 1km buffering, many mosques overlapped with one another coexisting adjacent or opposite as in Gadon Kaya This study discovered that the proliferation of *Jumu'at* mosques are skewed toward sectarianism.

3.1.1 Sectarian Landscape in Kano metropolis

The study revealed that, many conflicts and misunderstanding exist among the leaders and followers of sects. The Muslim migrants from the southern part especially Yoruba mainly reside in Sabon-Gari, away from the old walled city (Birni), they usually establish their mosques based on Tariqa, Izala and Ansaruddeen sects. Secondly, other imams opined that the formation of *Izala* in 1978 had contributed to the proliferation of mosques in Northern Nigeria in general and at highest Kano due to its population. During pre-*Izala* period, *sufi* groups (Tariqa) were the dominant sect in Kano city or even the entire state with few *Jumu'at* mosques (Gidan Sarki and Waje). After the episode of Maitsine religious crisis of 1980s, the strength of ruling Sects (Kadiriyyah and Tijjaniyyah) faded and the new incubated *Izala* started to flourish at the outskirts of the metropolis of Kano. The *Izala* got more followers from YanBoko (western Educated elites) associated with building of their separate mosques and schools around the Sufi dominated areas because the potential members were followers of Sufi brotherhoods (Tariqa) who were the majority in the area. Later the *Izala* sect splits into two branches at national level created the factions of Jos and Kaduna. Consequently, this breakage led to rapid erection of sectarian *Jumu'ah* mosques.

Scholarship and sponsorship for studies through educational tourism by youths to Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Iran and other Middle East countries who are already in Wahabiyyah sect, contribute a lot to the formation of *Salafiya* group and establishment of more sectarian mosques in the religious landscape of Kano. Kano and indeed Nigeria is witnessing a trying time of religious agitations, transformations and dynamisms. Mosques, Schools and Prayer Grounds are defined by sectarian affiliation. Competition and polarization between sects accentuates proliferation of *Jummuaat* mosques erratically at the same location a times affecting passerby and transport flow especially at the peri-urban areas. As illustrated in the chat below, Kadiriyyah and

Tijjaniyya sects firmly hold the walled city of Kano with very few spread of *Izala* and *Shiaat*. At peri-urban Kano (outside the city wall), the spread of *Izala* is significant because most educated and business elites are residing at medium and low density areas of peri-urban outskirts.

3.1.2 Religious, economic and political intricacies of sectarianism

The study interacted with many religious stakeholders in the area where issues are raised that indicate use of religion for personal or collective advantages. In an interview with one Imam *Jumu'at* mosque opined that financial gain and political position play significantly for the prolific establishment of *Jumu'at* Mosques in the metropolis. Each sect try to establish more Mosques and other religious structure to showcase its significance and influence among the society. During political campaigns the religious leaders use the influence of the followers to bargain positions, appointments and contracts a times even cash donations to endorse a political party or candidate. The finding concurred with (Lambu 2017) a business of religion in Nigeria where people use religion for material benefit. A religious cleric gave a bold response during an interview where he expressed his concern on the recent trends as follows

'we are using religion for material gain from politicians, most of us seek personal benefit from those campaigners. We now compete in building houses, luxury and fashion become order of the day in the religious circle.'

Similar responses were collated from followers of many sects, describing the role of money making in the religious sphere. One respondent described a religious party where people struggle for positions, appointment and lucrative jobs for them and their children. Crises often evolve during rationing of the dividend from the campaigners or enthroned officers after winning the election. A respondent who claimed to have dissociated from any sect responded bitterly

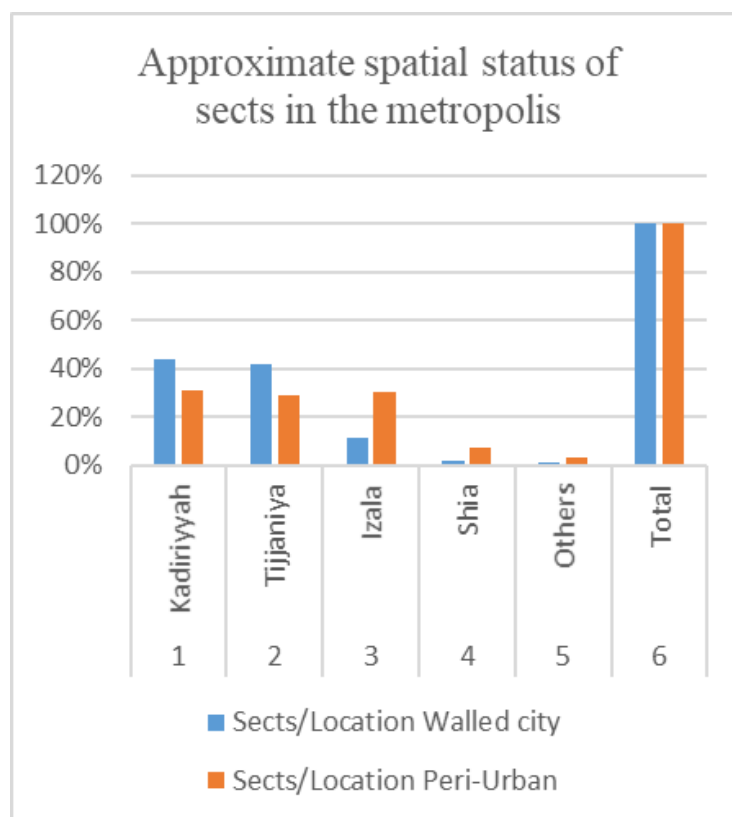


Figure 4: Approximate spatial status of sects in the metropolis

'nobody can use me again in religion to get personal benefit from politician. Leader that told you in the last election to boycott certain aspirant as none-pious, this election session after a closed door meeting will come out and tell you that person is a beacon and sustainer of religion. In many times quarrels erupts between religious committee that some were cheated while dividing the booty.

3.1.3 Spatial stronghold of sects within the metropolis

Before the Maitsine religious crises of the early eighties, Tariqa sects of Kadiriyyah and Tijjaniyyah are the only dominant religious factions in the area. Wards like Kabara, Galadanchi, Tudun Wazirci, Dogarai, Soron Dinki and so on are rooted by followers of Kadiriyyah where the spiritual leader Sheik Nasira Kabara establishes the Headquarter popularly known as Gidan Kabara. On the other hand, Tijjaniyyah followers are more from Salga, Zangon Bare-Bari, Karofin Sudawa, Zage and Bakin Kasuwa. with prominent leaders

like Sheik Mudi Salga, Sheik Yusuf Makwarari, and Sheik Isyaka Rabi'u among others.

With full emancipation of modern Islamic institutions, like SAS, Aliya, AKSILS and Postgraduate studies at BUK, ABU as well as Saudi Arabia, Sudan Egypt etc produces new set of religious scholars with certificates of graduation. The Ulama without certificates are regarded as Traditional while the later are called modern Ulama (Lambu 2013). This led to polarization between the two camps. Modern Ulama adopt hash and radicalized style of preaching, mode of conducts and other notorious identity that distinguished them and nicknamed as Izala around 1987 or there about. Izala followers are commonly residing at peri-urban wards and institutional quarters such as Kabuga, Dukawuya, Dorayi and so on with scholars like Sheik Jafar Mahmud Adam, Another sect evolved which was populated mostly by unemployed youths (victimized by Structural Adjustment Program) known as Shia movement when Tajjaded youths joined the spiritual leader

Sheik Ibrahim Zakzaky from Zaria. Their stronghold is peri-urban Kano around Danbare, Dandinshe, Kurna and Kofar Dawanau.. The religious landscape kept metamorphosing and transforming gradually with fission like Atomic or nuclear. Tijjaniyyah, Kadiriyyah, Izala and even Shia divided into many sectlets due to inter and intra religious, economic and political interest for status, income or responsibility. By way of projection, this division is going to continue due to the benefit attached. Recent concluded 2023 elections signaled the participation of religion in the political sphere of the state and country at large and is likely to continue to a distant future.

3.1.4 Sociography of religious sects in the area

Kadiriyyah is attractively followed by ruling class and their disciple from Emir's palace and its environs popularly referred to Hayewa. The Tijjaniyyah are common to areas surrounding Jakara, Bakin Ruwa, Salga which commonly called Bakin Kasuwa. Usually, elderly and middle income non-working class are the mainstream populace of this doctrine. The Izala sect is a home of working class in a more formal set up mostly youths and elites from western education.

3.1.5 Political struggle among sects in the study area

During election of political leaders, the Ulama of different sects attached themselves to different aspirants and even involved in Campaign as well as active partisanship. Key political positions that are related to religious domain are rotated between sects especially when opposition party happened to win election. Politicking penetrates into the noble position of Enthronement and Dethronement of Emirs mutilating the cultural heritage, identity and values. Loyalty to political class by traditional or religious leader is politicize and made partisan.

4.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, the Muslims busy themselves with the use of religion to favour ethnic, political, ideology in Kano or even Nigeria at large. At times, several

small *Masajid* coexist on the same street with provocative sentiments and innovations in the community. In a recent future, if care is not taken, places of worship is going to outnumbered the shops in the metropolis of Kano signaling sectarian conflicts and religious agitations through what Lambu (2017) called business of religion.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar S. I. (2015). The Nature and Distribution of Property Crimes in Sokoto Metropolis. An M. Sc Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Geography Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Abubakar, D. (2018). The adverse effects of the proliferation of Jumu'ah mosque on the unity of Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. Department of Islamic studies, Jigawa state college of education. IMAF 2018. ISBN 978967. 13087-4-5. Bangi Selangor, Malaysia.
- As-sawy, A.A. (2006). *Lilam al-Anam Bima ja'a fil al jumu'ah Min al-Ahkaam*. Dar ibn Rajab, Cairo. P. 27-28.
- Bn Muhammad A. (2014). The proliferation of jumu'ah mosques in Sokoto metropolis and its effects on Muslim unity (1808-2013). M.A. Islamic studies. UDUS.
- Eliade, M. (1957). The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion. In Introduction to Spatial Analysis December (2014). Available on <https://sites.utexas.edu/religion-theory/bibliographical-resources>.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, (2009). National Population Census Report 2009, Note on the Panel Code Law 1987. (Cap 89 Laws of Northern Nigeria, 1963). S.S Richardson, 1987, 4th Edition.
- Harry, Munt (2014). the Holy city of Madina 'sacred space in early Islamic Arabia' Cambridge university press.

- Hussain, Musharaff (2012). The five pillars of Islam laying the foundations of Devine love and services to humanity. Kube publishing LTD.
- Lambu, I.B. (2013). A Geographical Analysis of Religious Landscapes of Kano Metropolis. A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Geography B.U.K. in Partial Fulfillment and Award of Ph.D in Geography.
- Lambu, I.B. (2015). Belief without faith: The effect of business of religion in Kano state, Nigeria. In S. D. Brunn (Ed.). *The Changing World Religion Map*, Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer International, pp. 1125-1135.
- Lambu, I.B. (2020). Hausanization of Nigerian Culture. In S. D. Brun and R. Kehrein (Eds.), *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*. Dordrecht, the Neterlads. Springer International, pp. 1145-1153.
- Radio Nigeria. (March 19, 2020): President Buhari urges caution, not fear over Covid_19 (Full text).
- Lambu, I.B. (2013). A Geographical Analysis of Religious Landscapes of Kano Metropolis. A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Geography B.U.K. in Partial Fulfillment for Award of Ph.D in Geography.
- Last, M. (2014), from dissent to dissidence the genesis and development of reformist Islamic groups in northern Nigeria. In sects and social disorder. Edited by Abdul –Raufu Mustapha. James Currey.
- Muhammad, W; Kabiru, H.I. (2015). The proliferation of *jumu'at* mosques in Kano metropolis: A historical perspective, department of history. Bayero university Kano.
- Sambo, M.B. (1988). In Abubakar D. (2018) The adverse effects of the proliferation of Jumu'ah mosque on the unity of Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. Department of Islamic studies, Jigawa state college of education. IMAF 2018. ISBN 978967. 13087-4-5. Bangi Selangor, Malaysia.