THE NIGERIAN HISTORY MACHINE AND THE PRODUCTION OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY

BY

SAMAILA SULEIMAN

B.A. & M.A., Bayero University Kano, 2004/2010

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Department of Historical Studies
University of Cape Town
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

January 2015

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

University of Cape Town

THE NIGERIAN HISTORY MACHINE AND THE PRODUCTION OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY

ABSTRACT

While existing studies on Nigerian historiography cover renowned historians, major historical writings and prominent historiographical traditions, there is hardly any exploration of the institutional processes and concrete circumstances within which historical knowledge is produced. Deploying a range of sources, from in-depth personal interviews – with historians, archivists, museum curators and publishers of history texts – archival research to museum displays, this thesis examines the production of history and the socio-political tensions and conflicts associated with it in postcolonial Nigeria. Specifically, it explores the linkages between Nigerian history as a discursive practice and the institutions where historical knowledge is produced such as history departments, archives, museums and the publishers of history and scholarly texts. I see these processes as a kind of "history machine", defined as the interconnected system of social technologies through which the Nigerian state defines the discursive limits of the nation by appropriating, packaging and relaying discrete ethnic histories as Nigerian history in specific national cultural institutions such as archives and museums. But it is not robotic or a centrally run machine. The Nigerian history machine, originally activated as a nationalist intellectual mechanism against colonialist historiography in the wake of decolonization, broke down into a multitude of regional compartments in the postcolonial period, leading to the proliferation of "extra-national" discourses in areas like the Middle Belt region. The practices of collecting, organizing, classifying, naming and appropriating discrete cultural symbols activates, as much it silences, the voices of certain communities. Each site of production strives, ostensibly, to produce Nigerian history, retaining and concealing the distinctive historical repertoires of each constituent ethnic community as they go through the history machine. In the process certain communities were ostracized to which they responded by manufacturing their local histories against the institutional representation of their pasts in History Departments, National Archives and National Museums. Through a textual analysis of the writings of historians and other scholars of Middle Belt extraction, this study posits that the textual tradition of the Middle Belt historiography is animated by a discourse of marginality and resistance to the dominant interpretations of northern Nigerian history and historiography, an epistemic struggle by the minorities to reassert their "historical patrimony" or reclaim their "historical dignity" through the creation of projects that highlight their historical past.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special gratitude to Professor Shamil Jeppie, whose penetrating questions taught me to question more deeply. I thank him especially for expanding my vision of historiography and directing me to a wide range of cutting-edge theoretical paths to reading the making of historical discourse. I would also like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Andrea Brigaglia, my co-supervisor, whose valuable insights into northern Nigerian history and the dynamics of identity politics have helped tremendously in enriching the thematic and empirical focus of this thesis. To my beloved mother, wife, and children, I cannot thank you enough for your love, inspiration and patience.

My gratitude is due to the following individuals: Professor Haruna Wakili, Malam Ibrahim Mu'azzam. Professor A.R. Mohammed, Professor Ibrahim Bello Kano of Bayero University Kano, Professor Aminu Isyaku Yandaki, Professor Mustafa Gwadabe, Musa Ibrahim Abba, Dr. Salisu Bala, Arewa House, whose unwavering encouragement and support, towards the completion of this thesis, has been tremendous. Your assistance in various capacities is truly appreciated.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship (SSRC) funded through the Carnegie Foundation of New York. Their generous grants and platforms for international workshops have been extremely useful for researching and completing this thesis. I am also extremely indebted to Huma, and particularly the Tombouctou Manuscripts Project, University of Cape Town, for offering me financial aid and a robust intellectual space for writing up this thesis. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Rifqah Kahn, who was always willing to respond to my queries, and for her untiring support during my stay in Cape Town. I am also indebted to Dr. Mauro Nobili of the University of Illinois, Susanna Mollins-Literas, Professor Deborah Posel, Dr. Ilana Van Wyk, Dr. Zethu Matebeni, Simbarashe Gukurume, Abubakar Sadiq Abdulkadir and Chapane Mitiua. I appreciate you all for your edifying partnership and support.

I thank Bayero University Kano for giving me a three-year study leave, which enabled me to pursue this study. The curators of National Archives Kaduna, National Museums Jos, Kaduna and Makurdi, as well as Directors of research centers, deserve a special gratitude for granting me interviews and access to their valuable

repositories. Members of staff of the History Departments of University of Jos and Benue State University, I say thank you for facilitating this intellectual endeavor with your ideas and intellectual resources.

DECLARATION

I, Samaila Suleiman, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorize the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature:..... Date: .....

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE……i

ABSTRACT ……ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ……iii-iv

DECLARATION……..iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS…….vi-viii

ABBREVIATIONS……..viii-ix

LIST OF MAPS ……...x

LIST OF FIGURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS……xiii-xiii

INTRODUCTION…….....1-32

- THEORISING THE "HISTORY MACHINE"……....4-11
- THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: NIGERIA AND THE POLITICS OF FEDERALISM…….....11-21
- CONSTRUCTING THE MIDDLE BELT DISCOURSE COMMUNITY…….21-25
- THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT.....25-29
- SOURCES AND APPROACH.....29-30
- OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS.....29-32

CHAPTER ONE…….33-74

THE NIGERIAN "HISTORY MACHINE"

- INTRODUCTION……33-35
- MAPPING THE FIELD: HISTORIANS AND THEIR PROFESSION……..36-49
- THE MAKING OF ARCHIVES……..49-61
- MANUFACTURING NATIONAL ANTIQUITIES AND HERITAGE…….62-70
- THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION AND CURRICULUM PRODUCTION…….70-74
- CONCLUSION……..74

CHAPTER TWO…….75-100

DECENTERING NIGERIAN HISTORY

- INTRODUCTION.....75-76

- FIRST RUPTURE.....76-81
- THE MIDDLE BELT AS A SECONDARY THEME OF NIGERIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY……..81-83
- THE ABU SCHOOL OF HISTORY……...83-87
- SECOND RUPTURE……..87-93
- TOWARDS MIDDLE BELT HISTORIES…….93-95
- THE ALLEGIANCES OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIANS……...96-99
- CONCLUSION.....99-100

CHAPTER THREE……101-136

THE MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RESISTANCE

- INTRODUCTION……101
- "UNI JOS OUR UNI JOS": THE PLATEAU HISTORY PROJECT AND THE THRESHOLD OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY……..101-106
- THE BENUE VALLEY PROJECT……...106-111
- WRITING WITH VENGEANCE: THE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY……...111-126
- HISTORY WRITING AND THE SETTLER-INDIGENE DEBATE……...126-135
- CONCLUSION……...136

CHAPTER FOUR…….137-149

DISSIDENT HISTORIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR ARCHIVES

- INTRODUCTION……...137
- THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES KADUNA……137-144
- LAWYERS IN THE ARCHIVES: SETTLING LAND, CHIEFTAINCY AND BOUNDARY DISPUTES……144-145
- PUTTING THE ARCHIVES ON TRIAL……..145-149
- CONCLUSION……...149

CHAPTER FIVE……..150-186

MANUFACTURING BRIDGES ACROSS CULTURAL CLEAVAGES: MUSEUMS AND THE POLITICS OF SYMBOLIC HISTORY

- INTRODUCTION……..150-152
- APPROPRIATING NOK ANTIQUITIES…….152-162
- SEEING NIGERIAN HISTORIES THROUGH NATIONAL GALLERIES…162-170
- VISITING MUSEUM IN A CLIMATE OF CONFLICTS……170-173
- HISTORIES ON THE MARGINS OF NATIONAL GALLERIES: THE QUEST FOR MINORITY MUSEUMS…….173-178
- PERFORMING MIDDLE BELT HISTORIES……..179-185
- CONCLUSION……...185-186

CHAPTER SIX……187-224

PUBLISHERS, PRINTERS AND THE EXPANSION OF MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY

- INTRODUCTION……..187-188
- ORIGINS OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY……...188-196
- BOOKS AND JOURNAL PRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF MIDLLE BELT PUBLISHING…….....196-208
- "PUBLISH OR PRINT": VANITY PRESS, HISTORY AND AMATEUR HISTORIANS…….208-215
- "PRESSING HISTORY": THE PRESS, MAFIA THEORISTS AND MIDDLE BELT HISTORIOGRAPHY…….....215-223
- CONCLUSION……224

CONCLUSION……..225-229

LIST OF SOURCES……230-252

ABBREVIATIONS

- ABU: Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.
- AP: Aboki Publishers.
- BSU: Benue State University.
- BMAS: Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard.
- COCIN: Church of Christ in Nigeria.
- NAN: National Archives of Nigeria.
- NAK: National Archives Kaduna.
- NCMM: National Commission for Museums and Monuments.
- NHRS: Northern History Research Scheme.
- NORLA: Northern Regional Literary Agency.
- NUC: National Universities Commission.
- HSN: Historical Society of Nigeria.
- JHSN: Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria.
- JOHALT: Jos Oral History and Literature Text.
- KADMINEDU: Kaduna Ministry of Education
- MOTNA: Museum of Nigerian Traditional Architecture.
- PPC: Plateau Publishing Company.
- PPP: Plateau Printing Press.
- PHP: Plateau History Project.
- PIDAN: Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network.
- UI: University of Ibadan.
- UJ: University of Jos Press.

- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- SAP: Structural Adjustment Program

LIST OF MAPS

MAP 1: MAP OF NIGERIA……

MAP 2: A MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA……

MAP 3: NIGERIAN MAP SHOWING PROPOSED MIDDLE EBLT STATE.....

MAP 4: A MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN NIGERIA……..

MAP 5: NOK CULTURE REGION…….

LIST OF FIGURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1: FREQUENCY OF ARTICLES APPEARING IN THE JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA…….

FIGURE 2: A CHART SHOWING THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATIONS ON MIDDLE BELT AREAS AND NORTHERN EMIRATES……..

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF PROVINCIAL FILES AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES KADUNA……..

FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF SEARCHERS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES KADUNA BY NATURE OF RESEARCH……...

FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF VISITORS PER YEAR, JOS MUSEUM……..

FIGURE 6: TRENDS IN BOOK PRODUCTION ON MIDDLE BELT COMMUNITIES, 1930s-2000s……

FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF BOOK TITLES BY SUBJECT, ABOKI PUBLISHERS…….

PICTURE 1: HOUSING OF ARABIC COLLECTION IN NATIONAL ARCHIVE KADUNA……..

PICTURE 2: COVER PAGE OF A BOOK PUBLISHED BY THE PLATEAU INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT NETWORK……

PICTURE 3: NOK TERRACOTTA HEADS……

PICTURE 4: A LOCOMOTIVE TRAIN AT THE TRANSPORT EXHIBITION, NATIONAL MUSEUM JOS…….

PICTURE 5: A GERMAN FORD KIT CAR AT THE TRANSPORT EXHIBITION, NATIONAL MUSEUM JOS……

PICTURE 6: THE AFIZERE COMPOUND AT THE MUSEUM OF TRADITIONAL NIGERIAN ARCHITECTURE, NATIONAL MUSEUM JOS…….

PICTURE 7: COVER PAGE OF A BOOK PUBLISHED BY THE LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, JOS……

PICTURE 8: COVER PAGE OF *THE MIDDLE BELT IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT*…….

PICTURE 9: PUBLICATION DETAILS OF *THE MIDDLE BELT IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT*.....

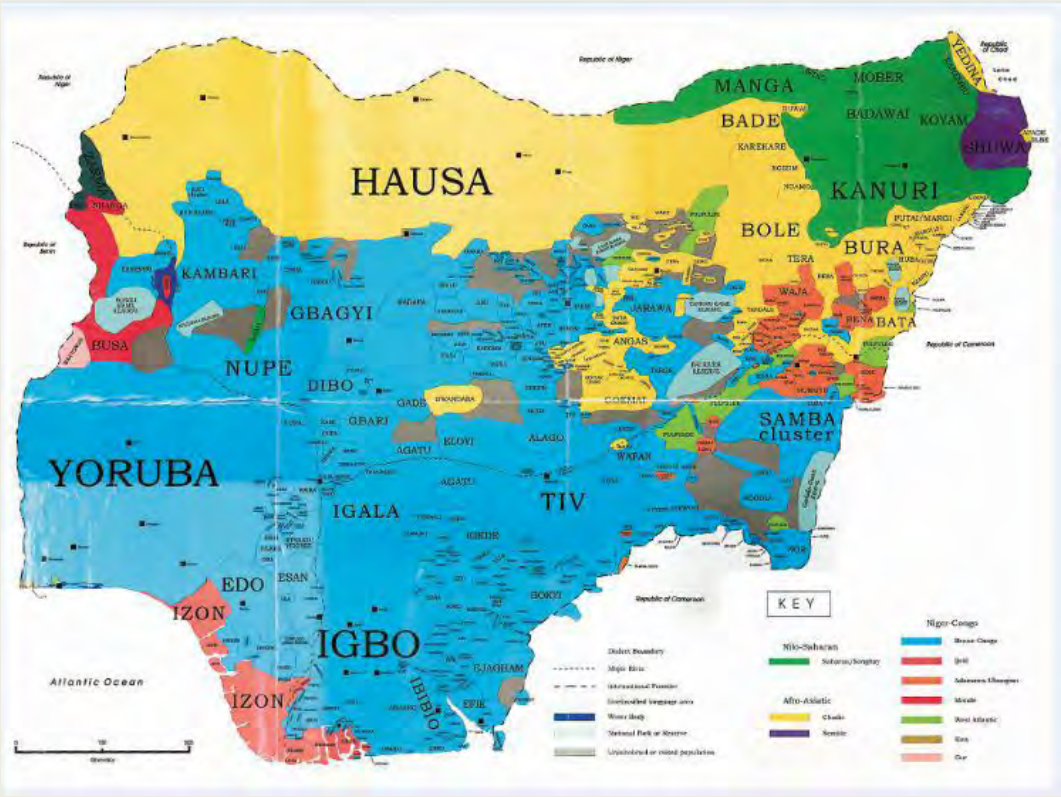
PICTURE 10: COVER PAGE OF *TAROH HISTORY*…….

PICTURE 11: PUBLICATION DEATAILS OF *TAROH HISTORY*……...

PICTURE 12: FRONT COVER OF *NATIONAL IMPRESSION* MAGAZINE…….

Map 1: NIGERIA

MAP 2: NIGERIAN ETHNIC MAP



Introduction

> We cannot exclude in advance any of the actors who participate in the production of history or any of the sites where that production may occur. While some of us debate what history is or was, others take it in their own hand. (Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1988, 25).

> History, fashioned physically by man in the workshop of life itself, constructed mentally by man in laboratories, libraries and on excavation sites, is also made for man, for the people, to illuminate and motivate their awareness. (J. Ki-Zerbo, *General History of Africa* I, 1981,3).

Nigerian history, often thought of as a finite body of knowledge, that could be unequivocally enunciated is not always written or taught in academic institutions. It is also archived, curated, performed, and published within different institutional contexts beyond the academic industry. This dissertation offers a critical (re) reading of the making of history in postcolonial Nigeria. I make a twofold intervention in Nigerian historiographical discourse that is both conceptual and thematic. At the conceptual level, the work attempts to decenter Nigerian academic history by opening it up to the institutional practices and discourses of archives, museums and the publishing industry. As for the thematic contribution, I map out, for the first time, the textual tradition of the histories of ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt region and the politics motivating it.

This dissertation lies at the intersection of three approaches to the making of history: academic history and archaeology, the making of archives, and the presentation of history in national museums. Although these "approaches have their own priorities and agendas, draw on different sets of data, they have as their common thread the interpretation of past human activity".[1] There are, in fact, multiple ways through which we produce and organize our relations to history. Historical writing is one such way, but historical knowledge is equally produced in museums, heritage

[1] Peter Stone, "Presenting the Past: a Framework," in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries*, ed. Gerard Corsane, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 240.

sites and archives. This generic approach to the making of history affords us the opportunity of linking the theory and practice of Nigerian history in ways that are conceptually novel and empirically grounded. In order to track the concrete practices and conditions under which Nigerian history is produced, we look beyond the academy since historical practice involves multiple yet mutually supportive participating agents and agencies. The notion of history as a closed intellectual activity in which the only socially acceptable past is the one produced by academic historians through a methodologically and conceptually sophisticated ritual,[2] is no longer tenable. The making of Nigerian history involves an arsenal of diverse practitioners working in different sites and contexts such as policymakers, historians, archaeologists, archivists, museum curators and publishers. This knowledge production grid is conditioned by the complex history of the Nigerian nation and the socio-economic and political dynamics associated with it.

While there is no shortage of works on Nigerian historiography and its various contours, the meaning, essence and concrete circumstances of its production are fundamental issues, which are still far from historians' concern. To put it differently, although most professional historians would admit there is epistemological connection between mainstream history (as practiced within academy) and archival and museum institutions, the state of our knowledge on the ways in which these allied practices connect and shape the direction of historical discourse leave much to be desired. In common historiographical parlance, archives are at best considered as institutions of historical sources; museums as mere galleries of material cultures; and the publishing industry not more than an agent for the preparation, distribution and marketing of history texts.

Despite the successes of the nationalist historiography against colonialist history in the 1950s, and the dogged attempt at constructing a national narrative in the postcolonial era, using state-controlled institutions of history, Nigerian history has been challenged by regional and separatist histories, and, in fact, even scrapped from school curricula. The seeds of this postcolonial epistemological crisis were embedded in the foundations of the nationalist historiography as manifested through the

[2] M. Cross, "Changing Frontiers of Academic Discourse: Knowledge, Power and the Production of History in South Africa," Democracy: Popular Precedents, Practice, Culture, University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, 13-15 July (1994).

appropriation of the Nigerian history project by competing regional governments in the 1960s. During the 1980s, some of the ethnic minorities, who felt marginalized by the national and regional institutions of history, struggled to establish their own versions of local history projects to articulate their identities and restore their voices in Nigerian history. One of the bourgeoning subnational narratives is the Middle Belt historiography. This historiographical tradition reflects the tension between distinct intellectual trends and political agendas in postcolonial Nigeria. Since the end of colonial rule in 1960 and the early postcolonial administrative arrangement, such critiques have also reflected the ethnic self-assertion of non-Hausa-Fulani ethnicities in the Middle Belt, linked to wider, if slow, processes of administrative decentralization and political devolution.

The production of Middle Belt historiography is championed by a group of writers largely centered at the University of Jos and Benue State University. The scholarly output by these scholars has expanded rapidly over the last thirty years. [3] Although their works deal largely with specific cases of local histories, they fit into a larger discursive tradition,[4] which emerged in the 1970s as a counterdiscourse against

[3] Some of the works on Middle Belt communities include: Baba Thomas Bingel, "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt A.D. 100-1900: An explanation of the Role of Historical and Environmental Factors in shaping the Population of Niger Province" (PhD Diss. A.B.U. Zaria, 1991); Okpeh O. Okpeh, "The Idoma and Minority Group Politics in northern Nigeria 1944-1960: a Study in an Aspect of National Question," (M.A. Diss. University of Jos, 1994); Mailafiya Filaba, "A History of Karu, Kurape and Kurudu Kingdoms: A Study of Economic, Social and Political Changes among the Gbayi of Central Nigeria in 18th and 19th Centuries," (PhD Diss. A.B.U. Zaria, 1994); John Longkat, "The Economic and Political Relations of the Peoples of Southern-Western Foothills of the Jos-Plateau Region to 1900 A.D.," (PhD Diss. A.B.U. Zaria, 1994); *The Right to be Different: Perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt and Constitutional change in Nigeria*, Nankin Bagudu and Dakasa C.J. eds. (Jos: League for Human Rights, 2001); *Studies in the History of Central Nigerian Area*, Aliyu A. Idrees and Yakubu Ochefu eds. (Lagos: CSS Press, 2002); *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria* ,eds. Okpeh O. Okpeh and Sati Fwatshak (Makurdi: Oracle Press, 2007).

[4] This is the frame within which contemporary intellectuals from the Niger Delta region are producing alternative histories of their respective communities that challenge the official version of Nigerian history. The Niger Delta historiography is largely inspired by the agenda of resource control. See Peter Ekeh's "The Mischief of History: Bala Usman's Unmaking of Nigerian History"; and Ben Naanen's "Bala Usman, History and the Niger Delta," both available at: www.waado.org.

northern Nigerian historiography as represented in the 19th century Sokoto Jihad scholarship, as well as colonial anthropological and ethnographic writings.

What is the textual tradition of Middle Belt historiography and the politics motivating it? How can we account for the rise in the output of historical writings on the Middle Belt minorities? How are these histories produced and circulated, and in what concrete circumstances? How do Middle Belt historians negotiate through national history institutions and knowledge-regulating regimes? In addressing these specific questions on the Middle Belt, we are in fact, deciphering the "essence" of Nigerian history where, how and by whom it is produced. By focusing on the multiple sites of history-making, I take Nigerian historiography beyond textual and methodological discourses, to the concrete sites where historical knowledge is produced. It is envisaged that this approach would help us uncover the nuances of the institutional practices around which certain histories flourish while silencing others, and perhaps demonstrate the subtle connections between politics, identity-making and knowledge production.

The linkages between history as an academic field and archive, museum, and the publishing industry are grossly under-theorized. With cases drawn largely from Plateau and Benue states in the Middle Belt region, I offer what I believe to be a coherent and empirically grounded account of the linkages between Nigerian history as a kind of theoretical knowledge and the concrete sites or institutions where it is produced. Deploying insights from an array of disciplines such as cultural anthropology, archival science, museum studies, book history and publishing discourses, I develop the idea of the "history machine" as an approach to understanding the dialectics of history-making in postcolonial Nigeria.

Theorising the "History Machine"

This dissertation was originally intended to be a work in intellectual history. After several months of engagement with an inter-disciplinary literature ranging from cultural studies to other avant-garde theoretical discourses in the fields of archives, museum studies and book history, I became acquainted with some new methods of interpreting the ways in which history is produced beyond the customary reading of historiography as a fairly closed system of the reading and writing of texts. Whereas the dominant paradigm favours an "objective" reconstruction of the patterns of

historiography mainly through the study of the textual works of professional historians, the production of meaning and representation forms the focus of the newer cultural studies approaches to the making of history.[5] Seen within the rubric of cultural theory, the production of historical discourse must go beyond history as a literary/textual form. What I am positing here is that the search for Nigerian history calls for a "unity of approach" across a broad range of historical practices.[6] I see this ensemble of practices as a "machine", a "history machine", defined as the interconnected system and technologies through which the Nigerian state attempts to appropriate, package and present discrete ethnic histories as Nigerian history in specific national cultural institutions such as archives and museums.

My attempt at theorizing a "history machine", although drawing from works done in critical cultural studies and cultural anthropology, is novel in the field of Nigerian historiography. But I will begin by acknowledging that the idea of "the machine" as an analytical category in cultural studies is not original to this dissertation. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their collaborative works articulate the concept of machine as a tool for explaining social formations and literary production. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they define social formations by what they dub as "machinic assemblage" and not through modes of production.[7] The book according to Deleuze and Guattari is a kind of "literary machine", an assemblage that is unattributable.[8] In other words, the making of the book involves different agents and processes that cannot be solely attributed to one agent. The use of the term machine in their co-authored work, *Anti-Oedipus*, is largely mechanical and psychoanalytical in approach. Analyzing the configuration of capitalist production, Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism operates through a combination of technical and social

---

[5] Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006).

[6] The term Historical Practice in the context of dissertation is not limited to history as practiced within the academy. It is used broadly as a generic category to denote all formal kinds of epistemic practices such as historiography, archaeology, heritage management, archival documentation and other curatorial platforms that are linked together by their predilection and preoccupation with the past, notwithstanding the difference in their methodological alignments.

[7] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* transl. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 435.

[8] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5.

machines. They did not make any pretention about their interpretation of the social machine in a literal sense: the social machine, they declare, "is a machine, irrespective of metaphor". They, however, admit it could be technical as well as social; depending on the perspective from which one is looking at it. The clock, for instance is "a technical machine for measuring uniform time"; it is also a "social machine for reproducing canonic hours and for assuring order in the city".[9] In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze describes art as a "machine" for producing certain impressions about how we make meanings about objects around us.[10] Following Deleuze and Guattari, other writers have operationalized the notion of the machine in different contexts: Jeffery Cohen formulates the idea of Medieval Identity Machines,[11] and John Johnston, posits the notion of the "Vision Machine".[12]

My operationalization of the term "machine" departs from its usages by the preceding scholars. While they conceive the idea of the machine mechanically in relation to literature, psychoanalysis, and capitalism, I am transposing it into historical discourse to animate the processes through which history is produced. My idea of the history machine is simply metaphorical. History conceived of as a machine becomes a site of multiple practices that are connected by their shared interest in past human activities. But unlike mechanical bodies, "real" machines, that manufacture commodities under an overriding unit and process, the history machine is different. The production of history, of course, involves real machines as in the cases of archaeological excavation or the printing of history books; but the idea of the machine in this context is deployed simply as an allegorical interpretive framework. The history machine operates as a dynamic and double-jointed system, with various moving parts that are not attached to a central operating device. Yet, its transmitters traverse the same epistemic terrain, and are linked in many significant ways. The history machine is akin to a factory that manufactures the past as a cultural commodity – as artifacts, monuments and heritage sites, archives and scholarly

[9] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1972), 141.

[10] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 200), 147.

[11] Jeffery J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[12] John Johnston, "Machinic Vision," *Critical Inquiry* 26 (1999).

history texts and popular books, which although ontologically diverse, share a common ultimate epistemological concern – that is the construction of knowledge about past human activity.

History as a practice means different things to practitioners in different fields. For the conventional historian, who practices the craft within the walls of academic formations, history is a written narrative of the past as documented in academic monographs. The archaeologist and museum curator see history in terms of artifacts or past material culture. Although the archivist is expected to have some knowledge of history, the prevailing view is that "an archivist is not and should not be a historian".[13] While these practitioners operate in different institutional contexts, they are epistemologically connected to the grid of *history* in many significant ways. When historians write history, it assumes the status of a textual product; when published it is turned into history books or journals; when documents from the past are archived, they form an institution of source material for historical writing (archives); when curated in museums and heritage sites it becomes artifacts and monuments. These practices together constitute a dynamic ensemble of institutional machines by which the past is processed and turned into history. It is in this symbolic sense that I envision my formulation of the history machine paradigm.

The idea of the history machine, for me, offers a theoretical path to making what has come to represent the "cultural turn". My transition from mainstream intellectual history to cultural history has been inspired largely by the works of Michel Foucault,[14] Michel de Certeau,[15] Michel-Rolph Trouillot,[16] David William Cohen[17]and to some extent Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural production.[18] To be sure, none of the five theorists, perhaps with the exception of Cohen, is a trained historian, but their theoretical insights and postulations about history bring additional

---

[13] Thomas T. Spencer, "The Archivist as a Historian: towards a Broader Definition," *Archivaria*, No. 17 (1982-1983), 296.

[14] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

[15] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[16] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

[17] See David Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[18] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

light and flow into the idea of the history machine. It is difficult to place Foucault's works in any single domain as he moves across disciplines. De Certeau was a Jesuit theologian whose works, like those of Foucault, "explored the edges of past systems of thought".[19] Trouillot is an anthropologist by training, but who was born into a family where history sat at the dinner table.[20] Cohen is a leading figure in the now established field of historical anthropology and his *The Combing of History* has been a very influencing study of the making of history beyond the academy. Bourdieu is a sociologist, whose works on cultural production and practice theory have become a major theoretical voice in cultural history. However, the theoretical works of these scholars meet at the confluence of "practice theory" in terms of their shared interest in the situatedness of discursive practices within concrete cultural institutions. What I find particularly interesting for the purpose of this dissertation is their respective approaches to the production of knowledge in various institutions within society. The writings of Foucault, particularly *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of things* inspired a new shift in historiography in which the past is seen as socially constructed. The cultural construction of the past, "discourse analysis, and the rhetorics of historical writing" itself, so central to the new cultural history", leans heavily on Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods. History, viewed from the Foucauldian perspective, is a study in power relations. How history is written, archived, curated and published is deeply implicated in structures of power in a given society. Thus, historical knowledge is controlled through mechanisms of power such as history departments, museums, archives and the publishing industry. In other words, history is not only comprised of discourses, but also embedded and situated in concrete institutions, which operate largely through rules of inclusion and exclusion. The institutions, which embrace the past as their discursive field, and whose operations are governed by regimes of discipline, serve as the purveyors of the history machine. All sites of historical pedagogy, whether they are history departments or museums, are run through the mechanism of "discursive policing", defined as the "political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along

[19] Willem Frijhoff, "Foucault Reformed by Certeau: Historical Strategies of Discipline and Everyday Tactics of Appropriation," in *Cultural History After Foucault*, ed. John Neubauer, (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999), 93.

[20] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, xvii.

with the knowledges and powers which they carry".[21] These institutions or tools of history represent the "great political and economic apparatuses" under which discourses are produced and transmitted.[22] In academic institutions, for example, students of history are expected to study within the limits and rules established by the institution, the discipline and the department, and to acquire certain *discipline* with which they should practice the historical craft. In the words of Foucault, "the discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse."[23] Similarly, visitors to the National Museums and searchers in the National Archives must conduct themselves according to the rules set by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and the National Archives of Nigeria respectively. Even more importantly, curators of collections and archives follow a set of rules that determines how collections will look like. These sites of history-making are the technical bodies of the history machine, or what de Certeau calls "the historical institution" or the "erudite machine", in relation to the making of archives in medieval Europe, and what Pierre Chaunu describes in another context as the "gigantic machine". [24]

The history machine model speaks to the anthropological tradition of the production of history whereby schools, museums, heritage sites, archives, and commemorations are being examined in their own right as sites and practices of knowledge production. History is a practice or an operation in the sense in which de Certeau broadly defines it as a combination of a social place (history departments, museums, archives, heritage sites etc.), scientific practices (historiography, archaeology, anthropology, etc.) and writing.[25] These practices involve such technical procedures as collecting, writing, discoursing, archiving, curating and publishing, which release the practice of history to the space of the society and organize the

---

[21] Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, (Boston: Routledge and Kegan, 1981), 64.

[22] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Nature of Truth, Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Michael P. Lynch, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001), 317.

[23] Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 67.

[24] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 67.

[25] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 57.

procedures of the discipline.[26] That the traditional meaning of historiography has been both contested and deepened by a whole range of different approaches to the "study of our changing ways of making sense of the past" is a truism. History is essentially a consciously structured activity in which the past is processed into historical knowledge. I envision the making of history in postcolonial Nigeria as the function of a collaborative regime of knowledge production, which is, at least at the initial stage, essentially state-driven. From this perspective, thus, Nigerian history becomes a "collective product, not that of an individual historian, but together a result and symptom of the group which functions as a laboratory".[27] The idea of the history machine "requires a wider view of historical production than most theorists admit",[28] since the making of history neither starts nor "end with the work of a professional historian since the public is quite likely to contribute to history if only by adding its own readings to – and about – the scholarly production".[29] From this viewpoint, I am opening Nigerian historical discourse to the spaces of archival, museum and publishing discourses and practices. I have found works in archival theory, museum studies as well as book history conceptually useful to theorizing the history machine paradigm.

The institutional grid within which the practitioners of history operate might be weak, depending on the contexts and conditions under which they practice. Although historians, archaeologists and museum curators operate along distinct professional and disciplinary tracks and in separate institutional sites, this work demonstrates that they work, often unwittingly, in a huge industry (sponsored and monitored by the Nigerian government), which produces various meanings, symbols and interpretations of the Nigerian past toward a common social purpose, i.e. nation-building. Thus, one of the limitations of the history machine paradigm is that while the historians in our area of study claim to be writing for the sake of ethnic nationalism, the activities of the museums and archives are, in line with a national cultural policy, which is geared towards nation building through the production and

[26] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 57.

[27] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 64.

[28] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

[29] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

preservation of documents and material culture. To be sure, the scope of the history machine as defined in this dissertation is limited to the official sites of history-making such as history departments, archives and museums. Other pertinent social institutions like the family and religious organizations are not covered in this work.

The linkages between institutions for the preservation of the past and the project of nation building are fundamental to this project. Stripped of its 19th century positivist garb, history resembles a kind of "battleground" on which contending versions of the past compete for representation and discursive ascendancy. The broader view of the field of historical studies sets the hegemonic history machine in the context of marginal history projects within other local and regional units, social and political movements.[30] Since not every narrative of the past can be processed into a national history, whose narrative gets included or excluded in the making of Nigerian history?

Using the idea of the history machine, I map out the situatedness of the histories of ethnic minorities in history departments and texts, archives, museums and publishing houses. These are treated as the technologies of epistemological repression that the Nigerian history machine exercises on the Middle Belt minority histories. I also examine the political tensions and conflicts that make the Nigerian history machine function and breakdown at certain points. Driven by a penchant for national historical narrative, the Nigerian history machine has been ruptured at certain stages. Although the various Nigerian communities have been federated into the Nigerian state, the epistemological venture of "federating" the discrete ethnic histories has been deeply problematic because of Nigeria's endemic cultural diversity. Thus, it should be made clear from the onset that in addition to the Nigerian history machine there have been attempts at building regional/subnational machines according to the rhythm of politics and social dynamics within the country.

The Historical Context: Nigeria and the politics of Federalism

Nigeria is a federal state and a sizeable country located in West Africa. With the capital in Abuja, Nigeria is presently made up of thirty-six states – including the

[30] Peter Seixas, Introduction to *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 5.

capital – and seven hundred and seventy-four local government areas. The country is bordered by the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroun in the east and Niger Republic to the north. It has an area covering roughly 356, 668 square miles. The physical geography of Nigeria on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean in the south and the Sahara Desert in the north exposes the country to two major foreign influences: Western and Christian influence in the south and Arab and Islamic sway in the north.

Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world with a population of about 170 million people and over 250 ethnicities – the major ones being the Hausa and Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the west and the Igbo in the east. In addition to these major ethnicities, there are multiple ethnic and linguistic minorities found mainly in the Middle Belt areas of northern Nigeria and the Niger Delta region in the south. The great variety of cultures produced by a protracted historical process of intermingling and the wide differences in the scale and degree of social and political formations in the pre-colonial period has complicated the history of the formation of ethnicities in Nigeria. The number of ethnicities in Nigeria does not correspond to the number of languages, which is estimated at 529. Some of the languages are mutually intelligible while a great number are not. The northern part of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim with a large concentration of Christians in the Middle Belt. The Southeast and the Niger Delta regions are predominantly Christian, and the Southwest is mainly populated by Christians and Muslims.

For over five hundred years before colonial intervention, the northern part of Nigeria had been exposed to influences from Western Sudan and North Africa. Islam was introduced in Borno and Hausaland by a group of North African and Wangarawa traders in the 11th and 14th centuries respectively.[31] These religious and cultural contacts allowed for the emergence of a thriving literary tradition that lasted for centuries. An Islamic Jihad led by Shehu Usman dan Fodio in the early 19th century resulted in the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate,[32] which incorporated hitherto autonomous communities into a single polity. The Islamic movement extended beyond the frontiers of Hausaland to as far as Borno. Downward towards Bauchi,

[31] See John Lavers, "Islam in the Bornu Caliphate". *Odu* 5 (1971), 27-53; and J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa* (London: University of Oxford Press, 1959).

[32] See Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Longman, 1967).

Plateau, Benue and Gongola rivers a whole chain of emirates emerged.[33] The emirates' attempts to control some of the "non-Muslim groups"[34] of the Middle Belt were followed by resistance. It is interesting to note that the Jihad resulted in the production of a historiographical tradition that sought to delegitimize the prevailing religious and political practices and justify the new order that was being established in pre-colonial northern Nigeria. The literature produced focused on the history of the region, the activities and experiences of the Jihad leaders and political treatises on how to administer the caliphate. Thus, the major caveat of the non-Muslims in the region has been the charge levelled against the Caliphate's intelligentsia that in constructing their narratives, the latter ignored the experiences of the former. The failure to convert a significant number of traditionalists in the southern parts of the caliphate left a huge vacuum for Christian proselytization in colonial northern Nigeria.

The emergence and spread of Christianity and the Pentecostal drive gave impetus to the voices of the non-Muslim groups who were variously and derogatively constructed as "pagans", *arna*[35] and "heathens".[36] The advent of Christianity and the establishment of schools, hospitals, dispensaries, and churches by the Missionaries in the non-Muslim societies, engendered a shared religious identity, which fed into

[33] There is a good literature on the impact of the Sokoto Jihad on the Jos-Plateau area, Niger-Benue and the Middle-Benue confluence. See Ahmed Rufa'i Mohammed's *History of the Spread of Islam in the Niger-Benue Confluence Area, Igalaland, Egbirraland and Lokoja C. 1900-1960* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2014); Mahmoud Hamman, *The Middle-Benue Region and the Sokoto Jihad 1812-1869, the Establishment of the Emirate of Muri* (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2007); John G. Nengel, "Echoes of the Sokoto Jihad and its Legacies on the Societies of the Jos-Plateau," in *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804-2004*, Vol. II, eds. Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2006); Mohammed S. Abdulkadir, "The Effects of Extension of the Sokoto Caliphate on the Igala Kingdom," in *The Sokoto Caliphate*: *History and Legacies*, Vol. I, eds. Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu eds, (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2006); Mohammed D. Suleiman, "The Sokoto Jihad, Sharia and the Minorities in Northern Nigeria," in *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Vol. II.

[34] The term non-Muslim group was used by the colonial administrators to refer to the peoples of the Middle Belt areas in the southern parts of northern Nigeria.

[35] This is a Hausa term loosely translated as "animist".

[36] Yusufu Turaki, "The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-Political Role of he Non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial Hierarchical Structure of the Northern Nigerian Region: a Socio-Ehical Analysis of the Colonial Legacy," (PhD Diss. 1982), 9.

conceptions of a social and political identity that was seen to be different from the dominant Islamic patterns in politics and society in Northern Nigeria.[37] In an attempt to win converts, the Christian missionaries reactivated local sentiments and memories of victimhood among the non-Muslim groups against the Muslim Hausa, Fulani and the Kanuri. This view has been re-echoed by Mathew Hassan Kukah when he states that, "the products of these missionary efforts were gradually chipping away at the foundation of Anglo-Fulani hegemony and their education served to provide an escape route for those that this class held bondage for many years".[38]

Prior to the emergence of Nigeria in 1914, following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by the British colonial administration, the polities established by different pre-colonial societies varied greatly in terms of size and composition. Among the largest and prominent ones by the 19th century were the Sokoto Caliphate and the Borno Sultanate in the north, the Benin Kingdom and the Alafinate of Oyo in the south. The boundaries of these pre-colonial polities did not correspond to the boundaries of ethnicities. Within the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, for example, there existed multiple ethnic and linguistic communities.[39]

Whatever the pre-colonial processes of state formation were, there is no question about the colonial imprints of Nigeria's national pedigree. Although contact between the different communities predated colonialism, the making of Nigeria as a

---

[37] Paul Chunun Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development*: *A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967* (Abuja: Centre for Middle Belt Studies, 2004), 116.

[38] Mathew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), 4.

[39] Yusufu Bala Usman, in many of his writings, has shown that some of the contemporary ethnicities in Nigeria, particularly the major ones were formed in the 19th century as well as in the context of British colonialism in the 20th century. Usman exposes a view of Nigerian history in which multiple ethnicities are said to have lived either in alliance or on their own in sovereign polities, city-states, chiefdoms or village confederations under "natural rulers". According to this perspective, which is popular among communities particularly in the Niger Delta and Middle Belt regions, the various ethnicities like the Hausa and Fulani in the Sokoto Caliphate were ethnically and religiously homogenous. This narrative also implies that prior to the British colonial conquest, the advent of the Sokoto Caliphate among the Hausa and the Fulani and Borno emirates somehow represented the imagined contemporary geopolitical divisions of the "Muslim North" alongside the "Middle Belt" and the "South". Yusufu Bala Usman, "Nigerian Unity and Nigerian History: beyond Fairy Tales," paper delivered at the First Annual Dialogue organized by the Citizens Magazine, Abuja, 20th August (1992), 4.

federated entity was a British colonial initiative. Between 1880s and 1914, the Muslim Caliphates of Sokoto and Borno, the non-Muslim communities around these polities, the diverse Yoruba polities, Igbo and other communities were gradually amalgamated to form the Southern and Northern protectorates. In 1914, the two protectorates were brought together as a single administrative unit, establishing the colonial entity of Nigeria. The country was divided into provinces administered by Resident Officers. With little regard to the pre-colonial social, religious and political formations, the ethnic minorities were incorporated into the new colonial administrative superstructure. The colonial dispensation introduced a new regime of geography in which artificial political boundaries were drawn, leading to the dislocation of many communities "leaving some of the people on one side and some on the other".[40] Indeed, the foundations of the contradictions in Nigeria's federal system were laid during the colonial period through various arbitrary practices and regimes of governance and geography, which accentuated cultural differences, and entrenched communal cleavages. The colonial roots of some of the present day ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and the politics of marginalization among ethnic minorities are not farfetched. In Northern Nigeria, the British introduced the Indirect Rule system under which the various communities where administered through the political structures inherited from the former Sokoto Caliphate.[41] This synergy between the preexisting caliphal regime and the colonial philosophy of governance formed the basis for a strong opposition against the British and their Hausa-Fulani Muslim counterpart in colonial Northern Nigeria, especially among the non-Muslims.

In 1946, the colonial government introduced a regional system of government as a solution to the problem of cultural diversity. Consequently, the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions with capitals in Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu respectively were created (In 1963, the Mid-Western Region was created out of the Western Region). This quasi-federal structure was intended to promote both Nigerian unity

[40] Drake C, "Some Observations on Interethnic Conflict as One Type of Intergroup Conflict," *Conflict Resolution* I, no. 2 (1957), 157.

[41] One of the best studies of the Indirect Rule colonialism is Mahmood Mamdani's recent work, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

and provide within that unity the opportunity for the individual units to pursue their separate cultural aspirations.

Until the 1940s, the politics of identity in Nigeria was mainly defined in terms of a "Core-North" (comprising predominantly Muslim communities) versus the rest of Nigeria. The non-Muslims of Northern Nigeria had no institutional platform under which to articulate their grievances. Unlike the Muslim North (Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Daura, Zamfara, Bauchi and Sokoto), where Islam, the Hausa language, history and culture allowed for the formation of a broader cultural allegiance and cultural identity, the non-Muslim axis of Northern Nigeria had no common language, nor an indigenous set of cultural values to which a majority subscribed, nor a pre-existing regional history to draw on.[42] In the absence of a strong cultural cohesion, the non-Muslim communities resorted to Christianity and historical narratives of marginality and victimhood for a common cultural denominator.

In 1949, a small group of Christian leaders launched the Northern Nigeria Non-Muslim League. This was started with a view to resisting attempts by the Regional Government, under the leadership of Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, to interfere with Christian activities in the Middle Belt. By 1950, the Non-Muslim League had metamorphosed to become the Middle Zone League in order to emphasize its separatist goal. Most of the minority "tribal" unions such as the Berom Tribal Union, Nzit Tribal Union, the Yergam Union, Bachama Progressive Union, the Tiv Progressive Union, Idoma Hope Rising Union, Egbirra Tribal Union immediately became affiliated to the Middle Zone League.[43] Despite the change in nomenclature from Non-Muslim League to Middle Zone League, the socio-political and religious dynamics, which the former contested, remained the defining issue in the latter as a technology of mobilizing Christian solidarity for political purposes in Northern Nigeria.[44] Between 1949 and 1960, these religious-cum-ethnic assemblies gave rise to a political organization for a Middle Belt movement, which later found expression in a political party, the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC). The introduction of

[42] Mark Patrick Smith, "Northern Identity and the Politics of Culture in Nigeria, 1945-1966" (PhD. Diss. University of London, 2004), 223.

[43] Ugbana Okpu, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965* (Uppsala, 1977), 66.

[44] Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*, 514.

federalism in Nigeria in 1954 amplified political rivalries among the various political parties, which were largely ethnic based, that is, they drew support from the major ethnic groups – Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba-in the country. The intrigues of party and minority politics in the north need not detain us here as this has been well covered in previous studies.[45]

In 1958, the Willink Commission (generally referred to as Minorities Commission) was established by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Hon. Alan Lennox-Boyd, "to ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria" and advise on the means of allaying them.[46] A number of organizations appeared before the commission to represent their ethnicities, but only one of such tribal unions claimed to cover a field wider than the purely local. And this was the U.M.B.C. The Middle Belt minorities expressed fears regarding the emirate traditional institutions of Northern Nigeria; the colonial policy of teaching the Hausa language in schools and the danger of losing their mother tongue; fears of Islamic Sharia Law and foreign policy.[47] To the non-Muslims, the "main political aim of the period was to avoid Muslim domination and to resist what they saw as a long-standing British imperialism and Muslim Fulani sub-imperialism in northern Nigeria". [48] But far from representing a homogenous identity, the Middle Belt movement was hamstrung by internal cleavages. The Minorities Commission reported that the support for a Middle Belt region among the minorities was strong only in limited areas such as among the Beroms in Plateau Province, the Tivs in Benue

[45] For details on party politics and the politics of minorities in Northern Nigeria, see Billy J. Dudley, *Party Politics in Northern Nigeria* (Cass, 1968); and Paul Chunun Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*.

[46] Colonial Office, Nigeria, *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into fears of minorities and Means of allying them*, (1958).

[47] Colonial Office, Nigeria, *Report of the Commission*, 58-70.

[48] Niels Kastfelt, "The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria," Paper presented to the Research Seminar of the African Studies Centre, Leiden, 27 April (2006), 6.

Province and Southern Zaria.[49] Expressions of anxiety were reported among other minority ethnicities in both provinces such as the immigrants of various ethnic groups in Jos. In Southern Bauchi, support for a Middle Belt region came only from Jarawa District. In Adamawa Province support for the Middle Belt was practically confined to the Numan Division.[50] From the onset, therefore, it was clear that the minorities were not culturally and linguistically homogeneous enough to convince the colonial administration to yield to the proposal of excising the non-Muslim elements from Northern Nigeria. Consequently, the colonial government declined the demand for the creation of a separate Middle Belt region from the Northern Region.

[49] The term Southern Zaria was used to refer to the non-Muslim societies south of Zaria Emirate who although brought under Zaria Province during the colonial period were never effectively conquered by the Sokoto Caliphate. The term Southern Kaduna is now preferred by historians especially from the Middle Belt areas to distinguish from the Muslim-dominated north of Nigeria and to reassert their cultural and religious autonomy.

[50] Colonial Office, Nigeria, *Report of the Commission*, 72.

Map 3: Nigerian map showing the proposed Middle Belt State.[51]

The Northern Region itself, being a colonial construction, was far from being a monolithic entity. Indeed, it has been argued that in terms of ethnic and religious configuration, Northern Nigeria was far more heterogeneous than the South.[52] There has been a debate about the disintegration of northern Nigeria as an entity.[53] The

[51] Available at: http://www.nigerianmuse.com

[52] James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 354.

[53] Andrea Brigaglia, "Is the 'North' a mere Rhetorical Tool? Reflections on the Disintegration of Northern Nigeria from the First Republic to Boko Haram," paper presented on Nigeria

British colonial regime was accused of conferring a territorial edge to the Northern Region, in terms of size, over the rest of the country. According to the prominent constitutional academic lawyer, Benjamin Obi Nwabueze:

> The persistence of the idea of one Northern Nigeria is strange because there is nothing like Northern Nigeria as a sociological, cultural, linguistic or religious entity. First, the North consists, not of one tribe, but of various tribes marked apart from each other by fundamental differences in culture, customs and traditions, way of life, traditional occupation, etc., just like the tribes in the South.[54]

In his rejoinder, Mohammed Haruna describes Nwabueze's opinion as a distortion of Nigeria's history.[55] The region is now seen broadly in terms of a "Muslim-North", made up of the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri; and the Middle Belt largely inhabited by non-Muslims who escaped Islamization. Nonetheless, the historical dynamics of Islam and the legacies of the 19th century Sokoto Jihad and the colonial administrative policy of unification had given the region a certain kind of identity, whose content is no less problematic. It is this northern cultural identity as embodied in the historical ideals of the Sokoto Caliphate and their endorsement in the context of colonial Northern Nigeria that the ethnic largely Christian minorities of the region opposed and are still opposing at various levels.[56]

The ethnic minorities, however, remained within the political entity of the Northern Region up until 1967 when the regions were disbanded and replaced with twelve states. The North was divided into the North-Western, North-Central, Benue-Plateau and Kano States. Although the creation of the Benue-Plateau State, which comprised most of the ethnic minorities in the north, was conceived and celebrated as the realization of the dream of a separate Middle Belt state, the grievances of the

---

Study Day, held at the Institute of Humanities Research in Africa, University of Cape Town, August 2014. I have the author's permission to cite this paper.

[54] Benjamin Obi Nwabueze, "The North-South Divide as an Obstacle to the Creation of a Nation and National Front," *The Guardian*, August 23 (2013).

[55] Mohammed Haruna, "Nwabueze's Distortions of Nigeria's History," *The Nation,* October 30 (2013).

[56] See chapter two for a discussion of the Northernisation policy of the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto.

ethnic minorities continued unabatedly. The demand for states in Nigeria has always been associated with ethnic minority grievances. Communities who feel marginalized as minorities in a state often resort to demanding for their own states. This has resulted in a vicious cycle of demands and counter-demands for state creation in postcolonial Nigeria. Since the end of the regional system, many more states have been created. In 1976, the twelve states were replaced with nineteen states. Between 1987 and 1996, seventeen new states were added, bringing the total number of states to thirty-six. In 1999, the various states in the country were delineated into six geopolitical zones.[57] Most of the states with larger concentration of non-Muslim ethnic minorities such as Plateau and Benue fall under the North-Central geopolitical zone.

Constructing the Middle Belt "Discourse Community"

On the morning of 22nd of April 1990, Nigerians woke up to hear martial music. A BBC World News read by Loise Carr at 6:15 am reported a heavy gunfire in the center of Lagos. The main body of the story said that the French News Agency had monitored an unidentified voice in a broadcast from Lagos, which declared:

> On behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning people of the Middle Belt and the Southern parts of this country, I, Major Gideon Gwaza Orkah wish to happily inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, corrupt, drug baronies, evil men, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually-center (sic), prodigalistic, unpatriotic administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida…we wish to emphasize that this is not just another coup but a well conceived, planned and executed revolution for the marginalized, oppressed and enslaved people of the Middle Belt and the South with a view to freeing ourselves and our children yet unborn from eternal slavery and colonization by a clique of this country.[58]

[57] North-East – Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe; North-West – Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara; North-Central – Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; South-East – Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo; South-South – Akwa ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers; South-West – Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo.

[58] "Major Orkar's Manifesto," *Free Nation* 3 no. 1 (1990), 14.

Since independence, Nigeria had experienced several military coups, but this was the first time that a coup was prosecuted ostensibly on behalf of a section of the country.[59] Major Orkar, the coup plotter, was catapulted into an instant champion of the Middle Belt social imaginaries of emancipation from "slavery" and Hausa-Fulani domination. The most startling aspect of the manifesto, which turned out to be the Achilles heel of this Middle Belt-inspired "revolution", was the decision to remove some states of the federation – Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, Borno and Bauchi – and the suspension of all citizens of the aforesaid states from public and private offices in the Middle Belt and Southern parts of Nigeria. What the Middle Belt military revolutionaries failed to understand was that apart from the implications of excluding other military officers especially those perceived as "disciples of the Sokoto Caliphate" from their abortive insurrection, they made the "mistake of assuming that all the so-called Middle-Belters and the Southerners shared common problems, struggles, and perceptions, as well as a commitment to change".[60] The coup was ultimately aborted by some military officers loyal to Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

Although the neologism of the Middle Belt is widely used in political and scholarly discourse, it is difficult to locate precisely the region on the Nigerian map. Some scholars, however, have attempted to define the boundaries of the Middle Belt in terms of geographical, climatic and demographic factors.[61] According to Ballard "the Middle Belt is taken as an area roughly inscribed by the Hausa-speaking area to the north, and the Yoruba, Edo, and Ibo-speaking areas to the south".[62] As a human geographical term, the Middle Belt is sometimes used interchangeably with Central

[59] Ladi Shehu, "After Orkar, what Next?," ***Free Nation***, 3 no. 4 (1990), 6-7.

[60] Julius O. Ihonvbere, "A Critical Evaluation of the Failed 1990 Coup in Nigeria," ***The Journal of Modern African Studies*** 21, no. 4 (1991), 615.

[61] Patrick Dawam, "Aspects of the Geography of Central Nigeria Area," ***Studies in the History of Central Nigeria***; Baba Thomas Bingel, "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt…"; J. A. Ballard, "Historical Inferences from the Linguistic Geography of the Nigerian Middle Belt," ***Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*** 41, no. 4 (1971); Keith Buchanan, "The Northern Region of Nigeria: the Geographical Background of its Political Duality," ***Geographical Review*** 43, No. 4 (1953); Agboola S. A, "The Middle Belt of Nigeria: the Basis of its Geographical Unity," ***Nigerian Geographical Journal*** 4, no 1, (1961); R. A. Pullan, " The Concept of the Middle Belt: a Climatic Definition," ***Nigerian Geographical Journal*** 5, no. 1 (1962).

[62] Ballard, "Historical Inferences," 1.

Nigeria, because most of the ethnic minorities in northern Nigeria are geographically located at the "centre" of Nigeria.

Moses Ochonu provides a conservative regional approximation of the Middle Belt, "as opposed to the idea of a Greater Middle Belt, which is a largely political construct appropriating all non-Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri peoples of northern Nigeria".[63] From this postulation, the Middle Belt comprises Abuja, Benue, Plateau, Kwara, Kogi, Southern Kaduna, and parts of Niger, Adamawa, and Taraba states. Nonetheless, even this territorial delineation is faulty because of the presence of a sizeable number of Hausa-Fulani and non-Hausa-Fulani Muslims in all of these states.[64] This is further complicated by the fact that the predominantly "Muslim states" of Katsina, Kano, Kebbi and Gombe likewise contain pockets of non-Muslims. Thus, the Middle Belt, as a contested space, does not correspond to a clear geopolitical or an ethnic unit, but is usually understood vis-à-vis its main (real or imaginary) adversary, i.e. the so-called Muslim Hausa-Fulani culture, which allegedly constitutes the main hegemonic culture of northern Nigeria, and the latter's corresponding pre-colonial political institution, i.e. the Sokoto Caliphate.

According to Okpeh Okpeh, there is a consciousness called the Middle Belt and the context of this consciousness is defined by a history of resistance to Islamization and marginalization in the way British colonialism was conceived and applied to the northern Nigerian ethnic minorities.[65] In other words, the Middle Belt consciousness can be succinctly defined as the aggregate of the historical experiences of the non-Hausa-Fulani and non-Muslim communities of northern Nigeria, who resisted Islamization and incorporation into the Hausa-Fulani religious and cultural matrix. According Ochonu:

> Middle Belt peoples recall historical injuries inflicted on their cultures, languages, and religions by Anglo-caliphate colonials seeking to extend their influence and power. Depending on the political context, this narrative

---

[63] Moses Ochonu, "Colonialism within Colonialism: The Hausa-Caliphate Imaginary and the British Colonial Administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt," *African Studies Quarterly* 10, 2 & 3 (2008) 111.

[64] Ochonu, "Colonialism within Colonialism," 111.

[65] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

> of victimhood is conjoined to a coterminous script of heroic resistance against Anglo-caliphate colonial oppression. Hausa-Fulani elites, on the other hand, invoke colonial anthropological evidence that dramatizes Middle Belt cultural backwardness and Hausa-Fulani civilizational influence on peoples of the Middle Belt.[66]

The bulk of the people that constitute the Middle Belt have been disparagingly referred to as "animists", "pagans", "acephalous communities" and "stubborn tribes" in the Sokoto Jihad scholarship and colonial anthropology. These characterizations somehow informed the ways in which power relations were constructed between the colonial government and the Hausa-Fulani on the one hand, and the ethnic minorities of the middle Belt on the other. Thus, the Middle Belt "narrative of resistance", which forms the subject of chapter three of this dissertation, was constructed as a counterdiscourse to both the caliphate and colonial narratives.

Although the term Middle Belt, as we have seen earlier, is extremely controversial, it is conceived for the purpose of this dissertation as a "discourse community", which is essentially driven by a historical discourse of marginality. In other words, the Middle Belt resembles what Michel Foucault describes as a "society of discourse", within which the practice of historical writing, as institutionalized in history departments and the publishing system, takes place.[67] The Middle Belt community of discourse is made up of politicians, activists, academics, journalists and publishers who have identified with the Middle Belt minority consciousness.[68] This community of intellectuals was responsible for the production of the Middle Belt narratives of descent and dissent, memories of victimhood, and a social imagery of fear of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani. The Middle Belt ideas were originally developed in the meetings of politicians, activists and religious leaders and gradually transposed into the universities and scholarly monographs.

Although the Middle Belt ought to have been approached regionally, the scale of the problem can best be illustrated using the case of Plateau and Benue States, which are generally regarded as the closest equivalent of the territorial delineation of

---

[66] Moses Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*: *Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2014), 217.

[67] Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 63.

[68] All the academics I interviewed for this dissertation acknowledge their allegiance to the Middle Belt identity.

the Middle Belt. These areas house the oldest institutions of history in the Middle Belt such as the University of Jos, Benue State University and the Jos National Museum. Plateau and Benue also represent the nucleus of non-Muslims' resistance to the Sokoto Caliphate and what is generally considered in Middle Belt discourse as the "Hausa-Fulani hegemony". However, I am not anxious to generalize the peculiarities of the Plateau and Benue States across all the Middle Belt communities.

There are many pertinent sites of historical production in Nigeria: archives, museums, publishing and media houses, libraries, research centres, the voices of street vendors and the academy with its diverse disciplinary and professional matrix. The sheer number of these sites and the need to speak to their multiple spatiotemporal trajectories in order to establish the processes and conditions of history-making in Nigeria is a huge research question demanding lifetime interrogation. It is, therefore, imperative, for practical reasons, to narrow down the scope of this project to Plateau and Benue States, which represent the most vocal centres of Middle Belt discourse. The national institutions of history within Plateau and Benue States were founded to promote Nigerian history, but the Middle Belt identity politics is deeply implicated in their operations, as we shall see in the ensuing chapters.

The Historiographical Context

As one of the birthplaces of academic historical scholarship in Africa, Nigeria has received more than its fair share of attention from historians of different specialties. Indeed, Nigerian history as a discursive field is too broad for any individual historian to master. However, the study of, what can be called, *history-making*, in Nigeria is generally neglected if compared to other more familiar and, therefore, more widely explored areas like political history, economic history, religious history, and social history. In writing about the evolution of historical scholarship in Nigeria, as stated previously, the central focus has been on mapping the traditions and contours of the historical writings. Thus, the existing works in the field mainly represent methodological taxonomies and textual analyses of the writings of the different generations of historians. [69]

[69] Some of the prominent examples of the textual approach include: Robert Hess, "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography, the Historians of Modern Nigeria," (PhD Diss. Howard, 1971); Lidwein Kapteijns, "African Historiography written by Africans: The

Saheed Aderinto and Paul Osifodunrin have identified three broad contours discernible in the evolution of modern Nigerian history as an academic enterprise.[70] The first phase began in the 1940s with the founding of the premier History Department at the University College Ibadan (later University of Ibadan) in 1948. During this first stage, historians were focused on writing the histories of state formation and empire building in pre-colonial communities, with the aim of offering the much-needed ideological weapon for decolonization. Hence the popular label "nationalist historiography", assigned to this brand of historical writing. The second wave, which began in the 1970s with the establishment of new universities and the proliferation of National Archives across the country, reached its height in the 1980s. This period saw the consolidation of the burgeoning fields of economic, social and religious history in the country. Although many scholars have emphasized the rupture between the first and the second phase in terms of ideology and thematic priorities, the institutional and discursive legacies of the initial phase allowed for the emergence of the second wave of Nigerian historiography. The National Archives, National Museums and the Historical Society of Nigeria were all founded through the efforts of the pioneer historians of the first phase. Discursively, the nationalist phase provided the template upon which the foundations of economic, social, religious histories were written in the second phase. The third phase, which began in the 1990s, inaugurated a new wave of scholarship, challenging established narratives on ethnicity, nationalism, politics, discourses and practices of colonial administration in Nigeria. One concomitant feature of this development was the rise of ethnic minorities as the foci of sustained historical research.[71] While the first wave has been thoroughly studied, the second and third waves are still very far from the concern of the students of

---

Nigerian Case," (PhD Diss. Leiden, 1972); Hamza Muhammad Maishanu, *Five Hundred years of Historical Writings in Borno and Hausaland* (Macmillan: Ibadan 2008); Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010).

[70] *The Third Wave of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ayodeji Olukoju*, eds. Saheed Aderinto and Paul Osifodunrin (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 5. Prior to the advent of academic history, there were of course various strands of historical thoughts among different communities in pre-colonial Nigeria. With colonial intervention, these traditional ways of engaging with the past were gradually and systematically succeeded by colonial historiographical regime.

[71] *The Third Wave of Historical Scholarship*, 5.

Nigerian historiography. The Middle Belt historiography was inaugurated during the second phase and consolidated in the third wave of historical scholarship in Nigeria.

The first major systematic studies of the first wave are Robert Hess's "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography: 1875-1972: the Historians of Modern Nigeria" and Lidwein Kapteijns, "African Historiography Written by Africans, 1955-73, the Nigerian Case". Hess traces the origin of historical practice to the works of "traditional and Arabic historians", whom he treated as the forerunners of academic history that emerged during the decolonization period. Kapteijns examines the development of African historiography, its institutionalization and Africanisation from 1850 to 1973 with a focus on Nigerian historiography. Their approach, however, remain textual, and they covered, understandably, only the works of the pioneer generation who wrote between the 1950s and 1960s.

There are many other significant appraisals of Nigerian historiography, which deserve mention here – the seminal ones being mostly talks given at conferences by prominent Nigerian historians.[72] In his paper "History and the Historian in Developing Countries of Africa", Obaro Ikime examines the colonial origins of African history and demonstrated how these have conditioned the thematic and methodological preference of the first generation of nationalist historians in Africa. These historians, noted Ikime, tended to concentrate on the 19th century in an attempt to decolonize African history from the mental grip of European imperialism. He further argues that the historians of every generation respond to the climate of times and needs of their society. Their preferences are to a very large extent conditioned by religion, nationality, and social class.[73] Ikime sees the role of the historians of developing countries as primarily that of

[72] For example, the most outstanding ones include: Obaro Ikime, "History and the Historian in the Developing Countries of Africa," (1977), Bala Usman, "The Problem of Ethnic Categories in the Study of the Historical Development of the Central Sudan: A Critique of M.G. Smith and Others," in *Beyond Fairy Tales: Selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman*, (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research and Documentation, 1978); E.A. Ayandele, "The Task before Nigerian Historians Today," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9. no. 4, (1979); K.O. Dike, "African History Twenty five years ago and Today," a Keynote Address on the Occasion of the Silver Jubilee of The Historical Society of Nigeria, September, (1980); Ade Ajayi, "History and Society," (2005); and Okon E. Uya, "The Historian as a Citizen: The K.O. Dike Challenge," in *Interrogating Africa, Dike Memorial Lectures, 1999-2007,* eds. C.B.N. Ogbogbo and Okpeh Okpeh (Historical Society of Nigeria, 2008).

[73] Ikime, "History and the Historian in the Developing Countries of Africa," 4

providing the necessary historical knowledge for national integration and nation-building purposes.

In 1979, while highlighting the giant historiographical strides of Nigerian historians and the challenges they faced in realizing the aspirations of the founding fathers, Ayandele challenged Nigerian historians for their failure to keep pace with the initial momentum of surging forward in research publications, take over the Nigerian historiographical stage from colonial anthropologists, and for failing to write a history with a populist appeal.[74] In 1980, K.O. Dike in his paper "African History twenty five years ago and today" offers another interesting, self-reflexive, but jubilant reappraisal of African historiography. As the pioneer of African historiography, the views and experiences of Dike on African history were almost synonymous with the major trends in African and Nigerian historiographical transformation. He recounted his experiences first as a post-graduate student at Kings College, London, when it was normal to graduate with honors in history without ever studying the history of Africa, to the period when chairs, professorships, and journals and books on African history proliferated. Dike called for a search for new methodologies and approaches to African historiography. Specifically he stresses the need for a shift from the history of great kingdoms and empires, which are comparatively few in the sub-Saharan region, to a more detailed investigation of small-scale societies and states that characterize the large majority of African peoples.[75]

The only existing work so far on the historiography of northern Nigeria is Hamza Maishanu's *Five Centuries of Historical Writing in Hausaland and Borno 1500-2000*. Published in 2008 this book opens a new vista in the study of Nigerian historiography, particularly the northern part of the country. Maishanu's work not only traces the emergence of historical writing in northern Nigeria, from the ancient period, when history was solely a family business, through the changing epochs in which historical knowledge was variously appropriated by the ruling class for different reasons, but also examines the *raison d'être* of historical writing and the socio-cultural milieu behind its birth. What is interesting for this dissertation in Maishanu's work is

[74] Ayandele, "The Task before Nigerian Historians today," 1-6.

[75] Dike, "African History twenty five years ago and today," 5.

that he acknowledges the historiographical marginalization of the Middle Belt communities, which he describes as "acephalous".[76]

Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto write on the formative epochs in the creation and transformation of Nigerian historiography from the optimistic era of nationalist historiography through to the period of national fragmentation and the emergence of fragmented histories. This work departs to some extent from the previous literature in that it attends to the significance of the National Archives of Nigeria in shaping the direction of historical scholarship. The most interesting part of this book, as far as the theme of this project is concerned, is the attention given to the ways in which the dynamics of identity politics created competing versions of local histories among both the so-called major and minority ethnicities in their attempt to justify their claims to power and resources.

Despite the advances made in writing about the evolution of Nigerian historiography, there is still much to be done in terms of both thematic and temporal coverage; not to mention the task of establishing the linkages between academic history and the concrete institutions where history is produced. That is the conceptual goal of this dissertation, while mapping out the historiography of Middle Belt.

Sources and Approach

This project deploys, in the spirit of "methodological eclecticism", materials from the writings of Middle Belt intellectuals, official publications of the National Archives and museums. I have also conducted in-depth oral interviews with several historians, an archaeologist, journalists, archivists, museum curators and publishers, whom alongside historians, I treat as agents of history-making in Nigeria. The insights and perspectives of these practitioners are conflated and corroborated with textual evidence from the writings on the Middle Belt scholars. I also did some ethnographical fieldwork in museums and archives.[77] I also make a close examination of students' dissertation files at the Universities, and consulted visitors' and

[76]Maishanu, *Five Centuries of Historical Writing*, x.

[77] During my fieldwork, some of the institutions suspected that I had come to audit or accredit their practices of knowledge production such as curriculum, dissertations and journals.

searchers' register at the National Archives and National Museums with a view to showing how the Middle Belt historical consciousness is reenacted, performed or repressed through historical writing, museum, archival and publishing practices.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One

Chapter one examines the foundations of history institutions in Nigeria. It attempts to show how the institutionalization of history in Nigeria reflects a kind of corporate venture involving historians, archivists, museums curators and policy-makers. It offers an empirically grounded description of the complex linkages between History Departments, the making of National Archives, the National Museums and heritage sites and the political context of the emergence of the Nigerian history machine.

Chapter Two

This chapter makes a transition into a discussion of the breakdowns of the Nigerian history machine into regional machines. The political tensions motivating these ruptures and the incentives they engendered for minority discourses are examined here to provide a logical entry point into the crucial discussion of the Middle Belt historiography in the succeeding chapter. This chapter wraps up with a brief survey of the Middle Belt historians' allegiances and the ways in which they inform their choices of themes and narrative strategies.

Chapter Three

Here I map out the textual tradition of the Middle Belt "historiography of resistance" through a textual analysis of the writings of Middle Belt historians. The focus here is on history writing within the context of the History Departments at the University of Jos and Benue State Universities. Furthermore, the chapter explores attempts by scholars of Middle Belt extraction at reimagining the status of minority communities within context of colonialism, and the linkages between history writing and the settler-indigene debate in the Middle Belt.

Chapter Four

This chapter focuses on the linkages between the National Archives Kaduna and Middle Belt "dissident histories". The chapter looks at the "circuits of archival consumption" beyond the confines of historical writing; it demonstrates the preponderance of legal practice in the use of the National Archives, Kaduna – due to rising conflicts and identity politics in the Middle Belt. For example, it reveals a dramatic shift in the status of colonial files – dealing with land and chieftaincy matters – from conventional sources of colonial history to viable instruments of legal proceedings.

Chapter Five

In chapter five, we examine attempts at producing Nigerian history through the appropriation of material cultures in three selected museums located in Jos, Makurdi and Kaduna. It begins with a discussion around the ownership of the famous Nok heritage, which has been appropriated as national heritage and contested as "cultural and symbolic capital" for the Middle Belt region, by Nigerian government and local communities respectively. Then we examine the curatorial practices of the three National Museums, the institutional contradictions associated with the National Museum practices and the attempts at re-enacting of local histories in the Middle Belt through local museum projects and performative history like cultural festivals.

Chapter Six

Chapter six focuses on the role of the publishing industry in the circulation of the Middle Belt ideas. Like all social movements, driven by claims of exclusion and marginalization, the Middle Belt struggle has to devise and grapple with a means of communication. The chapter is concerned not only with the publishing of Middle Belt scholarly books and journals, but also the role of the mass media in injecting Middle Belt ideas into the public sphere. Although the Middle Belt academy has played a major part in circulating Middle Belt ideas, its influence on mass mobilization has been minimal relative to the role of the popular press – newspaper production, radio

and TV broadcast. The chapter examines how the printing press has been deployed as a mechanism for plugging the Middle Belt into national discourse.

Chapter One

The Nigerian "History Machine"

> It is impossible to analyse historical discourse independently of the institution in respect to which its silence is organised. (De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 69).

> Nigerian historians have embraced their calling not just as an academic profession but also as one that should contribute visibly to the on-going effort to construct the Nigerian state, to develop it and to sustain it. (Adiele Afigbo, "History as a Statecraft," 2006, 367).

Introduction

On the 20th of June 2012, the Federal Executive Council of Nigeria approved the membership and programme of the Cabinet Centenary Committee. A presidential sub-committee on a centenary book was constituted and inaugurated by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Anyim Pius Anyim. The Director of National Archives, directors of the National Library, research centers, and prominent academics were appointed as members of the committee. The work of the committee was to, among other things, collect, develop, and select the contents of the official centenary book that would tell the history of Nigeria from 1914 to 2014, in words and pictures. To this effect, circulars were dispatched to all the state governors in the federation, directing them to collect and submit all relevant historical source materials of their respective states; and also articulate the "authoritative" history of relics, events and historical facts of the states in the last 100 years for processing into the centenary book.[78] This was in preparation for the commemoration, in 2014, of Nigeria's 100 years of national existence since the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates by Lord Fredrick Lugard, which created the entity known as Nigeria.

[78] Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Circular SGE 32/S 47/01, 26th July (2012).

Amidst allegations of corruption and wanton insecurity, the Government of the Federation set aside billions of Naira to celebrate this historical event with a series of magnificent national memorials: a millennium city in the capital, Abuja, a centenary book, national conferences and seminars. The centenary celebrations, according to the Federal Government, were designed to celebrate Nigeria's history and unity and "to affirm the obvious truth that Nigeria is not a historical accident, rather the product of a long and mature consideration".[79]

One of the major components of the centenary programs was the "History and Heritage Program", featuring photo exhibitions, festivals and carnivals that sought to project Nigeria as a mosaic national identity defined by its history and culture. Various stakeholders of the Nigerian history project jumped onto the bandwagon of the centennial jamboree. The National Archives and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments scheduled major exhibitions to showcase different aspects of Nigerian history. Similarly, as part of the centenary celebration, the Historical Society of Nigeria paid a courtesy call to President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to enlist his support in organizing a National Colloquium on "Amalgamation: the pains, the gains, and the Agenda for Future".[80]

Meanwhile, a lively debate about the implications of these commemorations on the meaning of Nigerian history ensued among politicians, public commentators and historians. The Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Tunde Fashola, cautioned the Federal Government not to distort Nigerian history because, as he contends, "all our teachers taught us is that Nigeria became a sovereign nation on 1st October 1960".[81] A feud between Niger and Kogi States developed over the status and rightful ownership of the colonial seat of power/administration and the venue of the amalgamation. Whereas the Kogi State Government asserts that the event took place in Lokoja, (the present Capital of Kogi state), Niger State claims that Lord Lugard, the architect of the amalgamation, was in Zungeru (in present day Niger State) at the time. Commenting on this, a historian, Adamu Simbad, observes that, "Lokoja has its own

[79] The Federal Ministry of Information, "Concept Document for the Nigeria Centenary," February 7 (2013).

[80] Interview with Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Abuja, 2014.

[81] Babatunde Tunde Fashola, "Why I Faulted FG's Centenary Celebration," *Vanguard*, March 15 (2014).

significance as the Seat of government but where the treaty (of the Amalgamation) was signed is most significant in the history of Nigeria".[82]

Since the attainment of self-rule in 1960, Nigerian history has come to represent something of a shared "knowledge industry", processing and procreating contesting visions and narratives of the nation. The politics of commemoration engendered by the centenary brings to the fore issues around debatability, authority and ownership of Nigerian history. After over 50 years of independence from British colonial rule, it is somehow eccentric that Nigerians are still debating over some basic historical issues such as dates of national anniversaries and seat of colonial government. This is not to suggest some kind of national consensus or philosophy of history to which Nigerian historians, government and the public should subscribe, since "the problems of determining what belongs to the past multiply tenfold especially when that past is said to be collective".[83]

As an academic enterprise, Nigerian history was originally established as a constricted practice within the academy. But the alliance of historians, archaeologists, archivists, museum curators, policymakers and government agencies opened up the field to extra-academic pressures and influences. I posit not only a unity of historico-epistemological affiliation beyond the disciplinary boundaries of archival, archaeological and historical professions, but also map out the intrigues and limits of history-making in a range of "formal" cultural institutions that are engaged in producing narratives and images of the past in the public sphere. By formal institutions, we mean official sites of historical pedagogy, which have the power to transmit historical and cultural knowledge, methodically. In Nigeria, these institutions, bound by the common objectives of research, documentation, teaching and nation building, were mostly founded in the 1950s as part of the struggle for decolonization and nation building. The emergence of Nigerian history was a result of this dynamic process of institutionalisation, pursued through a consortium of intellectuals of varying shades, government and other cultural agencies, not only because the projects were easy to fund, but also for the functional value attached to history as the ideological instrument of decolonisation.

---

[82] Agbo-Paul Augustine and Sam Egwu, "Nigeria: Centenary Celebrations – Kogi, Niger Feud over Amalgamation House," *Leadership*, October 26 (2013).

[83] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 16.

Mapping the Field: Historians and their Profession

In 1955, Kenneth Onwuka Dike reluctantly submitted a manuscript entitled "African History and Self-government" to David Williams, editor of *West Africa*. The article was a response to Margery Perham's piece, "British Problems in Africa", which appeared in the authoritative journal, *Foreign Affairs*, of July 1951. At a time when colonial stereotypical narratives dominated African historical discourse, Dike wrote to challenge the views of a leading figure in colonial politics and policies. His article was accepted on the condition that Mrs Perham had to read and perhaps approve the manuscript before publication. Dike thought the editor was asking rather too much of him but had little choice because the journal, *West Africa*, had no competitor and was widely read among those he wanted to reach. To his surprise, however, Perham's response to the article turned out to be positive. She congratulated him for a good piece of writing.[84]

The symbolic implication of Dike's encounter with Perham on the epistemology of African history cannot be overemphasised. It was a major breakthrough in view of the climate of opinion on African history within the British colonial establishment. The official view was that "Africa had no history". This narrative was instrumentalised to rationalise colonialism. The dominant themes of colonial historiography were the Europeans themselves; trade and diplomacy, invasion and conquest, heavily dosed with assumptions about racial superiority that bolstered colonial domination.[85] Dike's successful discursive engagement with a doyen of the colonial knowledge industry heralded the beginning of the quest for national historiographies in many emerging African countries.

With the cessation of colonial rule, Nigerian history became a compulsory subject for all students of history in Nigeria.[86] Cultural resources for nation building were mobilised and appropriated by the Federal Government of Nigeria – through the institutional mechanisms of universities, archives, museums and other concomitant government agencies – in the making of the Nigerian history machine. From

[84] Dike, "African History: twenty-Five Years Ago and Today," 4.

[85] Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa* (Lynne Rienner, 1998), 2.

[86] Obaro Ikime, Introduction to *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan: Heinemann,1980), 1.

inception, Nigerian professional historians recognised that the making of history required the services of, and, collaboration with other institutions and professionals. Through his work, as the premier director of the National Archives of Nigeria, Dike inaugurated what can be described as the "age of documentation", which saw the collection and preservation of massive records on Nigerian history. His role and that of his contemporaries and disciples in the founding of African history, the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), the Antiquities Commission (later National Commission for Museums and Monuments), the National Archives of Nigeria (NAN) and the production of Africanist history curriculum is widely recognised. [87]

In the decolonisation project, the stakeholders of the Nigerian history project were committed to, and convinced about, the utility of such ventures in the making of the new nation. Historians, archivists and archaeologists worked hard in collecting and documenting different aspects of Nigeria's pasts. The government provided the institutional support for the making of a national history by establishing and funding museums, archives, universities and research projects. But the task of forging a national history beneath the ruins of colonial historiography was no less an easy one. The historians and their colleagues from adjacent discourses and practises, therefore, had to contend with the difficulties of sources and other essential institutional resources for the production of a professionally and socially acceptable historical knowledge.

The historians spearheaded a drive towards the resurrection of the colonially subjected histories of Africa. The nucleus of this intellectual project was the University of Ibadan (UI), which began as a college of the University of London in 1948 before it became a full-fledged and the first Nigerian university in 1952. At UI, there emerged a cohort of Nigerian historians whose writings produced a variant of

[87] There is no shortage of works on the role of nationalist historians in the emergence and development of national historiographies in Africa. See *Interrogating Contemporary Africa: Dike Memorial Lectures 1999-2007*, C.B.N. Ogbogbo and O.O. Okpeh, eds. (Historical Society of Nigeria, 2008); Robert Hess, "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography: 1875-1977: the Historians of Modern Nigeria"; Lidwein Kapteijns, "African Historiography Written by Africans, 1955-73: The Nigerian Case"; J.D. Omer-Cooper, "The Contribution of the University of Ibadan to the Spread of the Study and Teaching of African History within Africa," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*., 10, no. 3 (1980) ; Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics," in *African Historiography, Essays in Honor of Jacobs Ade Ajayi*, ed. Toyin Falola (Lagos: Longman,1993).

historical scholarship popularly labelled as the Ibadan School of History. The pioneer historians at UI were all British-trained. Sabiru O. Biobaku, Kenneth Dike and Jacobs Ade Ajayi took their doctorate degrees prior to 1960, while J.C. Anene, Tekena Tamuno, I.A. Akinjogbin and E.A. Ayandele completed theirs between 1960 and 1965. These scholars trained a large chunk of Nigerian students who took up teaching appointments at the University of Lagos (1962), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1962), and the University of Ife (1962), where they "each produced their own variants of the Ibadan tradition, resulting in a nationalist school of historiography for all four centres".[88]

Since the founding of the premier History Department at the University of Ibadan, the field of Nigerian history has exploded as the number of history-offering universities and practitioners increased exponentially. Between 1948 and 2013, no less than seventy departments of history have been founded across Nigeria. Beginning like a cottage industry based in half a dozen universities, employing hundreds of practitioners and training thousands of apprentice students, the field has been transformed into a complex "training factory" with practicing historians and students working along different thematic constituencies.

Between 1960 and the 1980s when African history affirmed itself as a university discipline, the Nigerian state was privileged as a historical subject.[89] Originally, the Nigerian history machine was structurally a state enterprise, performing the function of manpower production and a "fuller inventory of a national cultural and intellectual property".[90] As early as 1952, for example, a visitation panel to the University College Ibadan underscored the significance of the discipline in manpower manufacturing for the public service, when it recommended the introduction of honours degree in History. The visitation panel underscored the urgency of the History Department not only in the humanities but also in assisting the work of the Faculties of Science and Medicine.[91] Nigerian history, seen in light of its

[88] Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School," 195.

[89] B. Jewsiewicki and V. Y. Mudimbe, "Africans' Memories and Contemporary History of Africa," *History and Theory* 32, No. 4, (1993), 2.

[90] Afigbo, "History as Statecraft," 368-369.

[91] Olutayo Adesina, "Teaching History in Twentieth Century Nigeria: the Challenges of Change," *History in Africa* 33 (2006), 21.

manpower-producing role, resembles a kind of national intellectual property.[92]

Perhaps the most visible area where the historical profession has made its mark on nation building was in forging a history from a national perspective by producing teleological discourses as opposed to discrete histories of the multiple ethnicities of modern Nigeria. According to Afigbo, apart from the production of national cultural property, history also served the Nigerian state through the "growing collection and synthesising of the histories of the different ethnic nationalities that constitute Nigeria".[93]

The making of Nigerian history required a subtle appropriation of and synthesis of the discrete ethnic histories within the nation. The task of aggregating the discrete histories of over 250 ethnicities to produce a Nigerian History was intellectually monumental. One fundamental characteristic of the early phase of Nigerian historiography was that all the historians wrote Nigerian history, with each focusing on one ethnic group or area, more often than not the historian's own ethnic group or native region.[94] The idea, nonetheless, was to "nationalise" these ethnic histories into a Nigerian History. There was, during these times, minimal tension between historians' allegiance to their emerging nation and their disciplinary loyalty and responsibility to the historical craft. The ideology of nationalism and professionalism were the basis of historians' allegiances that were writing back to the British Empire. The Historical Society of Nigeria focused on themes of nation building in its conferences and journals. It was easier to collaborate and for historians to write on regions other than their own. For example, while A.E. Ayandele was working on Christian Missions in Northern Nigeria, R.A. Adeleye worked on power and diplomacy in the region from the 1804 Jihad to the dawn of formal colonialism in the 1900s. The works of these historians, who were of Yoruba ethnic extraction from South Western Nigeria, have had profound impact on the growth of northern Nigerian historiography. Southern Nigeria received greater coverage with the histories of the ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt and Niger Delta regions frequently treated as appendages. Thus, the possibility of historiographical extinction of the minorities has

[92] Afigbo, "History as Statecraft," 369.

[93] Afigbo, "History as Statecraft," 370.

[94] Kapteijns, "African Historiography Written by Africans," 47.

been a major issue in post-colonial historical discourse in Nigeria as well as an instrument in the hands of Nigerian minorities against the major ethnicities, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, earlier represented by Afigbo as *wazobia*.[95]

The main theme or historical period that engrossed the minds of the professionals during the formative years was the late 19th century; the transitional period from informal to formal empire building, for there was not only an abundance of untapped archival source material for this period, it was also a moment in which a generation of eyewitnesses of colonial encounters were still alive.[96] For the pre-colonial era, the historians were constrained by the practical question of access to the raw materials/ or primary sources of Nigerian history, especially in written form. Available archival sources were mainly European colonisation, which were usually economical with the historicity of African agency in historical development.

The Politics of Sources

The past is a scarce resource,[97] which leaves fragmentary traces and evidence. Therefore, sources must be carefully collected and processed to produce a coherent history. The paucity of sources renders the past fluid and inherently debatable.[98] And as a cultural commodity, its utility in our everyday lives is quite profound. Yet the power to determine what past is worth processing into history, where and how to undertake such operations are some of the epistemological challenges of historical production. Sources of history, at least in their original form, reside in locations beyond the immediate dominion of professional historians. Documents, artifacts and oral traditions are created through archival, archaeological and other mnemonic practices. Therefore, professional historians have to come to terms with archives, archaeology and the custodians of oral history in order to produce their historical accounts.

---

[95] This is a popular maxim in Nigerian public discourse. *Wa* (Yoruba) *zo* (Hausa) *bia* (Igbo) means come. These are the main ethnic and language groups in Nigeria.

[96] Kapteijns, "African Historiography Written by Africans," 46.

[97] Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man, New Series* (1981), 201–219.

[98] Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," 218.

There has been a competition over the management of the meanings of African pasts between colonial administrators, anthropologists and African historians. The main sphere of this struggle was on the legitimacy of sources of history. Generations of Africanist historians have debated the efficacy of sources of African history.[99] So the intention here is not to repeat the debate, but to highlight the nuances of the sociology of competition and dominance in the production of Nigerian history.

In setting the terms of historical discourse, colonialist historiography sidestepped the validity of the pre-existing sources of Nigerian history, particularly the culture of orality. Thus, the nationalist historians, thanks to Jan Vansina's seminal rendition of oral methodology,[100] resorted to oral traditions as a mechanism for unpacking Nigeria's pre-colonial past. But owing to the double standard nature of the rules of measuring the worth of historical evidence, written texts were, nonetheless, favoured over orality, thereby stripping the latter of the epistemological "legitimacy" required to dislodge colonial stereotypical narratives of Nigerian history. Generally, the paucity of written texts, and not their total absence, in Africa was used as a barrier for admission into universe of "standard" historiographies. This is notwithstanding centuries-old extant manuscript traditions in many parts of Africa including northern Nigeria. Oral history, as argued by Jan Vansina, "is an attitude to reality and not the absence of a skill".[101] The control of sources was one of the potent cultural assets of the gatekeepers of colonial history machine. The principle of source probity was deemed more suitable for oral sources. Therefore, the greatest challenges were for historians "to turn themselves into anthropologists like fieldworkers instead of library and archives rats, and to convince the historical establishment that this worked".[102] In the course of collecting oral histories "the historians assumed the role of archive

[99]See *General History of Africa I* .

[100] See his "The Power of Systematic Doubt in Historical Inquiry," ***History in Africa*** I, (1974), 109-127; ***Oral Tradition as History*** (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and "Oral Tradition and its Methodology," ed. J. Ki-Zerbo, ***General History of Africa*** I, (London: Heinemann, 1981), 143-165.

[101] Vansina, "Oral Tradition and its Methodology," 142.

[102] David Henige, "Oral Tradition as a Means of Reconstructing the Past," in ***Writing African History*** (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 170.

creators". [103] Through the exploitation and appropriation of the expertise of the custodians of oral narratives, or what Ki-Zerbo describe as "the hoary-headed old men with cracked voices" and dimmed memories, the hegemony of the professional historians in the production line of history is established. Through this process, historical knowledge is, therefore, transferred from the custodians of oral traditions to the academic sphere, thus transposing its custody and location from mnemonic device to scripted record. Themes are imposed on oral materials, the "ownership" of which passes on to the professional historian who orders and plots them – through the dents of transcription, editing, writing and interpretation – into historical narratives. In this regard, the historian changes his role as an archive user to archive creator.[104]

Historians' monopoly of the technologies of written literacy has been their most important bargaining "epistemological capital" in the making of history. Whereas in the 19th century and afterwards, oral traditions were treated as history in themselves, academic historians in 1950s and 1960s have dealt with, and appropriated, them as sources, and not history in themselves.[105] This hybridity in fact further challenges the widely held conception of history as the preserve of practicing members of the academy. Orality was in itself a historical institution in most pre-colonial African communities where oral tradition "takes its place as a real living museum, conserver and transmitter of the social and cultural creations stored up by peoples said to have no written records".[106]

While the foundation of modern Nigerian history, as is the case in other parts of Africa, rested on oral traditions, historical writing is equally closely tied to a network of practices. Although the authors of nationalist historiographies emphasized the primacy of oral sources as the most viable records of human activities in Africa, Nigerian historians were conscious that the autonomism of Nigerian history as a field of practice depended on the establishment of sources and allied institutions. With the growing interest in the study of Nigerian history among the new crop of historians,

---

[103] Henige, "Oral Tradition as a Means of Reconstructing the Past," 15.

[104] Philip D. Curtin, "Filed Techniques for Collecting and Processing Oral Data," *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 3 (1968), 369.

[105] Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, 5.

[106] Ki–Zerbo, "Introduction to *General History of Africa I*, 7.

there also grew a need for a professional body to coordinate historical research and writing in Nigeria.[107]

The Historical Society of Nigeria

The Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) was inaugurated in a colourful conference in Ibadan in 1955, with chiefs and traditional historians in attendance. Galadiman Bida[108] clad in turban and flowing white robes had brought a very old man with him to display as the last surviving warrior. Mallam Lawal, the scribe of Agaie in present day Niger State, perfectly represented the traditional Islamic scholarly class of the North in his dress and deportment.[109]

The HSN was the first association of academics in the country. The society played a crucial in the foundation and institutionalisation of the Nigerian history machine. Given his prominence as a leading crusader against colonialist historiography, Kenneth Dike was chosen to be the first president of the HSN. The work of the society was to encourage and co-ordinate historical research by members, especially in connection with the study of Nigerian history; assist teachers in their efforts to improve standard of history in Nigeria; and to stimulate interest in the study of history among the general public. The HSN was to pursue these objectives through publications, congresses, lecture courses, group discussions, exhibitions, conducted visits to historical sites and strengthening contact with other organisations for the promotion of historical studies. The membership of the society was open to all individuals and agencies interested in the study of Nigerian history. The founding membership was drawn from an array of professional historians, archaeologists, archivists and librarians. The premier members of council were: J.C. Anene (historian), T.C. Eneli (archivist), Bernard Fagg (archaeologist to the Nigerian government), W.J. Harris (Librarian), Malam Omaru Gwandu (clerk to the Northern Region House of Assembly), J.D. Cooper, H.F.C. Smith (later Abdullahi Smith) and W.E. Sexton. Ordinary membership of the HSN in March 1958 stood at 350, with 38

[107] Hess, "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography: 1875-1977," 259.

[108] This is a traditional titleholder in Bida emirate council in present Niger State. The title is usually found in most emirates of northern Nigeria and Borno.

[109] Omer-Cooper, "The Contribution of the University of Ibadan," 27.

affiliated bodies[110] such as the Royal Anthropological Institute, London; Columbia University Library; and King's College Library, London.[111] Thus, it was clear from the onset that the production of Nigerian history was a corporate multi-disciplinary enterprise.

The initial task confronted by HSN was that of structuring autonomous mechanisms of knowledge production such as university and school curricula, archives, museums and publishing outfits, which are the essential elements of the history machine. The university and schools syllabi inherited from the colonial regime was more British than Nigerian in terms of focus and outlook. Despite the drive towards self-government, British institutions in London continued to supervise the production of history curriculum for Nigerian institutions. For example, in making the syllabus for the History Department at the University College Ibadan, the staff had to work closely with members of the Board of Studies in London.[112] The history curriculum drawn up for the University College Ibadan consisted of modules like "Modern European history, 1500-1914", "Modern English History", and the "History of European activities in Africa from the Middle of the fourteenth century to the present". Similarly, the standard texts for historical instruction in universities and secondary schools were Harry Johnson's *Colonisation of African by Alien Races* and T. R. Batten's *Tropical Africa in World History* respectively.[113] History was hardly taught in schools in early colonial Northern Nigeria (1914-1920). The Annual Reports of the Education Department shows that history was not included in the elementary and primary classes. Where it was incorporated into the syllabus as in the case of the Sokoto Provincial School, it was taught with a marked European bias. Among the books recommended for school libraries were *A Tropical Dependency* by Lady Lugard and Hogben's *The Muhammadan Emirates* and T.H. Baldwin's *Notes on*

[110] KADMINEDU M. 7/37, "Minutes of the 8th Council Meeting of the Historical Society of Nigeria" held on 26th April (1958).

[111] KADMINEDU M. 7/37 "The Historical Of Nigeria," *Bulletin of News* II, no 3 (1957).

[112] Olutayo Adesina, "Teaching History in Twentieth Century Nigeria," 19.

[113] J.F. Ade Ajayi, "The Historical Society of Nigeria: presidential Address," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, no. 3, (1980), 8.

Moslem History.[114]

From 1956 when the London Board of Studies agreed to the inclusion of courses in African history in the honours and general degree syllabuses, the subject was strengthened progressively as more Nigerian scholars were trained. Until 1962 when the institutional subordination of the University College, Ibadan to the University of London was terminated, the content and approach of the curriculum remained largely Eurocentric. Thus, with the cessation of the collegial relationship between the University College, Ibadan and London University, the first step undertaken by historians in reversing this trend was to start a major process of "Africanising" the history curriculum. The Ibadan School of History spearheaded the drive towards institutionalizing Africanist curriculum in which African history became the centrepiece of history teaching, replacing British and European history. A compulsory course module on Nigerian history, using primary documents, was also introduced for the final year undergraduate students.[115] The syllabus developed at Ibadan School of History eventually became a model for the universities of Lagos, Ife and Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. With the consolidation of the new degree program, postgraduate training for the MA and PhD in history was introduced. The Ibadan School of History was responsible for the production of a large chunk of historians who took up teaching appointments in the newly founded universities.

In order to incorporate schoolteachers in the Nigerian history project, the HSN organised regular workshops for teachers in schools, and handbooks were produced as source material. In Northern Nigeria, the government encouraged schools and other agencies to register with the HSN. There was a productive synergy between professional historians, the government and the members of the public who were interested in Nigerian history. The early conferences and workshops of the HSN were organized around the theme "teaching of African History". For example, the theme of its second Annual Congress held in 1956 was "History Teaching in Nigeria". This was principally aimed at pressing for the inclusion of a paper or two on African history in

[114] NAK KADMINEDU/ EXA/69/HIS/ Vol. 1, "The Concept of History Syllabuses in Northern Nigeria in the Early Colonial Period," (nd).

[115] Omer-Cooper, "The Contribution of the University of Ibadan," 25-26.

the syllabuses of secondary schools.[116] Letters and short questionnaires were, to that effect, dispatched to schools in order to elicit information on their practices of history teaching. The HSN also solicited papers from schoolteachers on the principles of history syllabus making; Cambridge school certificate syllabuses; provision and use of history textbooks in schools; training of history teachers; and history in adult education.[117] When the HSN gained the right to be represented on the Nigerian section of the West African Examinations Council's History Syllabus Panel, it exploited the opportunity to inject some dosage of Africanist content into the syllabuses, with the objective of extricating colonially inspired history syllabus that was used in both teaching and in West African School Certificate Examinations (WASCE). Naturally, the drive for curriculum review did not go well with some colonial education officers, who blamed the history teachers for concentrating on the Eurocentric aspects of the syllabus, which offered the best prospects for examination success.[118] The widespread criticism of the curriculum was explained away as the "uncritical echo of the lead given by the Historical Society of Nigeria in this matter rather than original ideas developed by practising teachers who were the people most concerned in the practical difficulties of teaching the syllabus".[119]

During the 1950s, the central emphasis remained on the study of African history, with basic instruction in some regional histories – U.S.A, U.S.S.R. and Europe.[120] It was the age of African historical consciousness. The result of the thematic overconcentration on Africa was a kind of pedagogical tension between continental and national approaches to history. Much as the historians were engrossed with writing histories from an Africanist perspective, Nigerian history received less attention in syllabi making during the first decade of the postcolonial era. In fact,

---

[116] Adiele Afigbo, "Some Thoughts on the Teaching of History in Nigeria," *Myth, History and Society*," 221.

[117] John Lavers Files, Arewa House Archives, 15/9, "A Letter sent to Principals of Secondary Schools by H.F.C. Smith," 1st October, 1956. The language of the letter was crafted in such a way as to avoid creating the impression that the society was seeking to expose practices in particular schools.

[118] NAK KADMINEDU/ EXA/69/HIS/ Vol. I, "The Concept of History Syllabuses".

[119] NAK KADMINEDU/ EXA/69/HIS/ Vol. I , "The Concept of History Syllabuses".

[120] Olutayo Adesina, "Teaching History in Twentieth Century Nigeria," 22.

even as late as the 1980s, the historians were still grappling with the effect of this thematic tension. In 1986, a workshop was launched on the teaching of Nigerian history from a national perspective. With a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, the workshop was held at the university of Lagos with a view to getting teachers of Nigerian history in the nations' schools and colleges to see Nigerian history in a more holistic manner. It was resolved that if Nigerian history was to be adequately taught, more textbooks specifically tailored to the syllabus were as a matter of urgency required and that all those in a position to produce textbooks in Nigerian history be encouraged to do so under the auspices of the HSN.[121]

With this new drive, the number of works on Nigerian history grew each year. Yet students were increasingly faced with the problem of getting an overview of that history due to the enormity of ethnicities and their diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, eminent members of the historical profession were commissioned by the HSN to produce chapters on the histories of different Nigerian communities, which were published in 1980 as *The Groundwork of Nigerian History*. This was the first major attempt at publishing an overview of Nigerian history by a cohort of indigenous historians. However, the thematic focus of this volume left much to be desired in terms of coverage. While no chapter is included on pre-colonial Hausa land, the minorities in northern Nigeria were lumped together under the chapter "States and People of the Nigeria-Benue Confluence Area" by Ade Obayemi.[122] Since the production of this text, it has remained the most authoritative monograph on Nigerian history, used by both teachers and students in universities and colleges.

Another means deployed in achieving the goal of academic production of Nigerian history was journal publication. As early as 1956, the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (JHSN) was inaugurated. The editorial policy made it clear that the journal would not be limited to contributions by professional historians. The JHSN offered publishing opportunities for amateur or traditional historians. In addition to JHSN, a journal, *Tarikh*, was started for schools and colleges.[123] These publication outfits gradually "established the standards of scholarship and canons for

[121] John Lavers Files, Arewa House Archives, 1/5/37, "Historical Society of Nigeria, Minutes of 81st Meeting of Council, 26th January," (1985).

[122] See *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980).

[123] Ajayi, "The Historical Society of Nigeria," 8.

the career of professional historians, which stood up rather well under the pressure of rapid expansion"[124] both in terms of number of practioners and tempo of scholarly output. But with increasing pressures of academic scholarship and demands for canonization, the JHSN was gradually turned into an "increasingly orthodox learned journal".[125]

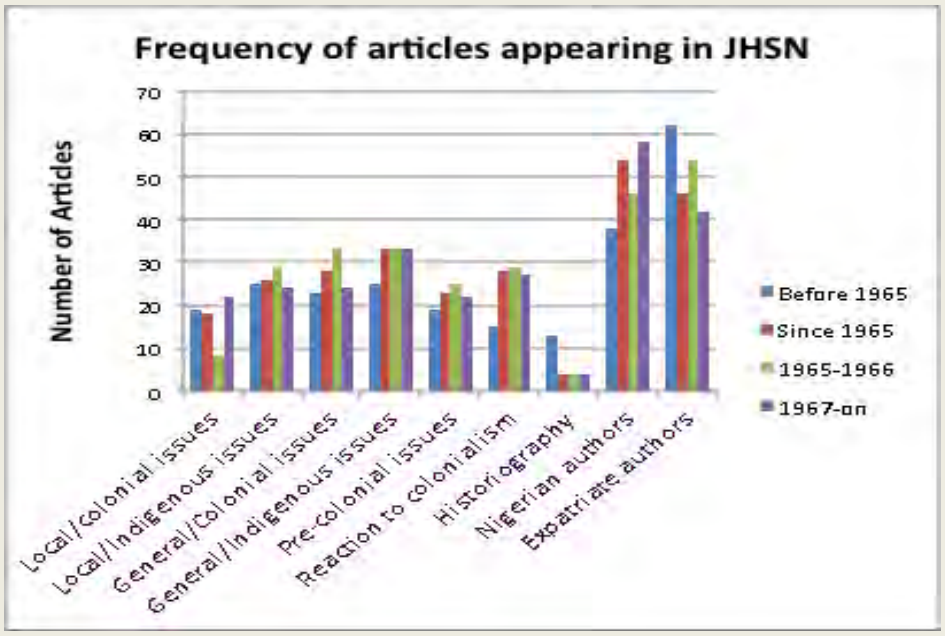


Figure 1:[126]

The above graph reveals an interesting dynamic of the power relations of academic historical production. The dominance of expatriate historians in the field is visible from the colonial period up until 1965 during which they authored over 60 articles as against their Nigerian counterpart who produced 40 within the said period. However, the mounting concentration on colonial matters, in both their local and general contexts, between 1965 and 1966 reflects not only the shifting climate of discourse in favour of Africanist/nationalist paradigms, but also of developments associated with the making of archives.

[124] Ajayi, "The Historical Society of Nigeria," 7.

[125] Omer-Cooper, "The Contribution of the University of Ibadan," 27.

[126] The data used in mapping this chart derives from Robert Hess's work, "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography," 263.

The Making of Archives

The history behind Nigerian history is more than just the story of historians teaching and writing history. The capacity to collect, collate, store and deploy archival documents as a source of historical writing is at the centre of historical production. The histories of modern public archives are deeply rooted in the history, legal framework, administrative and political organisation of the countries in which they are founded. Archival institutions and the degree of their authority and function are, therefore, dependent on whether a country has a federal, regional, socialist or democratic system of government. In countries with a unitary constitution, for example, regional archives tend to be subordinated to the archives in the capital. Similarly, in countries with socialist state ideology, such as the former United States of Soviet Socialist Republics, the National Archives exercises supervisory powers over all other regional archives.[127] The National Archives of Nigeria was a product of the pressures mounted on the colonial regime by both professional historians and some concerned colonial officers to locate and save from destruction, all sources considered of historical importance in the country.

The Colonial Archives

In 1914, the Colonial Office in London despatched a memo, requesting a brief report on the condition and existing arrangements for the custody and preservation of the older official records of government and went on to suggest that effective steps should be taken for the safekeeping and preservation of the said documents. In his reply to the despatch, Sir Fredrick Lugard, the Colonial Governor General of Nigeria, gave what amounted to a glowing representation of the situation of public records thus:

> Supreme Court records, and records of the commissioner of Lands were kept in strong rooms. The older Southern Nigeria records were preserved in the Secretariat, were well housed, carefully catalogued and readily accessible. In fact, the Southern Nigeria records rooms were renovated in 1912 at a cost of £100, and all pre-1898 records were found to be in a very fair state of preservation. Correspondence with Colonial Office was

[127] National Archives of Nigeria, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives in Nigeria" 2, (1970), 197.

> preserved in Government House, where the records were complete and in a fairly satisfactory state of preservation. The records of the Northern Provinces were still recent and were being preserved in Zungeru[128]

Taken as a whole, he added, "I consider the official documents of Nigeria are in a fair state of preservation and that the present arrangements are adequate for their safe-keeping".[129] In his 1916 memoranda[130] written for the guidance of political officers, Lugard established a policy framework for the documentation of office records. He ordered, "that the historical, ethnological and statistical records of each province be kept in loose sheets in a carefully indexed file". The provincial files were expected to contain information regarding the administrative history of the provinces, including the method and date of incorporation under British rule; previous condition; changes in area boundaries; the conditions of appointment of chiefs; names of the residents and the dates of any important administrative acts which affected the provinces such as the institution of taxation and native treasuries.[131] However, since the existence of a policy directive is not tantamount to actual practice, the loss of valuable records continued well into the 1930s and 1940s. Despite successive warnings by concerned officials, the laxity over records managements within the colony continued, leading to the loss and in some instances deliberate destruction of highly valued records. The colonial regime was more interested in preserving documents that were valuable for its business and accounting records. Heads of departments, and secretaries of the provincial administrations as well as the commissioner of the colony were directed to destroy records after their "expiration" periods. For example, on the orders of the Governor of the Colony, 99 files were destroyed out of the 207 secret files in his office. Whenever the private secretary to the Governor considered a file obsolete, he was simply required to submit a request for destruction to his Excellency and action

[128] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives in Nigeria" I, (1970), 1.

[129] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives" I, (1970), 2.

[130] Fredrick Lugard, *Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative 1913-1918*, (London: Waterlow, 1916). These Memoranda like the previous series were meant, according to Lugard, only for confidential circulation among political officers, and may not be used in communication to the press.

[131] Lugard, *Revision of Instructions to Political Officers*, 42.

would be taken accordingly.[132] At times, even records such as vouchers and counterfoils were cleared after seven years.

During the colonial period, there was hardly any clear-cut policy framework governing the management of records, and files were destroyed in the wake of administrative recklessness and contempt for cultural and historical heritage. In their article titled "Archives in Emergent Nations: the Anglophone Experience", Philip Alexander and Elizabeth Pessek offer some insights into the practices of British colonial documentation:

> A number of factors help explain this situation. Hostile natural elements made it difficult to implement adequate storage and preservation programs. There was from time to time a degree of apathy or inertia among colonial civil servants, many of whom were posted to remote territories where they would rather not have been. Lack of constitutional continuity, resulting from the frequent transferral of territories between the colonial powers, caused the dispersion or loss of records. Finally, the growing complexity of colonial government operations created a boom in the quantity of records generated, confusing civil servants sometimes to the point of desperation. In one extreme case a governor was known to have routinely pitched great quantities of records into the ocean.[133]

In colonial Nigeria, reports from government agencies indicate the sad lack of order of settled policies and procedures in the destruction of "valueless" and or retention of valuable records. In one instance, a commissioner of police testified that scarcity of office space made destruction of routine forms and files inevitable. Similarly, the Agricultural Department also reported that files designated for retention were kept in a special filing room, which was inspected frequently to prevent damage by white ants, but confessed that some of the records were in a very poor condition. The situation was the same with many other critical agencies of the colonial administrative machinery such as the offices of the Chief Secretary and the Railway. In the Chief Secretary's office himself, rules for the destruction of what was rather rashly

[132] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives" I, (1970), 5.

[133] Philip Alexander and Elizabeth Pessek, "Archives in Emergent Nations: the Anglophone Experience," *The American Archivist* 51, no. 1, (1988), 121.

designated as "useless" records were only formulated in 1937.[134] Naturally, the initial proclivity for documentation was not driven by a desire to catalogue the actions of the colonial regime for posterity. The information collected was part of the consolidation of the colonial regime rather than for heritage purposes.

Nigerian historians in collaboration with their peers from other parts of Africa have expended so much ink in bashing colonialism for suppressing African agency and historical consciousness. Nonetheless, in all fairness, some credit is indubitably due to some colonial officers for their initial exhortation and support towards the preservation of Nigerian documentary heritage. To be sure, the archival institution in Nigeria emerged beneath the ruins of the colonial documentation practices. Notwithstanding its Eurocentric predisposition, and the loss of valuable records to poor preservation strategies, we should be fair enough to acknowledge the legacy of the "Colonial library", for bequeathing the Nigerian History Machine with valuable raw materials in form of official reports.

The 1920s inaugurated a prolific era of colonial ethnography.[135] For example, in 1916 Intelligence Reports were collected and compiled from all the provinces and districts of Northern Nigeria and published in 1921 as *The Gazetteers of Northern Provinces*.[136] These documents remain to this date a valuable repository of data for the writing of Nigerian history. Some of these documents deal largely with traditions of origin of various Nigerian groups. For example, Henry Richmond Palmer's *Sudanese Memoirs* reported the Daura legend on the creation of Hausa dynasties and the origin of the Sefawa Dynasty in Borno.[137] Such accounts were of course shrouded in the discredited Hamitic theory, which attributes the foundations of African civilisations to external inducements.

The British colonial intellectual investment in Nigeria is equally visible in the area of translation of Arabic manuscripts. Between 1940s and 1950s, Palmer collected and translated numerous Arabic documents in Northern Nigeria. Even

[134] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives" I, (1970), 6.

[135] Toyin Falola, "Mission and Colonial Documents," in *Writing African History*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 274.

[136] Falola, "Mission and Colonial Documents," 266.

[137] Falola, "Mission and Colonial Documents," 275.

groups that are mostly identified as "minorities" in the Middle Belt region were not left out in the making of this colonial library. The main lacuna of colonial documentation, therefore, is largely a function of ideology and approach rather than the substance of the exercise.

Surveying and Collecting Nigerian Records

The growing desire among professional historians to forge Nigerian history of colonial stereotypes was the major impetus for the institutionalisation of public records. Kenneth Dike spearheaded the move towards collecting and ordering records for historical production. In a letter dated 7th July 1950 to Mr. H.M. Foot, Dike proposed measures on how to ensure proper preservation of historical documents. Some of his recommendations were: locating and saving all documents of historical importance in the country; the appointment of an archivist, who, aided by the report following such preliminary investigation, should undertake the work of classifying, cataloguing, pooling together all known historical sources in Nigeria. Dike then offered to render his services free for such colossal task. The Nigerian Secretariat received the proposal with sighs of relief. One administrative officer, Mr. A. Williams, deprecated the protracted inactivity and culpable negligence of the government in the matter. He felt that this should not be restricted to merely ensuring that departments evolve proper policies and procedures for preserving their valuable records and destroying "useless" ones because the whole question of the proper care of historical records was involved. It was then suggested that Nigeria had reached a stage when the material bearing of its history should at last receive the attention it deserved, the aim being to establish something like a Public Records Office. [138]

On the 5th of February 1951, Dike was offered a temporary appointment to undertake part time duties in connection with the preservation of ancient documents of public interest in Nigeria.[139] At this stage, there were only two rooms, for the take-

[138] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives" I, (1970), 13.

[139] Kenneth O. Dike, *Report on the Preservation and Administration of Historical Records and the Establishment of Public Record Office in Nigeria*, (Lagos: Government Printer, 1954), 4.

off of the survey office, available at the University College Ibadan. While recognising the value that the records would bring to the embryonic History Department of the University College, the project was described to the record-producing agencies as a government business rather than a university one. The siting of the Records Survey Office on the University campus insinuated suspicion in certain official circles. The terms of the appointment allowed Dike to see "old documents" and take away those not needed locally; but discretion was to be exercised by the government with respect to documents classified as "confidential". The circular informed the regions that Dike was interested in old documents and solicited the assistance and cooperation of non-officials who might have in their possession documents of historical value.[140]

While Dike, being a trained historian, looked forward to building a national repository of records that would be available for use by researchers, the immensity of the task of building was grossly underestimated. The resources made available for the take-off of the project in terms of manpower and transport facilities were inadequate. Thus, following three months of field survey, the practical challenges of surveying and collecting "all the historical records" of a country as diverse as Nigeria became manifest.

The undergraduate students recruited as records surveyors were amateurs in the field of records appraisal, selection and classification. The only instruction they were given was to undertake a survey of historical records; seek advice, guidance and help when in difficulty from the Survey Office at Ibadan; to devote their full time to the archive work and report progress fortnightly; and not to divulge the content of the records they might come across.[141] The survey relied throughout on work done by these undergraduate field surveyors. Having been very inadequately prepared for their work, they irritated the administrative officers by their demands to be allowed to remove "old records".[142] One of the undergraduate surveyors, Mr. S.S. Wamiko, ran into trouble in Northern Nigeria. In the Eastern and Northern provinces,

[140] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 22.

[141] National Archives of Nigeria, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 35.

[142] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 37.

the approach of the field surveyors intensified suspicion of the real intention of the survey project and, especially in the North, where opposition began to build up against the idea of removing records from the regions to Lagos and Ibadan. The poor performance of the field surveyors was largely blamed for the poor results of the records survey. While Mr. Pefok, who worked for one month in the field, was able to send only 2 short lists, Mr. Inyang looked through 10,000 files, selected 4,000 as being historically relevant and sent in 2,000 of these to Enugu. The older consular records were not sent because Mr. Inyang failed to understand their importance.[143] In 1957, Mr. Wamiko who was deployed to open the Kaduna branch demanded that some confidential and even secret files should be transferred to the branch office. However, the Civil Secretary requested the Federal Government to clarify certain obscurities in the work of the Records Office, and refused to permit any of the records to be transferred until such clarification was obtained.[144]

In a memorandum addressed to the secretaries of the regional administration and the commissioner for the colony, Dike reported that "with our personnel (2 staff) and limited transport facilities it has not been possible to tackle adequately the immense area comprising the Southern Provinces of Nigeria let alone the North. As a result, the survey, could only concentrate on the areas defined as being "rich in historical records".[145] The implication of this was that areas designed as "historically poor" were left out of the field survey. It is difficult to determine with any precision the nature and extent of documents that were left out or missing in the survey and collection process. Although the survey was recognised as a valuable project by the colonial establishment, Dike was seen as being too obsessed and carried away by his enthusiasm to have a national repository of historical documents institutionalised. The government advised him to continue with the modest task of preliminary survey with visits to those parts of the country, which were not covered yet, particularly the Northern provinces to get an idea of the amount of records available.

---

[143] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 37.

[144] National Archives Kaduna, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 119.

[145] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 29.

In 1952, an attempt was made to regulate the transfer of records through collaboration with the government record-producing agencies. To remedy the problem of records collection and preservation, a committee for archives was inaugurated and a proposal was put for the enactment of an archive law in the country. The archives committee had as chairman the Chief Justice of the Federation, Sir Stafford Sutton. Other members of the committee were: Mr. J.O. Field of the Chief Secretary's Office, Dr. J.T. Saunders (Principal, University College, Ibadan), Dr. K.C. Murray (Surveyor of Antiquities and one of the more enthusiastic supporters of the 'Archives' idea), Rev. H. Sheppard, Mr. john Harris (Librarian at University College Ibadan), John Mackenzie Thomas of U.AC. Lagos, and Kenneth Dike himself as the Secretary. The first meeting of the committee, presided over by the Chief Judge, was held at the Supreme Court in Lagos. Some of the matters discussed at this meeting were the refusal of the Catholic Mission Authorities to deposit their records in the Nigerian Records Office as well as the appropriate ministry that would be responsible for the supervision of archival institutions in Nigeria. There were differing views as regards to where archives properly belong among various government ministries. The Chief Judge lamented why the Archives was made the responsibility of the Ministry of Works. He argued that archives, as an academic subject should have been handled by the then Ministry of Social Services, which was responsible for higher education. The location of the archives at the campus of the University was, for him, an appropriate decision. Mr. J.O Field on his part submitted that the Ministry of Works was inappropriate, but recommended the establishment of a Ministry of Information and research to handle the archives as opposed to the proposed social services ministry. Dr. Saunders agreed with the contention of the Chief Judge that the Record Office's affiliation to the University would facilitate matters if they were both under the same ministry. Dr. K.C. Murray of the Antiquities Service, which was under the Ministry of Works said he found the Works Ministry most suitable. Dike supported Murray's position and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Works for supporting the work of the Records Office.[146] Consequently, the Records Office was formally placed under the Ministry of Social Services and a Public Archives Bill was presented to the parliament in 1957. But

[146] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 110.

instead of conferring the archives compulsive powers over departmental records, which Dike considered necessary for the preservation of public records, the bill accorded mere powers to examine some and not all public archives.

Although, the work of the Records Office at Ibadan was still exploratory rather than archival in nature, limited access was given to some research fellows to make use of the available records. The first register of users, created in 1957 by the archivist in charge of the repository, show the names of the users as follows: Margery Perham, G.I. Jones, and A.H. Kirk-Greene, J.F. Ajayi and Akin Mabogunje[147] among whom only Ajayi was a professional historians.

The National Archives of Nigeria

On the 14 of November 1957, the Public Archives Ordinance came into effect, establishing the National Archives of Nigeria (NAN). In June 1959 Dike was appointed as its National Director. From a preliminary survey of records in 1951, to a small Record Office in Ibadan, the project had transmuted into what de Certeau describes as the "establishment of sources or the redistribution of space…of setting aside, of putting together, of transforming certain classified objects into documents".[148] This exercise exiles documents (sources) from the sphere of practice and confer on them the status of objects of knowledge.[149] Such concerted activity for the "redistribution of space," involving the ideas of historians, archivists and government officials, with all its intrigues, in the context of a country that was bidding farewell to colonial domination, helped to establish the archival machine through which the early PhD theses at Ibadan, as well as the writings of the post-colonial generation of Nigerian historians were produced.[150]

The history of NAN, the conditions and practices under which it was inaugurated reveals interesting dynamics about not only the institution's profound

[147] National Archives of Nigeria "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 103.

[148] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 7

[149] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 7

[150] Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, 27.

influence on the direction of Nigerian historiography, but also on the power relations associated with the making of history. While documents for archivists are "seen in the light of legal, fiscal, political, and social accountability as well as the wherewithal for writing history",[151] historians are trained to approach archives as a repository of historical data. Archivists define the value of records in terms of their origin, circumstances of creation, and the evidence they contain that justifies permanent conservation. Archivists for sometime have criticized the historians' relative lack of interest in the origins or social function of the documents in the archives. The former believe that the scholarly purpose for which a document is consulted frequently has little or nothing to do with the purpose for which it was originally made. In Nigeria, historians usually regard archivists as "civil servants",[152] implying an implicit remonstration of the bureaucratic bottlenecks, which the former usually experience during archival research.

Combining the work of the head of the archives with other tasks as professor of history and Head of the Department of History at Ibadan, Director of Benin Historical Research Scheme, and Chairman of Antiquities Commission, Dike was rebuked as being too "ambitious", and for recruiting only his former history students to the National Archives.[153] Dike, assisted by colleagues in the historical profession, was saddled with the task of both research and writing on one hand and the assignment of building institutions for historical production. This according to the National Archives Memorandum of 1970 was one of the factors responsible for the difficulties encountered in the process of records acquisition and establishing regional branches. The 1970 memorandum is replete with scolding remarks about the tenure of Dike as the chief custodian of the National Archives. The Memo describes Dike's tenure as "thirteen years of misdirection of the affairs of the Nigerian Archives". [154] Despite the allegation of "misdirection" against Dike's era, the

[151] Glenda Acland, "Archivists – Keeper, Undertaker or Auditor?," *Archives and Manuscripts* 19, (1991), 17.

[152] Interview with Professor Olayemi, Akinwumi, Abuja, 2014.

[153] National Archives of Nigeria, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 118.

[154] National Archives Kaduna, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 148.

landmarks of his tenure in the National Archives under unfavourable institutional circumstances cannot be repudiated for reasons arising from professional or logistical fiascos. It is not difficult to discern, from the text and context of the Memo, why the post-1960 Nigerian archivists did not appreciate his formative role as the head of the Archives. As a professional historian, it was implicitly assumed that he was not qualified for the job.

The question of access has been one of the spheres of dissension between historians and archival institutions. While the intention of Dike was primarily academic, the government from whose affairs the records originated had a distinct conceptualisation of the purpose of the National archives. The Archives Memorandum No. 13 titled "Records Exploitation Services," stipulates that "records preserved in the National Archives are held in trust on behalf of the bodies that deposited them".[155] The legislation added that, "the archives as institution must not allow the records in its custody to be put into any uses which are (not) approved by depositors".[156] The use of secrecy as an instrument of social control is not a new practice. Both individuals and institutions make and keep secrets. In fact, "secrecy and its cousin privacy are at the core of current debates over national security, intellectual property regimes" and the relationship between knowledge and social context.[157] All prospective users of archives were expected to give long notices in writing as regards their intention, nature of search, whether it is private, academic or official research undertaking. For academic users, the subject of their research and the covering dates must be stated. And where there is friction between the demands of scholarship and the interest of record creators, the latter is allowed to prevail.[158]

The current National Archives Act, which originated from the 1992 National Archives Decree, retains all the legislations regarding secrecy, which suggests that the records were put at the "absolute discretion" of the archivist who could restrict access to certain documents. In practice, however, it was recognised that strict adherence to principles will hamper the growth of scholarship. Therefore, restriction

[155] L.C. Gwam ,"Archive Memoranda," no. 13, (1962), 3.

[156] Gwam, "Archive Memoranda," no. 13, 3.

[157] Judith Reppy, *Secrecy and Knowledge Production*, (Cornell University, 1999), ii.

[158] Gwam, "Archive Memoranda," no. 13, p. 3.

was compromised with regards to documents with the "traditional archival maturity" of fifty years; records of academic nature such as Intelligence, Assessments and Annual Reports; Judicial Records; and other records for which the permission of the depositors is obtained.

Between 1954 and 1982 the National Archives existed in Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna,[159] reflecting the regional character of the country. The NAN has since expanded its operations to many states of the Nigerian federation with branches located in Jos, Ilorin, Owerri, Abeokuta, Akure, Calabar and Port Harcourt. The network being signaled by the existence of these repositories is in part a response to the cultural diversity of a country spread over a large territory, with strongly held regional ethnic traditions and customs.[160]

Picture 1: Housing of Arabic manuscripts in Kaduna National Archives.

[159] The National Archives Kaduna and its range of records and users are treated in details in chapter four of this work.

[160] J. Van Albada, "Records Management and National Archives in Nigeria," (UNESCO, 1989), 3.

The Society of Nigerian Archivists

In 1988, a group of Nigerian archivists met to discuss the possibilities of forming a professional body in order to consolidate the activities of practitioners and promote effective utilization of written cultural heritage of Nigeria. The result was the formation of the Society of Nigerian Archivists with headquarters at the National Archives, Ibadan. Among the objectives of the Society were: promotion of awareness of the importance of records in Nigeria's national and cultural life; assisting the National, state, local and university archives locate and collate archival materials for their eventual transfer to the archives; and to encourage the use of archives in scholarship and national planning.[161] A journal titled *The Nigerian Archivist* was also launched in 1989. In his presidential message, E.E. Ezemo, president of the society noted that the arrival of this journal was timely in view of the increase in governmental activities in the country. He added that if the large volumes of records being produced by the federal, state and local governments were not properly preserved, that would amount to committing a great havoc to the future generations of Nigerians.[162] The journal was opened to contributors of articles on archives, records management and documentation.

The Society held its first convention in 1993 in Calabar where historians and archivists presented papers on the role of archives in nation building. In his paper titled "Nation building and historical source material", the radical historian Yusufu Bala Usman, underscored the importance of archives in nation building thus: "primary historical sources, which, in their written form, are preserved in the archives, are essential for nation building, because they provide the bases for our coming to terms with the complex and dynamic nature of our nations and nationalities, as they were, and as they are changing".[163]

[161] Society for Nigerian Archivists, *Constitution*, (1990), 1-2.

[162] "Presidential Message," *The Nigerian Archivist*, No.I, (1989), vii.

[163] Yusufu Bala Usman, "Nation Building and Primary Historical Source material," paper delivered at the Convention of the Society for Nigerian Archivists, Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar, (1993), 4.

Manufacturing National Antiquities and Heritage

Although the explicit linkages between history, museums and heritage sites as resources of Nigerian history is usually recognised, their implicit epistemological nexuses as instruments of the history machine seldom form the subject of historiographical discourse. Susan Keech McIntosh, a renowned archaeologist of West Africa, argues, "if historians want to evaluate archaeological accounts, some understanding of these linking principles is essential".[164] While historians produce textual narratives of the past, and archaeology brings materiality to history, the museum organises and presents it to the admiration of the viewer in a well-thought out manner.[165] Reading fragmentary and dusty files on the Sokoto Caliphate, colonial conquest of Northern Nigeria or the Nigerian Civil War in the archives, for example, is not equal to seeing the concrete material vestiges from these moments and episodes in museums and heritage sites.[166] Underscoring the importance of materiality in the production of history, Ki-Zerbo observes that "the silent witnesses revealed by archaeology are often more eloquent than the official chroniclers".[167] But what the advocates of the supremacy of archaeological artifacts over textuality ignore is the fact that, like archival documents, artifacts and monuments do not speak for themselves. They have to be methodically collected, interpreted and curated by professional archaeologists and museum curators as the case may be.

The discipline of Nigerian history is heavily indebted to archaeology. In the absence of written records, particularly on pre-colonial history, archaeology helped in terms of dating. There were a number of Nigerian historians the likes of Dike, Sabiru Biobaku, E. J. Alagoa, and Adiele Afigbo who saw the importance of both archaeology and museums in trying to chart the course of Nigerian history. For Afigbo, there is an opportunity for cooperation and dialogue between the

---

[164] Susan keech McIntosh, "Archaeology and the Reconstruction of the African Past," in *Writing African History*, 58.

[165] J.E. Akata," National Museums and Nation Building," National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter* I, no. 2, (1993), 12.

[166] Silas Okita, "Emergence and Role of Public Museums in Nigeria," (MPhil Diss. University of Leicester, 1974), 281.

[167] Introduction to *General History of Africa I*, ed. J. Ki-Zerbo, 6.

conventional historians who deal in written and oral sources and the "unconventional historian" (or call them curators and archaeologists) who study the past mainly through artifacts. In studying the remote past of Nigerian communities, the historians depended for all his material on archaeology. Dike, in his study on the Niger Delta area, found a pamphlet published by the International African Institute titled "Study of Africa's past," which explained the part archaeology could play in historical writing. This had a profound effect on him, and resulted in his introduction of archaeology into the University of Ibadan when he was Vice-Chancellor.[168] When he was appointed the first Chairman of the Antiquities Commission, Dike remarked:

> To me, as a student of African history, the art treasures of this country form the most important surviving record of the activities of man in West Africa before the white man came and before the introduction of writing. The age, which produced some of these masterpieces, was truly inspired and we can catch a glimpse of these days only by preserving its art. It is for this reason that I regard the Commission and the Department of Antiquities as custodians of an important source of Nigerian history.[169]

Discovering the Past by Chance:

In 1943, British archaeologist, Bernard Fagg, received a visitor in the Middle Belt town of Jos, where he had spent years collecting and ordering antiquities. The visitor brought a terracotta head that was accidently discovered by farmers. Intrigued by this artifact, that resembled a terracotta monkey head he had seen earlier, Fagg toured across central Nigeria searching for similar relics. He visited the mining operations in the Nok valley where local people had been finding terracotta for years. Fagg realised that a great deal of archaeological material was being excavated with the tinstone and lost. With the cooperation of the mine owners and managers, he collected nearly 200 terracotta sometimes through purchase, persuasion or his own

[168] Thurstan Shaw, "African Archaeology: looking back and Looking Forward," *The African Archaeological Review* 7, (1989), 9.

[169] Minutes of the first meeting of the Antiquities Commission, cited in Silas Okita, "The Emergence and Role of Museums in Nigeria," 128.

excavations.[170] It was the mineworkers working without any complex machinery that turned out the significant discoveries.[171] The initial discoveries of Nok terracotta were not made under controlled scientific archaeological investigation. However, being an archaeologist himself, Fagg was able to compare these accidental discoveries to establish stylistic similarities, leading to the construction of the famous "Nok Culture", which was dated to about 500 B.C. Through the publication of the findings of his archaeological researches, he inaugurated a new era in the use of archaeology in the production of pre-colonial Nigerian history.

Thus, the efforts at collecting and preserving the documentary evidence of Nigeria's pasts received a major complementary boost through Nok's archaeological findings. This development, initially precipitated by mining operations and discoveries made by touring colonial officials in Jos, inaugurated a phase of archaeological reconnaissance in Northern Nigeria. Other archaeological excavations in the Benue-Valley, Owo, Benin and Ife also produced valuable material cultures such as the Ife Art and Benin.

The Museum Movement: rescuing and Regulating Nigerian Antiquities

The major impetus to the establishment of museums in Nigeria came from the growing concerns among some colonial officials with regards to the alarming rate at which Nigerian antiquities were plundered by missionaries, adventurers, traders and colonial officials. Prior to the 1940s, there were no laws prohibiting the exports of antiquities in Nigeria. It has been estimated that 95 per cent of all the known ancient Benin artworks are now in private and public museums collections abroad.[172]

The story of museums in Nigeria, like other institutions concerned with the production and preservation of cultural and historical objects, is a product of the concerted activities of individuals, mainly of British nationality, working in different parts of Nigeria. Whether these people were teachers, colonial administrators or miners, they seem to have one thing in common – the preservation of the material

[170] Roger Atwood, "The Nok of Nigeria," *Archaeology* 64, no. 4, (2011), 34.

[171] Federal Department of Antiquities, *25 Years of Jos Museum*, (1978), 14.

[172] Helen O. Kerri, "Developing Museums: the Nigerian Experience," *Nigerian Heritage* 3, (1994), 59.

cultural heritage of the peoples of Nigeria.[173] In 1927, Kenneth Murray was employed to advise on the effect of the colonial system of education on local art. In the process, he collected a large collection of Nigerian art works. By 1933, E.H. Duckworth, editor of the first *Cultural Journal* in Nigeria and organiser of exhibitions in government service, had started a crusade for the establishment of museums for the preservation of Nigeria's material culture. Writing in 1937, Duckworth advised African contributors to the *Cultural Journal* to research and describe Nigerian antiquities. His major caveat was: "respect the past, record its history, treasure its signposts, help build museums in Nigeria".[174] This marked the beginning of the institutionalisation of the material heritage wing of the Nigerian History Machine.

On 28 July 1943, the Nigerian Antiquities Service was launched and Kenneth Murray was appointed as the Surveyor of Nigerian Antiquities. Between 1953 and 1954, the Antiquities Ordinance No 17 was promulgated, establishing the Antiquities Department and Antiquities Commission respectively. The then Minister for Works, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, in his speech at the inauguration of the Antiquities Commission stressed the importance of arts and crafts in Nigerian history thus: "in contrast to whatever we import, our antiquities and traditional arts are Nigerian… and owing to absence of written records, the old arts of Nigeria represent a large part of the evidence of our history…it is necessary to protect and preserve our history and artistic relics because of their importance to Nigeria".[175]

The Antiquities Department, like its sister institution, the National Archives, was at various times under different ministries depending on the conception of the makers of cultural policy. In 1956, the Antiquities Commission recommended to the central government the removal of the antiquities of Nigeria from the residual list of the constitution. The commission sought to vest the control of antiquities in the central government instead of the regions. The idea was to protect Nigerian bonds of unity as it was thought that regional museums would prevent the development of

[173] Okita, ""Emergence and Role of Public Museums in Nigeria," 96.

[174] E.H. Duckworth, cited in Okita, "Emergence and Role of Public Museums in Nigeria," 105.

[175] Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, quoted in National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *News Letter* I, no. 2, (1993), 16.

National Museums, by making additions from the regions to its collections difficult.[176]

Later promulgations such as the Antiquities (amendment) Decree of 1969, Antiquities Prohibition Decree No. 9 of 1974 and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments Decree No. 77 of 1979, expanded the responsibilities of the commission to include: administering antiquities and monuments and establishing and maintaining National Museums and other outlets for antiquities: science and technology; warfare; African, black, and other antiquities; arts and crafts; architecture; natural history and education services.[177] Decree 99, otherwise known as the Antiquities Prohibited Transfer of 1974, banned the buying and selling of antiquities except through an accredited agent. The policy conferred on the police and custom services the power to search without warrants, the power of seizure, compulsory purchase of antiquities and the imposition of stricter penalties on offenders.[178] Decree No. 77 of 1979 (which became an Act of Parliament since the return to civilian rule in 1999) dissolved both the Federal Department of Antiquities and the Antiquities Commission to establish the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). The Commission was empowered to acquire any land and property that is considered worthy of being declared a heritage site or national monument. Where an antiquity has been declared a national monument, the owner may be compensated for the value of the date of such declaration and thereafter any estate, right, title and interest in and to such antiquity is extinguished.[179] On excavation and discovery of archaeological objects, the commission established a strict regime of control, which stipulates, "no person shall by means of excavation or similar operations, search for any antiquities unless authorised by permit issued by the commission and with consent of the government of the state in whose state the

[176] M.O. Akanbiemu, "The Development of Museums in Nigeria," *Nigerian Heritage* 4, (1995), 127-128.

[177] Kunle Filane, "Museums in Nigeria, Historical Antecedents and Current Practice," in *Art, Minorities, Majorities*, (CODESRIA, 2003), 3.

[178] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *News Letter* I, no. 2, (1993), 16.

[179] Federal Government of Nigeria, "National Commission for Museums and Monuments Act Chapter 242," *Laws of the Federation of Nigeria* (1990).

search is to be carried out".[180] However, the making of heritage legislation in Nigeria involved the participation of many stakeholders in the heritage industry such as traditional institutions, members of the academy, and other people engaged in heritage management.[181]

However, archaeological surveys, the reconstruction of the records of extinct cultures, and purchase of antiquities were seen as the professional preserve of trained archaeologists working under the supervision of NCMM.[182] The NCMM controlled even the publication of archaeological research findings through its journal, *Nigerian Heritage*. [183] For example, when J.F. Jemkur, published the results of his archaeological findings in 1977, he was reprimanded by the Federal Department of Antiquities. [184] At a point, the NCMM discriminated against applicants with combined honours in Archaeology and History on the ground that certain core archaeological courses were only available to single honours students.

Regulating and collecting antiquities represent one of the many processes involved in heritage production. The other aspect is the preservation of the antiquities in museums. Cultural products from the past are housed usually in historical museums and contemporary art works in ethnographical museums. During the early period of museum foundation in Nigeria, the origin of collections determined the location of museums.

On the 23rd September 1949, the foundation stone of the Jos Museum was laid and Governor Sir MacPherson commissioned it on the 26th of April 1952. Despite the pessimism expressed over local patronage, the Jos Museum recorded 64,418 visitors during its first year of operation.[185] More museums were subsequently established in

[180] "National Commission for Museums and Monuments Act Chapter 242".

[181] Many of the members who served on the board of the museum commission were drawn from the university. For example, Kenneth Dike, Sabiru Biobaku and Ade Obayemi all served as chairmen of the Antiquities Commission. Dr Yaro Gella, a historian from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was also Chairman of the NCMM.

[182] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos, 2013.

[183] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos, 2013. *Nigerian Heritage* is a peer-reviewed journal published annually the National Commission for Museums and Monuments.

[184] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos, 2013.

[185] Federal Department of Antiquities, *25 Years of Jos Museum*, 16.

rapid succession. For example, the Ife Museum (1954), Lagos Museum (1957), Oron Museum (1958), Benin Museum (1960), Kano Museum (1960) and Owo Museum (1968). "By 2009 there were at least 35 National Museums located mainly in the Nigerian state capitals or in historic towns. State governments, academic institutions and local communities that have developed interests in preserving their cultural properties have also established museums". [186] The distribution and curating of artifacts in Nigerian museums was originally dictated by the source of the materials and government policy of national integration. The museums basically house material objects of cultural cum historical importance, which are exhibited for the purposes of public education and entertainment. The more popular objects are the Nok terracotta, Ife and Benin sculptures, the Igbo-Ukwu materials, the Oron ekpu figures and shades of pottery from across the country.

In the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1969), museums of National unity were created as centres of cultural enlightenment to accelerate the production of a Nigerian nationhood. A policy was put in place to establish a National Museum in each state of the federation, with wider collections regardless of provenance. Consequently, museums both in their collections and their display were expected to project nationalism. The map of historical sites of Nigeria shows location of museums with a concentration in southern Nigeria and around the Jos Plateau region.[187] There are also scatterings of History Bureaus in various parts of Nigeria, which appear to house mainly museum collections with incidental archival holdings.

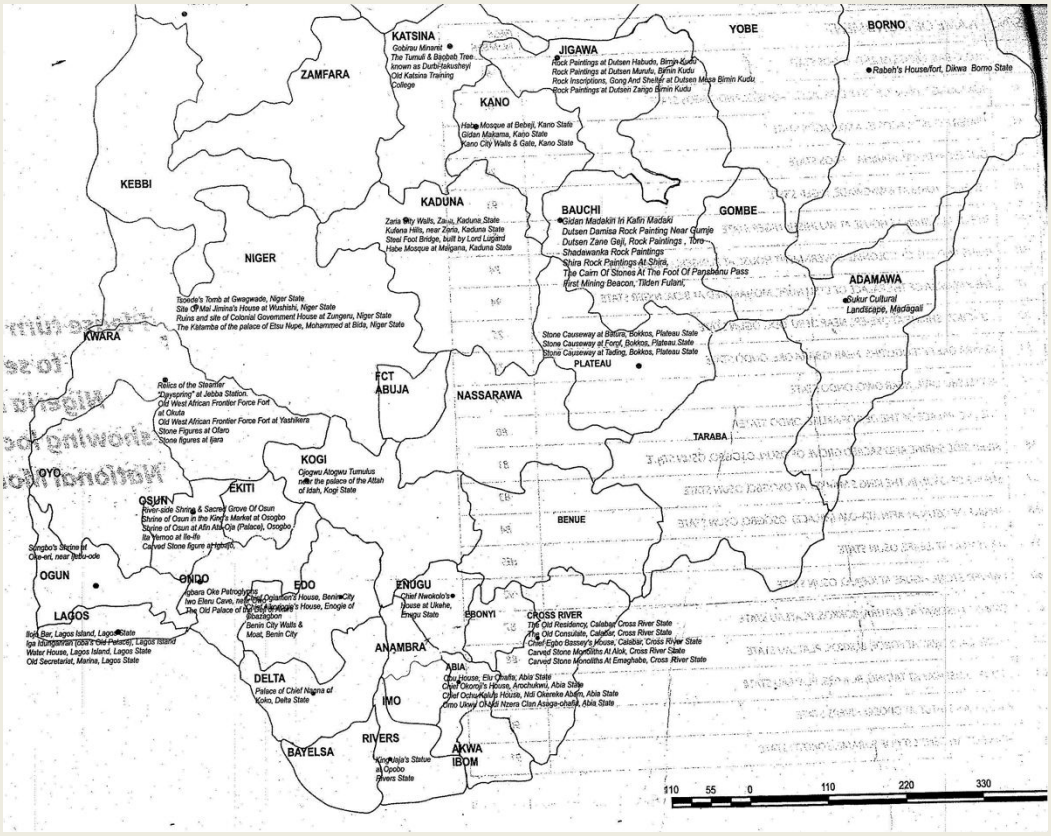
Historical Sites and Cultural Landscapes

The NCMM has since its inception declared 65 heritage properties as national monuments. The Sukur Cultural Landscape and Osun-Oshogbo Sacred Groove have been enlisted by UNESCO as world heritage sites in 1999 and 2005 respectively. These monuments, comprising of historical buildings, archaeological and historical sites, technological and scriptural works, paintings, inscriptions, caves, groves, temples, palaces, and landscapes have been found to exhibit various values from the

[186] Babajide Ololajulo, "Whose past?: Unity museums, memory production and the Quest for National Identity in Nigeria," a paper presented at the 13th session of Factory of Ideas, held at Federal University of Bahia, (2010) 5.

[187] Ololajulo, "Whose past?: Unity museums, memory production," 5.

point of view, art, science, aesthetics, ethnography, archaeology, anthropology, archaeology and other disciplines.[188]



Map 4: A map of Nigeria showing the locations of National Monuments[189]

In 2011, 24 new sites were proposed for declaration as national monuments in an attempt to address areas of national priority and some of the areas overlooked. Some of these sites include the tombs of the first Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, first President of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe and Late Murtala Ramat Mohammed. For a site to be recognised as a national monument, its historical significance has to transcend the community and states where it is located. However, since not all sites could pass for national monuments, it was decided that regional, state and local monuments should be allowed as well. Unfortunately, many

[188] Adebayo Oluremi Funsho, "List of Declared National Monuments," National Commission for Museums and Monuments *Newsletter*, January (2011), 6.

[189] Funsho, "List of Declared National Monuments," 23.

monuments and sites have disappeared from the Nigerian landscape resulting from poor conservation strategies.

Another crucial aspect of the making of the Nigerian history machine is the governance of knowledge production through the mechanism of the National Universities Commission. Like other instruments of the history machine such as National Museums and History Departments, the government exerts some influence on the content of what is taught at the universities through curriculum production.

The National Universities Commission and Curriculum Production

Governance and control of universities and colleges through national quality regimes has profound influence on the production of history. In Nigeria, the emergence of universities was influenced by the regional politics of the 1960s. With the exception of the University of Ibadan, which came into being in the wake of nationalist struggles, the three main regional universities in the Southeast (University of Nsukka), Southwest (University of Ife, later Obafemi Awolowo University), and the North (Ahmadu Bello University Zaria) were founded by the respective leaders of these regions – Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Owolowo, and Sir Ahmadu Bello, presumably to placate and promote geo-political interests.[190]

In 1962, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, after consultations with the Regional Governments, appointed the National Universities Commission (NUC) as an administrative mechanism to among other things: assist, in consultation with the universities and other bodies concerned, in planning the balanced and coordinated development of the universities in order to ensure they are fully adequate to the national needs; to make, either by itself or through committee, such other investigations relating to higher education as the commission may consider necessary; and for the purpose of such investigations, to have access to the records of the universities seeking or receiving federal grants.

In its recommendations the commission recognised the independence of Nigerian universities to teach what they will, to whom they wish, without any

[190] Sam B. Nwideeduh, "The Development and Administration of Nigerian Universities, 1948-1993: an Overview," in *Trends and Issues in Managing Universities in Nigeria*, (Owerri: Springfields, 2003), 10-11.

discrimination on grounds of race, tribe, religion or colour, has not only been widely accepted, but is enshrined in the laws under which everyone of them is established. The report, however, paradoxically states that:

> This independence need [sic] not to be prejudiced by a national machinery for the consideration of the needs of the country. The universities are among the most potent instruments by which our national aspirations, whether these be social, economic or cultural, can be fulfilled. We, therefore, hold that all the governments of the federation have a responsibility to concern themselves not only with providing funds necessary to maintain the universities, but with the positive task of planning and developing a national and coherent system of higher education to meet the needs and aspirations of the nation".[191]

The recommendations implied not only a co-ordinated system of financing but also some measures of centralised control of expenditure. It was also recommended that priorities should be given to the development of scientific and technological departments of the universities and that the universities should aim at a maximum enrolment target of 10,000 students by 1967-1968. Thus, the government decided that the enrolment target of each university should not exceed 5,000 by 1967-1968.[192] The Commission's recommendation that priority be given to sciences was accepted. This was the singular act that set for precedence for the declining relevance of history and other allied disciplines in the national scheme of things in postcolonial Nigeria. While historians and other professionals in the business of producing Nigerian history were busy building institutions and setting the standards of rigorous scholarship, the seeds of "mechanical" failures were being sowed in the history machine through government policy on education.

The notion that universities are ivory towers, somehow distinct and separated from their social and political milieu is debatable. Universities are not completely free or different from the societies that produced them. Although the Federal Government of Nigeria recognises, in principle, the autonomy of the universities to decide how best to meet the educational needs of the country, the universities are hardly

[191] Federal Ministry of Information, *Decisions of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the Report of the National Universities Commissions*, (Lagos, 1964), 2.

[192] Federal Ministry of Information, *Decisions of the Government*, 5.

"intellectual ivory towers, inward-looking and unmindful of the rest of the society. They are earthly institutions; bound by special and temporal laws, blessed with the strengths of society but also afflicted by is weaknesses".[193] For instance, while universities enjoy freedom to a certain extent in terms of curriculum production, their "surveillance" through institutional rules and regulations has put some constraints on the autonomous academic operation of the history machine.

The governance of knowledge production became more visible with the promulgation of Decree No. 16 in 1985, which empowered the NUC to establish minimum standards for all the programs in Nigerian universities. The Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) was approved in 1989 as a major instrument for university accreditation. This was reviewed and titled Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) in 2001 to integrate Peace and Conflict Studies, especially in the wake rising ethno-religious tensions and conflicts in the country. The BMAS set the philosophy, aims and objectives of the degree program in history. The document states that history teaching in Nigerian institutions should aim at: giving students a thorough understanding of Nigerian history and historiography planted firmly in the context of African history and historiography; making students comprehend the historical forces and developments which have shaped and are still shaping the lives of the peoples of Nigeria, Africa and the world entirely; developing a sense of commitment and capacity to consciously relate to these forces and developments in such a way that Nigerian and African unity, independence and prosperity can be achieved.[194] To achieve these stated objectives, history teachers were enjoined to draw on the expertise of allied disciplines in humanities and social Sciences. Even the behavioural expectations of the graduates of history were envisioned in the BMAS. In addition to the minimum acceptable ethics consistent with the tenets of liberal education, all graduates of history were expected to acquire a substantial body of historical knowledge and the ability to read, analyze and reflect

[193] Mahmud Tukur, "The Role of Intellectuals in the African, Asian, and Latin-American Imperialist Struggles," (1981), 2. This paper was originally intended as a contribution to a symposium on the life of Walter Rodney scheduled for January 31, 1981 but which was disrupted by a student demonstration the previous day. The author, however, distributed the paper in commemoration of Walter Rodney's birthday on March 13, 1982.

[194] National Universities Commission, *Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard for Undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian Universities*, Arts, (2007), 70.

critically and conceptually upon historical texts. In other words, history departments were expected to process and manufacture a cohort of patriotic history graduates as instruments of nation building.

Nonetheless, the existence of a statutory body for quality assurance in tandem with the objectives of nation building, does not always guarantee practical institutional acquiescence. Each university tended to emphasise allegiance to the local community where it is located. Virtually all departments of history in Nigeria would have a course on the local history of the host community. For example, while the History Department at the University of Jos teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on Jos Plateau and adjoining lowlands and Central Nigeria (Middle Belt), Benue State University has courses on the Benue Valley, the Bayero University, Kano has special papers on the Sokoto Caliphate and Northern Nigeria. Each department has its own variant of philosophical and ideological commitment to the nation while stressing its allegiance to its immediate community. The responsibility of history departments to their immediate environments is reflected in research agendas and the forms of knowledge produced. Several contradictions abound in the manner in which universities were founded and managed. Even admission and staff recruitment practices in most universities reflect ethnic and religious cleavages.

Typical of any development issue, the perception of the university in Nigeria has been communal rather than national in outlook. The practice of appropriating university establishments by local communities has affected the pattern of both staff and student configuration. If a university is established and located in a particular place, the people would simply assume that the federal government has given them a university. As a result, scholarship ultimately reflects a regional line of thinking.[195] As a result of the tendency to appropriate national cultural institutions by regional communities, the Nigerian history machine evolved with certain implicit internal flaws that resulted in the breakdown of the machine.

Moreover, the fact that Nigerian history in the early post-independence period was gleaned mainly through the works of John Flint and Margery Perham, who represented Sir George Goldie and Lord Lugard as the makers of Nigeria, complicated the Nigerian history project. There was so much pressure on local historians to produce history that would be relevant to the task of nation building.

[195] Interview with Professor Sati Umar Fwatshak, Jos, 2012.

Although a few good PhD dissertations had been produced, local historians' access to publishing outlets was still limited relative to their non-Nigerian colleagues. Thus, the history catalogues of schools and university libraries were dominated by the writings of foreign scholars. Even publishers saw the need for Nigerian authors to take the lead in producing Nigerian history. For instance, in 1962, the Manager of Oxford University Press Nigeria Limited, "drew the attention of the senior leadership of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, to the need for an authoritative Nigerian history largely authored by Nigerians".[196]

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the making of Nigerian history as a practice transcends the university walls. Beginning in the last decades of colonial rule, Nigerian history developed as a corporate venture, which involved assorted yet interconnected institutional and disciplinary regimes, resembling a kind of knowledge production machine. The advent of the Historical Society of Nigeria, the National Archives and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments led to the institutionalisation of the history machine, an asymmetric process through which documents, memories and artifacts were converted into historical knowledge for nation building. Between 950s and 1960s the makers of cultural and educational policies, historians, archivists and museum officials spoke the common language of historical documentation for nation building. The collaboration and tensions among them represent some of the nuances of the engine of historical production. The making of the Nigerian history machine depended so much on the appropriation of the individual cultures and histories of the various Nigerian communities through national institutions. But the arduous process of aggregating a large number of ethnic histories into a national narrative resulted in the breakdown of the history machine, thereby giving way to the powerful assertion of the historical narratives of regional and ethnic identities. In this way, local and regional communities in turn sought to appropriate the national narratives and institutions out of ethno-national concerns. Thus, despite the initial epistemological advances of nationalist historiography against colonialist

[196] Ayandele, "The Task before Nigerians Historian Today," 4.

history in the 1950s and 1960s, and the dogged attempt at producing a national history, Nigerian history as a subject of historical discourse has been consistently challenged by ethnocentric and separatist histories. The context and contours of this "historiographical regionalism" became evident following the appropriation and "provincialization" of the Nigerian history project by competing regional governments in the late 1950s and 1960s. This twists and turns in the Nigerian historical and cultural edifice forms the subject of our subsequent chapter.

Chapter two

"Decentering" Nigerian History

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the ruptures that befell the Nigerian history machine in the wake of regional politics and competition in the 1950s and 1960s, and the economic crisis associated with the Structural Adjustment program (SAP) of the 1980s. The end of colonial rule in 1960 brought a number of changes in the ways the Nigerian state and the public engage with the past. Most importantly, it resulted in what Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff called the "deregulation of cultural [and historical] production".[197] In other words, the production of history in postcolonial Nigeria was "provincialized", to use Dipesh Chakrabarty's term in this context.[198] By the 1980s, the drive towards national historical consciousness, using the institutions of history, had been effectively "regionalized".

Although the epistemological posturing of professional historians to "objective" historical reconstruction blurs the discursive bridge across politics and historical writing, it is usually difficult for intellectuals to conceal their extra-academic allegiances and loyalties. This principle of contradiction operates in multiple spaces and temporalities, from data collection to writing actual histories, historical practice is entirely relative to the structure of society.[199] In post-colonial Nigeria, there are four strategies deployed in consolidating ethnic and communal narratives, religions and perceptions about others: the politics of jihad and Islam by the Hausa-Fulani; the politics of ethnicity by the Yoruba; the politics of genocide and war trauma by the Igbo; and the discourse of marginalization by minorities in the

[197]Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Theory from the South, or How Euro-America is evolving towards Africa* (Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 139.

[198] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2000).

[199] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 66.

Middle Belt and Niger-Delta region.[200] The politics of marginalization – "that a minority group is present only as a "footnote" to the history of others, or as victims of politics,"[201] provided the basis on which Middle Belt resistance against the Nigerian history machine developed. The Nigerian history machine, as a social engineering technology, has experienced two major overlapping ruptures.

First Rupture

The first breakdown saw the waning of nationalist historiography, the founding of regional history institutions and research projects such as the Yoruba Research Scheme, the Northern History Research Scheme, and the Eastern Research Scheme, which created incentives for sub-national discourses and the marginalization of the smaller ethnicities in the making of history. These regional history projects reflected the postcolonial geo-political arrangement of Nigeria: Northern, South Western and South Eastern Regions, dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo respectively. This administrative structure was accordingly replicated in the regional history projects and the writings that emanated from them. By the late 1960s, the Nigerian history project had transmuted into regional compartments, manifesting clear signs of a cranky machine, functioning and breaking down in tandem with the political and social tensions in the country. Rather than having the institutional resources of historical production distributed proportionately across regions and cultural cleavages, the National Archives broke into regional archives, the National Museums proliferated into provincial museums; even the universities, as we saw in chapter one, were affected by this regional politics. While the expansion of institutions of history to many parts of Nigeria was seen as a good omen of multiculturalism in practice, the effect on the production of Nigerian history was counterproductive as local communities appropriate them especially with the explosion of identity politics.

This initial breakdown of the Nigerian history machine was also associated with the practical question of processing and aggregating the over 250 discrete ethnic histories into a Nigerian history. In line with the trajectory of regional politics in

[200] Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, 251-260.

[201] Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, 258.

Nigeria, the topology of post-colonial historical writing resembles what we can describe as "historiographical regionalism", a tendency which "facilitated the production of power by the political class by fostering the divisive power of communal consciousness and foreclosing the disruptive power of class and other solidarities, while threatening the integrative imperatives of nation-building".[202] Despite the instrumentalisation of history in the decolonization struggle and the drive towards a Nigerian nationhood, each regional government took the initiative of sponsoring researches into the histories of the people of its areas in the post-colonial era.

The Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS)

The penchant for a proper synthesis of the multiple ethnic histories in Nigeria was seen in terms of the promotion of local history projects, "each sufficiently broad to give meaningful field, but sufficiently restricted in scope to permit of work in great detail".[203] In 1956, Kenneth Dike put into operation an inter-disciplinary project for the study of the Benin culture and history. In the same year, S.O. Biobaku launched the Yoruba Historical Scheme, and the Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS) took off in 1964. A third scheme for the study of the history of Eastern Nigeria was inaugurated in 1965. Kenneth Dike originally conceived the NHRS in 1960 as an interdisciplinary project combining the resources of both University of Ibadan and the Government of Northern Nigeria.

The regional history projects coincided with a period of intense cultural awakening within Northern officialdom. The Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, initiated a cultural policy called Northernisation Policy. This project pursued between 1950s and 1960s by the new Muslim elites of postcolonial Northern Nigeria sought to bridge the endemic cultural and political divisions in the region. The Northernisation Policy implies the cultural and historical production of a strong and united North as a powerful political block in the new

[202] Paul Iyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997), 157.

[203] Northern History Research Scheme, *First Interim Report*, (Zaria,1966), 1.

political entity of Nigeria. This consisted not only of the idea of the unity and distinctness of the North within Nigeria, but also perceptions of what the ideal structure of power and historical consciousness in Northern society ought to be.[204]

Previous interpretations of this cultural policy largely view it within the prism of politics.[205] Yet it was more than just an instrument of politics; it inaugurated a new wave of historical production in Northern Nigeria. Between 1960 and 1966, the regional government took over the NHRS to chart the course of producing a "comprehensive" history of the region. The regional government, through the newly founded and premier University in the Region, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU), contributed half the cost of the research scheme. By 1962 all preliminary work necessary for it's launching was completed. The NHRS emerged as a project for the initiation of large-scale research into the history of Northern Nigeria, involving the employment of an Honorary Director and three full-time research fellows for three years.[206] The responsibilities of government in connection with the project were transferred to ABU in 1963. In 1964, the NHRS was formally launched with expatriates and indigenous scholars as research associates, largely centred at the University of Ibadan. These researchers include Kenneth Dike, R.A. Adeleye, M.A. Al Hajj, Robert Armstrong, Murray Last, and John Hunwick. This collaborative venture laid the foundations of what became the archive of Northern Nigerian historiography, on the basis of which subsequent generations of indigenous historians from the region produced histories of various communities. By 1966, it was reported that the project had undertaken an archaeological survey of Borno; recovered Arabic manuscripts in the North; launched a study of the historical traditions of the Idoma ethnicity in the Benue Valley; and the publication and translations of the works of Imam Ahmad Fartuwami, and the history of the reign of Caliph Muhammad Bello (1817-1837). One of the challenges confronted by the NHRS at this initial stage was how to deal with the complexities of multiple ethnic histories and the diversity of available sources. As a region of cultural and religious diversity, Northern Nigeria

[204] George Amale Kwanashe, *The Making of the North in Nigeria-1900-1965* (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2002), vi.

[205] See John Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria* (Zaria: Hudahuda, 1986).

[206] Northern History Research Scheme, *First Interim Report*, 2.

represented a conglomeration of multiple ethnicities: the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, Birom, Tiv, Jukun, Bole, Bachama, Idoma, Igala, Ebira, Gbayi, Nupe, Marghi, which have developed cultures organised within numerous interconnected but varied polities.[207] The non-Muslim and non-Hausa-Fulani peoples of the Middle Belt saw the NHRS as a symbol of cultural and historiographical hegemony of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani.

Lately, Murray Last, one of the pioneer research fellows of NHRS, who wrote a seminal work that changed the focus of northern Nigerian historiography, has pointed retrospectively, that his allegiance to the Sokoto Caliphate through the NHRS shaped his scholarship on the Caliphate.[208] This belated pessimism is evident in some of his recent writings. In one such work, Last reveals his self-reflexive posture on the historiography of the Sokoto Caliphate in the following words:

> The initiatives of the 1960s have been replaced by other programs of research, more contemporary in focus, more accessible to fieldworkers perhaps, or simply more interesting to today's young Nigerian...it is high time to take a closer look at the caliphate as a wider, regional phenomenon. For example, I think we need to distinguish those core emirates that sustained the Jihad values of scholarship and piety from the 'frontier' emirates whose role was more military, expanding the Caliphate or at least closing the frontier against its enemies. It is these 'frontier' which peoples (Middle Belters) outside the Caliphate experienced as representing the true spirit of the Jihad... A regional understanding, then, will take into account the experiences of both the mujahidun and those who resisted or endured the continuing warfare on the frontier... In the 1960s we were concerned primarily to show how the centre at Sokoto–say, the Waziri's family–sustained the spiritual and social values of the jihad against all odds.[209]

Murray Last's work *The Sokoto Caliphate* was a major breakthrough in the historiography of northern Nigeria. Deploying primary source materials in the private archives of Late Waziri Junaidu of Sokoto, Last wrote a seminal history of the Sokoto Caliphate. But the scope of the work was limited to the metropolitan areas of the

[207] Northern History Research Scheme, *First Interim Report*, 2.

[208] Interview with Professor Murray Last, Kano, 2009.

[209] Murray Last, "Innovation in the Sokoto Caliphate," paper presented at the Bicentenary of the Sokoto Caliphate, International Conference Centre, Abuja, June, (2004), 8.

caliphate. In other words, the experiences of the Middle Belt minorities who resisted attempts at incorporating them into the Muslim Caliphate were excluded in the narrative.

The Arewa House

In 1970, Arewa House, another regional heritage-cum-research institution was founded in the north to immortalise the legacies of Late Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. In what resembles, "the nature-culture connection" through which society transforms its relation to nature by making a social institution shift from one status to another,[210] the personal residence and office complex of the Sardauna was converted into a centre for historical documentation and research. The centre was placed under the charge of Professor Abdullahi Smith. Arewa House emerged as a centre for historical research and documentation when the History of Northern Nigeria Committee was instituted by the Interim Common Services Agency, which took control of the assets and liabilities of the then six Northern States, created following the dissolution of the Northern Region in 1967. This research centre was intended to cover the periods of history that the NHRS was not intended to cover; that is all aspects of historical research in the 20th century, including contemporary history. The Arewa House represents an archetype of the northern history machine, housing a library, archives, museum and a cohort of professional historians, curators and archivists. The Arewa House archives has a collection of documents: Arabic manuscripts, Northern Nigerian Documents 1900-1906 and transcripts of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.[211] And the museum has an exhibition of the life and times of the Premier of the Northern Region, late Ahmadu Bello, and other galleries showcasing artifacts and ethnographic materials from different communities of northern Nigeria.[212]

In addition to the institutional devolution of history in the country, the

[210]De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 71.

[211] "Arewa House Centre of Historical Documentation and Research," Brochure, (nd).

[212] During my visit to National Archives Kaduna, I met a searcher from Benue State who complained that the Arewa House Museum does not have any cultural artifact from the Benue in the Middle Belt region.

allegiance of the pioneer generation of historians to the Nigerian nation was shaken by postcolonial disillusionment, political intrigues among the regions and the experience of the Civil War (1967-1970). These factors combined to make the production of Nigerian history a kind of naked enterprise. Universities, archives and museums were regionalised to reflect the character of the Nigerian state, implicating these knowledge-producing agencies in the politics of identity and regionalism. In other words, the politics of the Nigerian federal state set the motion for ruptures and potential breakdowns of the Nigerian history machine and the quest for extra-national history machines by disgruntled communities. Within two decades after the quest for Nigerian history had begun in earnest, the focus of concern among historians shifted from the co-operative venture of collecting data and building of National Archives to a lively debate about how best to interpret the data.[213] At this stage, the academic field of Nigerian history had become too expansive for any given historian to master, and the failure to process the multiple ethnic histories into a national narrative became obvious. One of the obvious fallouts of this failure of historical production is the relative "exclusion" of certain communities from Nigerian history.

The Middle Belt as a "Secondary Theme" of Nigerian Historiography

In his book entitled, *Nigerian Perspectives: an Anthology*, Thomas Hodgkin acknowledges the histories of the Middle Belt minority communities such as Tiv, Idoma Birom and Anaguta as "interesting secondary themes". Apart from this passing remark, none of the minorities in the Middle Belt is featured in this monumental work of Nigerian history. Hodgkin simply rationalizes his exclusion of the minorities on the pretext of "shortage of space, time and knowledge".[214]

The historiographical exclusion of the Middle Belt communities from national discourses has a longer trajectory, going back to the writings of 19th century Islamic scholars, European travel narratives and colonial historiography. These early writings were framed around the themes of Middle Belt isolation from, and, resistance against

[213] Paul Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics," in *African Historiography, Essays in Honor of Jacobs Ade Ajayi*, ed. Toyin Falola (Lagos: Longman,1993), 198.

[214] Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: an Anthology*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 3.

their Muslim Hausa-Fulani neighbours. The writings of Islamic scholars from Bauchi Emirate in Hausa and Ajami scripts offered some historical accounts of the Sokoto Jihad around the Middle Belt areas, though, largely from the perspectives of the emirs with the Middle Belt societies mentioned only in so far as they happened to be the objects of Muslim slave raids and conquests. Accordingly, these "emirate-inspired" texts have been generally treated with scholarly skepticism and dismissed by Middle Belt historians as pejorative grand narratives, intended to legitimize Islamic expansionist agenda.

The earliest published accounts, which provide some glimpses into the histories of some Middle Belt areas, came in the form of the travel writings of European explorers. Despite the empirical details they contain on the Muslim societies, references to the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt are sketchy and based on secondary sources for the travellers rarely ventured beyond major trade routes.[215] Heinrich Barth, who visited parts of the Sokoto Caliphate in the mid 19th century, documented a lot of information on the institutions, political organisations and economies of the emirates. Barth's travel narratives have been treated by Nigerian historians as "first-hand observations" of 19th historical processes in the region. However, his reports were mainly confined to the areas of the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno Sultanate. About the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt, he could not offer any first hand information since he did not travel to those areas himself.[216] The glimpses he provided of those areas were based on second-hand information furnished by his informants; mostly Muslim traders who described the Middle Belt peoples in "unfavourable light".[217] So their works too like those of the Muslim writers were tainted with exotic views of the natives.

Through these narratives, a view of history evolved in which the Middle Belt societies were subjected to various pejorative descriptions such as "backward-looking", "stateless", "pagan", "hill-top people", "heathen", "barbaric" and inimical to civilisation. By the turn of the 20th century, the accounts of the Muslim writers and

[215] David C. Tambo, "The Hill Refugees of the Jos-Plateau: a Historiographical Examination," *History in Africa* 5 (1978) 202.

[216] Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* II, in three volumes (New York: 1857), 572.

[217] Tambo, "The Hill Refugees of the Jos-Plateau," 202.

European travellers' descriptions were transposed into colonial anthropological and ethnographic literature on northern Nigeria. In colonial writings, the view of the Middle Belt as the abode of primitive people or "pagans" within the emirates[218] was reproduced. For example, while describing Plateau communities as "virile pagans", Margery Perham also designated the Tiv in Benue as "brutally primitive".[219] But it is important to note that the colonial writers spared no Nigerian community in their project of epistemic transgression. The Muslim societies of northern Nigeria were also variously dubbed as "Mohammedan emirates" and "primitive". This derogatory characterization of the natives in colonialist historiography coupled with a shared history of resistance against the Hausa-Fulani Muslims formed the background against which the Middle Belt historiography emerged in the late 1970s.

The ABU School of History

The contradictions embedded in knowledge production practices are engendered by underlying local allegiances to extra-national and extra-academic loyalties such as ethnicity, region, and religion, which are usually written off in historiographical discourse, perhaps due to the intellectual grips of the British empirical tradition on the practice of history in Nigeria or the illusion of professional neutrality.

The emergence of history departments in most Nigerian universities contributed to the diversification of historical production as:

> Many historians, inheritors of the professional method became involved in universities, colleges and schools, peddling what has been bequeathed to them. Around such activities have crystallized various schools of Africanist historiography… Thus emerged the Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Ibadan and Makerere schools of nationalist historiography.[220]

The first Department of History in Northern Nigeria was the one at AB.U. Founded under the aegis of Abdullahi Smith, the department became the nucleus of the

[218] Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, (Oxford University Press, 1937), 132.

[219] Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*,148-153.

[220] Arnold Temu and Bonavenure Swai, *Historians and Africanist History*, (Zed Press, 1981), x.

activities of the NHRS and the production of northern Nigerian historiography. The early products of ABU were brought up in the mold of the Ibadan nationalist school of history, but by the late 1970s they had evolved a distinct brand of historical approach and interpretation, becoming the ABU school of history under the intellectual leadership of Abdullahi Smith and his students such as Yusuf Bala Usman, Mahmud Tukur, George Kwanashe and Abdullahi Mahdi.[221] The members of the ABU school of history have been variously dubbed "Marxists", "radicals" and "Islamic legitimists", who emerged in their own right, despite their early connection with Ibadan. [222] Therefore, as Lovejoy argues, "the real focus for the study of Islamic north shifted to Zaria, where Murray Last, Sa'ad Abubakar, Muhammad Al-Hajj and others followed the lead of Abdullahi Smith in reconstructing the political history of the Sokoto Caliphate". [223] This initial commitment to the historiography of Sokoto Caliphate resulted in the writing of emirate histories such as *The Lamibe of Fombina* (on Adamawa emirate) by Sa'ad Abubakar and *The Transformation of Katsina* (on Katsina emirate) by Yusufu Bala Usman. The ABU school of history was alleged to have envisaged the rejuvenation of the medieval structures of Islamic scholarship as the basis for revived ulama, using the NHRS and other research resources for the study of Arabic texts and oral traditions.[224] While the characterization of the school as "Islamic legitimist" is hard to validate as the foci of their philosophical orientation, it is believed that the histories produced during the formative years of the ABU school focus mainly on the emirates, neglecting the northern minorities.

However, it is important to state at this juncture that within the Department of History at ABU, there were scholars who identified with the non-Muslim minorities even before the emergence of universities in the Middle Belt region. For instance, at the 14th Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, prominent historians like Ade Obayemi and Ayandele strongly advocated the need for historians and

[221] Abubakar, "The Challenges of Nation- Building: Nigeria, Which Way Forward," in *Interrogating Contemporary Africa*," 28.

[222] Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School," 198.

[223] Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School," 198.

[224] Lovejoy, "The Ibadan School," 198.

university students to pay attention to the local histories of micro-ethnic groups.[225] Obayemi, who is arguably credited with laying the foundations of Middle Belt historiography,[226] called for the application of linguistic, oral, archaeological evidence in studying Nigerian micro-ethnicities. According to him, "this is the only way in which we shall be provided with a "complete" or "overall" history of Nigeria where the role of the "minorities" will help put the "majorities" in their proper places".[227] On the same vein, Ayandele, in his critique of the dominant approach to northern Nigerian historiography, states that:

> In Northern Nigeria where distinction between one class and another seems blurred by the opportunities of even slaves in matters of government, historical writing has been in partial favour of Islam. The doctrine of Islam with its minority adherents until the middle of the nineteenth century, its potential capacity for unifying society and its answer to the problem of life, form the bulk of the knowledge that has been imparted to us by professional historians.[228]

The thematic concentration of ABU School History on emirate histories was challenged by some leading figures in the profession. Abdullahi Smith's ground-breaking approach to the 19th century Islamic revolutions, as the "neglected theme of West African history",[229] was contested by scholars who were historiographically sympathetic to the northern minorities. The argument, as advanced by Ayandele, was that the neglected theme for northern Nigeria was not the Islamic revolution, but the indigenous religions, customs, institutions, habits and practices of the minorities,[230] mainly found in the Middle Belt. Yet most of the early literature on the Middle Belt

---

[225] A.E. Ayandele, "How Truly Nigerian is our Nigerian History?," paper present at the Conference of Historical Society of Nigerian, 4

[226] A.A. Idress and Yakubu Ochefu, Introduction to *Studies in the History of Central Nigerian Area*, xxiii.

[227] Ade Obayemi, "Some Observations on the History of Nigerian Middle Belt," paper present at the Conference of Historical Society of Nigeria, (nd) 11.

[228] Ayandele, "How Truly Nigerian is our Nigerian History?," 6.

[229] Abdullahi Smith, "A Neglected Theme of West African History: the Islamic Revolutions of the 19th Century," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 2 (1961).

[230] Ayandele, "How Truly Nigerian is our Nigerian History?," 7.

was produced at ABU

The point I am getting at is that the ABU School was more than just a group of "Islamist" or "Jihadist" historians, out to extol the virtues of the Sokoto Caliphate. Although the "Marxist" predilection of the School naturally foreclosed the rise of an overt Middle Belt regional solidarity, the pioneer historians of ethnic minorities in the north were themselves trained at ABU; for example, Charles Gonyok, John Agi, T. Makar and Monday Mangwvat, John Nengel, Stephen Banfa. But these scholars wrote the histories of their local communities mainly from a class rather than from ethnic or resistance perspective.[231] The social context was such that as ABU expanded, a large portion of the students were Christian and from the Middle Belt. They were certainly encouraged to research and write about their communities as they defined them, but the chances for these young scholars to cut up ties with the official narrative in ABU school of history in favor of ethnocentrism were narrow, given the primacy of Marxist ideology among the Zaria scholars then. During the 1970s, ABU was the hotbed of Marxist scholarship and debates where the likes of Yusufu Bala Usman, Mahmud Tukur and Yusufu Bangura took the lead in debating contemporary issues such as the direction of Nigerian political economy. Although the historical writings of Yusufu Bala Usman, who was the doyen of the radicals at ABU, are not necessarily conceptually Marxist, the general orientation of scholarly debates and discourses at that time was interpreted as a brand of Marxist scholarship.[232] It was, therefore, incongruous for a resistance-driven historiography like the one, which emerged later in the Middle Belt to have taken roots in this radical neo-Marxist intellectual climate. For instance, Monday Mangwvat writes in the acknowledgement of his recent book: "The thesis from which the book is derived was conceptualized and prosecuted within the intellectual rubric of the then emergent "A. B. U. school of history" or the "Zaria School".[233]

---

[231] The classical case of this approach is Monday Mangwvat's *A History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1902–1960: the Genesis of a Ruling Class* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2013).

[232] Samaila Suleiman, "Yusufu Bala Usman as a Historian: an Inquiry into his Writings and Historical Methodology," (M.A. Diss. Bayero University Kano, 2010).

[233] Mangwvat, *A History of Class* Formation, xxi.

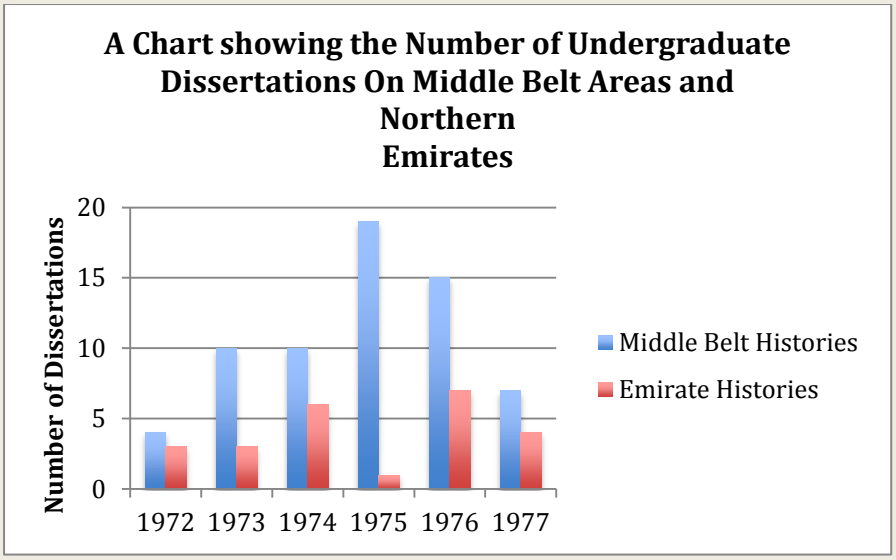


Figure 2

The above chart glaringly shows that undergraduate dissertations produced in History Department at A.B.U between 1972 and 1977 concentrate largely on the non-Muslim areas of the Middle Belt, especially Benue and Plateau states. However, thematic preference for emirate histories is slightly visible at the postgraduate level. For instance, between 1970 and 2004, 28 and 23 postgraduate theses were produced on the emirates histories and the Middle Belt communities respectively.

Second Rupture

The second rupture of the Nigerian history machine occurred in the 1980s, during which the institutions of history, as technologies of nation building, were thrown overboard in the wake of economic crises and declining funding for education. Between 1970s and 1980s, the practice of history in Nigeria witnessed a dramatic transition from the phase of institution building to that of politics of interpretation. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) introduced by the administration of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (1985-1993), as a package of neoliberal reforms, resulted in acute economic recession, social dislocation and identity contestations,[234]

[234] Attahiru Jega, "The State and Identity Transformation under Structural Adjustment Program," in *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment*

leading to a moral deflation of the Nigerian history project. By the late 1980s, the Nigerian state had lost its initial proclivity for social engineering with the result that cultural institutions and disciplines within humanities, hitherto seen as purveyors of national values, were neglected whilst the applied sciences became synonymous with national development. Meanwhile, drastic cuts in government expenditure on education affected scholarly activities such as conferences, research and publications. History was severely affected by the fiscal crises and the identity politics associated with it. While the government ostensibly introduced measures aimed at diversifying the productive base of the economy, universities and other knowledge-producing institutions such as archives and museums were ignored, and their annual funding allocations drastically reduced. Student and intellectual activism among historians was growing on campuses as Nigerian military dictators launched punitive and censorship strategies to screen what were considered as subversive knowledge regimes such as history, politics and sociology. The glaring evidence of this great rupture in the nation's history machine was the gradual removal of history subjects from primary and secondary school curricula. A new national policy on education which came into effect in 1977, and revised three times thereafter (1981, 1998 and 2004) removed history teaching from the syllabi of junior secondary schools and introduced Social Studies in its stead.[235]

Paradoxically, the declining funding was not commensurate to the rapid increase in the number of history departments in the country. The official thinking of successive governments has been that history programs are less expensive to institutionalize relative say to engineering and medical sciences, which require greater capital investment. But as new departments of history were founded and more students produced, the field of Nigerian history became more isolated from the public sphere. In fact, the initial institutional grid among the "operators" of the history machine was also broken as historians, archivists and museum curators retreated to their respective sites of practice, meeting and collaborating on very rare occasions such as seminars, workshops and conferences. This breakdown in the relationship

---

Program in Nigeria, ed. Attahiru Jega (Kano: Centre for Research and Documentation, 2000), 32.

[235] Israel Opeolu Osokoya, *Teaching and Researching History in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Laurel, 2010), 148.

between theoretical knowledge and concrete institutions where historical knowledge is produced created a wide epistemological vacuum in the history machine. Consequently, competing ethnicities began to rush in staking their claims to historical and national relevance, leading to the emergence of counter-histories and even alternative imaginations to the Nigerian state, heralding the second phase of the breakdown of the Nigerian history machine as a shared knowledge production project. The will to Nigerian history at this stage entered a state of perturbing hiatus. The rapid decentralization of the history machine, with the proliferation of new universities and advanced researchers in many parts of the country, encouraged the writing of ethnic histories with political resonance from within, but against, the Nigerian state. Nigerian history became all the more like "that noble dream", glittering in the national imagination, but still far from the reach of professional historians and museum curators.

The Historical Society of Nigeria virtually went into oblivion; there was a long moratorium in journal production; it was difficult to hold conferences, and even notices of meetings were relayed via post office box, which took long to deliver.[236] In his presidential address in 1980, Ade Ajayi laments the waning performance of the HSN:

> The Historical Society has shared many of the problems of the nation–the difficulty of organisation on a truly nation-wide basis, the problems of communication, of total mobilisation, and sustaining the interests of members to a common purpose. I have indicated how long it has taken to complete the *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. The manuscript has been in the press for more than six years and yet the bulk of the publication has in fact been done under the pressure in the last three months to beat the Jubilee Celebrations.[237]

Earlier in 1979, Ayandele went to the extent of accusing historians of neglecting their patriotic duties and social responsibility to the nation, and for engaging in inter-personal rivalry for control of the Nigerian history project.[238] He further argues "that nothing illustrates more clearly the serious disease that has been afflicting the society

[236]Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2013.

[237] Ajayi, "The Historical Society of Nigeria," 9.

[238] Ayandele, "The Task before the Nigerian Historian Today," 4.

than the tortuous and unedifying history of the Nigerian history project with which the society has been pregnant for over ten years".[239]

As opposed to the practice, between 1960s and 1980s, when conference venues were alternated each year among the different states to reflect Nigerian federal character, the current structure of the HSN and membership replicates the six geo-political areas in the country: North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-West, South-East and South-South. Although representation is, in principle, based on university affiliation, and not ethnic affinity, all North-Central representatives, for instance, come from the Middle Belt ethnic minorities. The HSN has recently decided to start holding conferences in specific areas of the country. The decentralisation of power in the society, according to one of the regional Vice-presidents, is being done in order to create a picture of a more inclusive professional association.[240] The problem, however, is that this might not augur well with the objectives for which the association was formed, especially that of nation building. For example, there was a recent case of a splinter group among some disgruntled members of HSN in the Southwest who felt that the society was being hijacked by elements from northern Nigeria.[241] The leadership of HSN has, however, dismissed this allegation as unfounded, and driven by the whims of some disgruntled members who could not make it to the list of distinguished historians who are conferred with fellowships at annual national conferences of HSN.[242] Most of the early Honorary Fellowships of the HSN were awarded to members, particularly some serving council members who were adjudged as proactive historians within the society.

The gravity of the crisis confronting the profession was made even more glaring in an interview with the current president of HSN in which he bemoans the

---

[239] Ayandele, "The Task before the Nigerian Historian Today," 3.

[240] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[241] When Professor Yakubu Ochefu, one of the leading historians from the Middle Belt, took the office of the HSN presidency, the Society was comatose. He deployed his personal resources, including his publishing industry, Aboki Publishers, in organizing conferences and reviving the Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria. Since then, conferences, and journal issues have become fairly regular. But the challenges of finance are still far from being addressed.

[242] Interview with Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Abuja, 2014.

apathy among members: membership dues are rarely paid, and conference attendance has been very poor. At several annual conferences, the president complained about meeting professors of history only for the first time.[243]

One of the fallouts of the second rupture at the university level was the change of nomenclature in history departments. Many departments of history chose to change their names by coupling history with international relations, or diplomatic relations, strategic studies, and or security studies as a panacea to the declining relevance of the discipline. The effects of globalization and the ascendancy of the market economy took a toll on the Nigerian history machine. The prospect of history graduates in a rapidly globalising job market continued to wane considerably. History graduates that were sought after by government agencies and even private organizations experienced a drought in their marketability. Departments of history responded to this challenge by breaking into what is usually considered as "marketable fields" not only to attract more students or boost the chances of their products in getting good paying jobs, but also to augment their internally generated revenue.

But the HSN did not fold its arms and watch the historical discipline die in Nigeria. In 2005, the HSN paid a courtesy call to President Olusegun Obasanjo to convince him on the need to restore history teaching at least to the Junior Secondary curriculum. The government of Obasanjo pledged to do that but bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education have severally scuttled the efforts. The thinking underlying the official approach to history was that Social Studies provided sufficient alternative to historical studies.[244]

As the crisis deepened, the themes of HSN national conferences reflected the growing concern among professional historians for the gradual extinction of history. In 2010, a group of historians from University of Ibadan, University of Jos and Bayero University convened a study group on "History and Social Engineering in Nigeria" to address some of the challenges caused by the crisis of relevance. In his paper titled "The Disfigurement of History as a Manifestation of the Crisis in Social Engineering", Lawal Bashir identifies the following factors as the fundamental causes of the crisis of relevance: the failure to orient or relate the lessons of history to the

[243] Interview with Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Abuja, 2014.

[244] C.B.N Ogbogbo, "Beyond Nomenclature: Current Challenges of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria," *The Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 20 (2011), 2.

problems of contemporary society; the inability of history graduates to internalize the virtues of historical training such as incisiveness, critical thinking, effective communications and the ability to deploy historical knowledge into other critical areas of needs such as technology, medicine, space exploration etc. He also berates the change of nomenclature by history departments in the universities, the dwindling quota of intake for the discipline of history in university admission and the banishing culture of mentorship.[245] While it was generally agreed at the meeting that history was in a state of crisis, the question of departments of history changing their institutional nomenclatures from core history to incorporating other fields as solution to the declining relevance was the bone of contention. Sati Fwatshak from the University of Jos (where the History Department had changed its name from History to History and International Studies) argues that: "The age in which the historian is writing is very important and could pose serious problems"; that Nigerian history should be a history of the 21st century in both teaching and content; and that the time has gone for historians to say that history is relevant, but they should show that it is relevant".[246] Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam from Bayero University Kano, however, argues that history departments should return to their original names. The group resolved to introduce what was called "applied history", as a purposeful and functional history project, which meets the yearnings and expectations of contemporary times". The Ministry of Education, private donor agencies and National Universities Commission were identified as the relevant institutions through which the history and social engineering project would be pursued.

Unlike the HSN, which has managed to survive through the period of acute economic and social crises in Nigeria, the Society of Nigerian Archivists experienced more frequent moratoriums. The apathy of members is more pronounced. For instance, the first issue of *The Nigerian Archivists* unfortunately happened to be last since the debut of the maiden issue in 1989. The optimism expressed by the editorial committee to maintain regular production was dashed by lack of finance. Subventions and grants from the Information Ministry and other corporate financial members of

[245] Minutes of the first meeting of a study group on "History and Social Engineering in Nigeria" held on 20th of April, 2010, at Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Research and Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University, Kano.

[246] Minutes of the first meeting of a study group on "History and Social Engineering".

the society, such as Chevron and the Council of Arts and Culture, were no longer forthcoming.[247] The last meeting of the society was held at the National Archives Zonal Office, Ibadan on the 23rd of September 2010.[248]

Political instability, Civil War, economic recession and identity politics changed the rhythm of historical production. These developments forced many historians to begin to rethink their allegiances to and perceptions of Nigeria and its history. Allegiances gradually shifted from the nation and the historical guild towards ethnicities and religions.

Towards Middle Belt Histories

Neil Kastfelt identifies two broad competing politico-historical visions in post-colonial Nigeria: an official or state's view of history and a universalised local history. The former stressed national integration and political centralisation, which were the ideals upon which colonial governance and Ahmadu Bello's Northernisation Policy were premised. And the latter outlook espouses diverse and fragmented regimes of knowledge, that inspire ethnic separatism as opposed to centralising historical vision. In the Middle Belt region, the emergence of universities in the late 1970s and 1990s paved way for the introduction and institutionalization of the fragmented histories of the ethnic minorities. The central focus of the "unofficial" narrative was local history, but in "a universalised form in which Christianity was the defining universalising element which linked local history to universal history. State history was promoted by the colonial administration and by the Northern People's Party, while universalised local history was championed by Christian intellectuals in (Middle belt) communities like the Bachama".[249]

Prior to the emergence of universities in the Middle Belt, however, the implicit allegiance of historians in northern Nigeria was to the Northernisation drive because it was difficult to get other forms of alternative platforms for identifications outside the

[247] The Finance Ministry once submitted the budget of the Information Ministry without any allocation to the National Archives, which is a department within the latter.

[248] Minutes of meeting of the Interim Management Committee of The Society of Nigerian Archivists, held at National Archives Zonal Office, Ibadan, 23rd September 2010, 3.

[249] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History," 7.

political and cultural imperatives of the Northern establishment. All the historians who wrote on the pre-colonial history of northern Nigeria saw the historical processes as a movement and continuity towards a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic northern Nigeria. But the historiographical implication of this rhetorical device was that the Middle Belt communities, who had little or no pre-existing institutional resources of history-making such as writers, archives and other pre-existing institutions, were subsumed into the larger narrative of "One-North".

The demise of Ahmadu Bello, the architect and symbolic leader of the One-North cultural tendency, and the emergence of Yakubu Gowon, as Nigeria's military leader from the Middle Belt, heightened the spiritual upliftment of the Middle Belt minorities.[250] It is difficult, though, to see how the rise of Gowon impacted on the psyche of the Middle Belt intellectuals. Except if we view it in terms of his policy of administrative devolution, which further balkanised imagined regional binaries like the North, Southwest, and Southeast. In 1967, Gowon dissolved the three regions and promulgated a decree splitting the Federal Republic into twelve states.[251] This political decision was primarily aimed at checkmating the growing influence of the rebel leader, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in the Eastern Region. The Middle Belt was not accorded the kind of official or constitutional recognition that these other ethnic-based regional blocks got.[252] Instead, the dissolution of the regional system resulted in the creation of states and the weakening of regional solidarities in Nigeria. As far as the non-Muslims of the north were concerned, though, state creation was at best a declaration of independence from "Hausa-Fulani hegemony". For example, the creation of the Benue-Plateau state, considered as the closest to what is defined as the Middle Belt,[253] out of the defunct Northern Nigeria, is interpreted as "severing the oppressive hand of the far-northern-dominated government of the region".[254]

---

[250] Okechukwu Okeke, *Hausa-Fulani Hegemony: the Domination of the Muslim North in Contemporary Politics*, (Acena Publishers, Lagos, nd), 82

[251] For details on the administrative evolution of Nigeria, see the introduction to this thesis.

[252] Perhaps, this explains why the historians of the region have remained an eclectic group without a clearly defined regional-based intellectual identity.

[253] Interview with Professor Monday Mangvwat, Jos, 2012.

[254] Okeke, *Hausa-Fulani Hegemony…*, 82.

However, the evidence is too anecdotal to show that Gowon somehow deliberately entrenched minorities' ascendancy in Nigerian politics. In fact, the administration of Gowon (1966-1975) emerged from the Civil War with a nationalistic fervour and programs designed to reconcile the different ethnic groups and encourage national integration. For example, the Post-War era saw the establishment of schemes such as the National Youth Service Corp and Museums of National Unity across the nation. The creation of states out of the hitherto regions, itself supported through the construction of marginal discourses as claim-making devices, has discouraged the emergence of wider regional identities among intellectuals.

In 1975 the federal military government took over the responsibility for the regional universities and established seven new ones.[255] Because it was difficult to get alternative forms of identifications outside the northern establishment, [256] the University of Jos was founded in 1972 as a campus of the University of Ibadan, under the initiative of John Gomwalk, the first military governor of Benue-Plateau state. This development appeared to the minorities as an expression of Middle Belt ethno-cultural nationalism and an opportunity for them to search and give agency to their ancestral voices in an increasingly competitive political and social matrix. In fact, the Middle Belt intellectuals accuse the Northern establishment and ABU Zaria of sabotaging Gomwalk's efforts to have an ABU campus in Jos. [257] Eventually, Gomwalk resorted to the University of Ibadan, his alma mater, which provided the necessary institutional and intellectual recourses for the takeoff of a university in Jos. Therefore, once the University of Jos was established, the Middle Belt political dream became a part of its goal[258] and subtly embedded in the form of discourses, which later emanated from the region. It is pertinent at this juncture to examine briefly the nature of the alleginaces underlying these constestations and how the historian define and negotiate them in the context of Middle Belt identity.

---

[255] Federal Government of Nigeria, *Report of the Presidential Commission on Salary and Conditions of Service of University Staff* (National Assembly Press, 1981), 9.

[256] Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2012.

[257] Mathew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), 42. Professor Sati Umar Fwatshak shares a similar view – interview, Jos, 2012.

[258] Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2012.

The Allegiances of Middle Belt Historians

The research themes and conceptual devices of historians in postcolonial Nigeria were conditioned by competing allegiances to the profession, the Nigerian state, ethnicity and religion. As De Certeau rightly observes: "historians escape neither from these latencies nor from the weight of an endlessly present past... and no longer can historians make abstractions out of the distancings and the exclusions that define the period and the social category to which they belong".[259] Similarly, Kukah has pointed out that the "average Nigerian" owes allegiance to at least ten or more distinct institutions around which life revolves:

> First, he belongs to a family, a clan, a village community… a tribe, an association, a religious group and an association within the religious group. When he moves into a city, apart from the cultural baggage that he brings along, he discovers that the city has its own rules for survival. In his place of work, he has to become a member of the local branch of the labor union or join a professional body…[260]

The historian of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria has to engage with many contending pressures and allegiances. The endorsement of a particular view of history is an act of political loyalty; and the rejection of such view in another context becomes an act betrayal of communal solidarity.[261] These are some of the powerful allegiances detracting historians from their professional or traditional mandate of "objective" historical reconstruction and the task of writing for the sake of national integration. It is in this light that Kastfelt aptly observes that:

> The growing field of local historiography in many African countries functions as a challenge to the nation-state and is widely interpreted as a reflection of the fragmentation, or the crisis, of the nation-state in Africa. Authors of local historical accounts often aim at giving their community recognition and "a place in the world", and historiography is widely seen as an important source of power of local communities in relation to the state.[262]

---

[259] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 66.

[260] Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, 255.

[261] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History," 3.

[262] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History," 2.

In the context of post-colonial historical production in Nigeria, ethnic allegiance often clashes with national allegiance.[263] Every historian has a family, nationality and ethnicity. The intellectual shares the sentiments of the Middle Belt consciousness with the political elite. Christianity, for example, has been described as the basis of Middle Belt historiography.[264] The Middle Belt idea was formed originally by a group of Christian clergy, and later hijacked by politicians, the two classes being both products of Christian missionary education. They formed an intelligentsia without university degrees or any training in the rigors of historical methodology. However, because they could communicate, read newspapers and write,[265] this local political intelligentsia succeeded in exhuming and deploying a particular kind of historical consciousness, a conception of the past and "discourse of marginalization" among non-Muslims groups that was translated into political practice. In contrast with the professional historians, the religious and political vanguards of the Middle Belt movement made no pretentions to objective social exhortation. Although the pioneers of the movement could not succeed in realizing the political dream of a Middle Belt state or region, the legacies of their ideas on the search and production of dissident narratives have been very profound. In the hands of the historians, such ideas acquired new discursive properties, which they instrumentalised in their search for the subjected histories of the minorities.

The Middle Belt historian has to traverse competing allegiances as he engages in historical writing. The pressures of professional/scholarly, ethnic, regional and religious solidarity are too difficult to transcend. Thus, many a historian tends to find escape routes by negotiating their allegiances to the craft as academics, the nation as "citizens", religion as adherents, and ethnicity as ethnic loyalists. As trivial as this contradiction may appear, it is a major source of concern for some Middle Belt historians. Okpeh Okpeh, worried about how the contradiction poses a lot of ideological questions as one attempts to overcome it, emphasized his allegiance to the Middle Belt over his loyalty to the Nigerian nation: "you cannot understand me" he

[263] Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History*, 258.

[264] Interview with Professor Zacharia Goshit, Jos, 2012.

[265] Interview with Professsor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2012.

argues, "as a Nigerian if you do not understand me first as belonging to a group,"[266] being an ethnic Idoma. The strategy for negotiating allegiances becomes clearer as he adds:

> The nation we have today has not gotten to a point where people have transcended the identity of a people to that of citizens of a nation. The narrative of resistance is so fundamental to our survival. Until I am a citizen and I have all rights and privileges, I am more comfortable as Idoma than Nigerian. Nationalism is a sentiment that comes instinctively. To qualify for such instinctive loyalty, a nation has to fulfill its responsibility to the people... The tragedy of the Nigerian state is that it has been unable to look at the constituent units as citizens. It cannot evoke that instinctive feeling in me because it has failed me several instances. It is unable to provide for me, it is unable to protect me as minority or provide a sense of belonging beyond the national anthem that we read.[267]

Indeed, there is a general feeling of disillusionment with the Nigerian project, often in good faith and with good reasons. Economic and political exclusion has frequently frustrated nation-building efforts as postcolonial disillusionment took a toll on nationalist historical production. The politics of marginality has become a strategy for both the so-called "majority" and "minority" ethnicities in staking claims to national relevance. Even among the Middle Belt minorities there are "sub-minority" groups who complain about marginalization by other more powerful minority groups as the instance of Tiv versus Idoma contestations in Benue immediately comes to mind. Ethnic groups in Nigeria believe unless they are culturally organized, their access to national resources is not guaranteed.

However, historians' preference or overemphasis on ethno-cultural nationalism could be detrimental to national integration efforts and harmony. As Zakaria Goshit argues, prioritizing ethnic and religious identities over national identity by historians is detrimental to the objectives of nation building and peaceful coexistence. Although he also recognizes the failure of the Nigerian state as a major factor in the upsurge of identity conflicts, he advocates a kind of discursive strategy that will mediate a fair equilibrium between ethnic and national allegiance.[268]

---

[266] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[267] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[268] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2012.

Other Middle Belt historians blame '"the nationalist ideology with its single-minded-focus on attainment of self-rule' and for failing to reorient the nation towards some desired goals".[269] The fragmentation of nations into provinces, ethnic, religious, regions, classes, cultural and linguistic ethnicities has been associated with historians' disservice to national history.[270] In view of these pressing cultural and institutional dilemmas confronting the historians, one possible panacea is:

> To engage critically with the dominant discourses of one's discipline in order to work out the terms under which writers can bring in alternate discourses… This is truly a process of negotiation… While showing that they are aware of established conventions and are taking them quite seriously, periphery scholars should attempt to reconstruct these conventions by bringing in their own discourses. This way they appropriate the established discourses for their own purposes according to their own ideologies and interests.[271]

Despite the contradictions associated with the historians' allegiances, the making of national history remains the central goal of the Nigerian history machine. The allegiance of the history machine as an institution of knowledge-making lies with the Nigerian state, which established and funds it.

Conclusion

The acute cultural diversity and politics of regionalism in the late colonial and early postcolonial periods, as shown in this chapter, encumbered the Nigerian history machine with too many political and intellectual pressures, complicating the task of producing a "national" history or at least a relatively consensual "macro-history" that could inspire national allegiance. The Nigerian state emerged from colonialism not as

[269] Toryina A. Varvar, "In Search of a Defining National Ideology: The Predicament of the Historical Discipline in Nigeria in the Age of Globalisation," a paper presented at the Golden Jubilee anniversary/annual Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Ibadan, (2005), 5.

[270] Lorenz Chris, "Comparative Historiography: Problems and Perspectives" *History and Theory* 38, no. I (1999), 26.

[271] Sursh Canagaraja, *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 295.

the dominant custodian of history, because its definition of Nigerian history was rivaled and contested by regional histories and marginal narratives produced under the auspices of both regional governments and minority ethnicities particularly in the Middle Belt and Niger Delta regions. The experience of Civil War (1967-1979) further exposed the contradictions of the Nigerian history project and prompted the federal government to review its cultural policy and renew its drive towards more national integration. Cultural institutions such as universities, museums and archives were established in many parts of the country to accelerate the process of post-war reconciliation and nation building. Paradoxically, however, the more these institutions were decentralised, the more the history machine broke down, creating incentives for extra-national discourses. By the late 1980s, the history machine had been weakened considerably, thereby "provincializing" historical discourse and splitting the allegiances of historians. In the Middle Belt context this took the form of a historiography of resistance against the Hausa-Fulani community in northern Nigeria.

Chapter Three

The Middle Belt "Historiography of Resistance"

Introduction

This chapter explores the textual tradition of Middle Belt historiography and the politics, which informs historians' choices of themes and narrative strategies. The chapter takes off from a discussion on the making of History Departments at the University of Jos (UJ) and the Benue State University (BSU) in the Middle Belt within the context of the Plateau and Benue Valley History Projects. Before any major progress in producing the local histories of Middle Belt minorities, two things were necessary: universities and history departments, and a sizeable number of advanced students. Since the founding of the Departments of History at UJ and BSU, the historiography of the Middle Belt communities has expanded considerably, particularly in terms of spatial coverage and the themes that are covered. The quest for the histories of these communities is not exclusively a historians' affair as political scientists and sociologists also participate in augmenting the frontiers of the Middle Belt historical discourse. With this development, different thematic grounds, from "core" history, religion, conflict, to entrepreneurship, industrialization have been covered. But one fundamental ideological framework that is common to these writings is the idea of resistance.

"Unijos our Unijos":[272] the Plateau History Project and the Making of Dissident Historians

The emergence of UJ and BSU in 1975 and 1992 respectively opened up new institutional opportunities for historical production among the peoples of the Middle

[272] This is the first stanza of the Anthem of the University of Jos, which subtly reflects the rhetoric of identity politics in the region. "Unijos" is an acronym, which stands for University of Jos.

Belt. This marked the threshold of intensive training of indigenous historians among the minorities and production of local histories at UJ from whence the tradition gradually spread to BSU. Most of the scholars who founded the History Departments in Benue and other newer universities in the Middle Belt were trained at UJ and, therefore, molded in the Jos tradition of local historiography.

As is the practice in most Nigerian universities, research at UJ places greater emphasis on the problems of its immediate community. While the Departments of Geography, Geo-mining and Building, for instance, have addressed problems unique to the geography and topography of Jos, the History Department has contributed towards the local research agenda through documentation and writing of the histories of Middle Belt minority ethnicities.[273] As Goshit puts it, "the university of Jos is located in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, therefor it has a responsibility to document the history of the region. And since most students of the department come from this region, they also share in the Middle Belt vision".[274]

The production of local histories at UJ began with Elizabeth Isichei, an expatriate scholar from New Zealand, who inaugurated a series of local research projects aimed at reversing the dominant historical narratives of the area. Isichei joined the Department of History in Jos in 1976 and became its pioneer head. She spearheaded a series of vigorous workshops, seminars and publications between 1976 and 1981 on the local histories of the Plateau and Benue regions. She coordinated three major publications that covered wide areas and numerous ethnic groups; the two volumes of Jos Oral History and Literature Texts (JOHALT) and *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*. Furthermore, with a generous research grant from UJ, Isichei inaugurated an oral history project generally referred to as the Plateau History Project (PHP). The project was launched in 1977 with a team of Plateau students chosen from and deployed to various local communities such as the Birom, the Kulere, the Ron, and the Goemai, as fieldworkers. After receiving some training in the techniques of oral interviewing, each took a cassette recorder to the field.

[273] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2013.

[274] Zakaria Goshit, "Trends and Patterns in Historical Research and Writing among Undergraduates in the Nigerian Universities: Case Study of the Department of History, University of Jos, Nigeria," paper presented to at the 50th Annual Conference of the Conference of Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, (2005), 3.

Working in their native languages, the students produced a collection of recorded interviews along with the English transcriptions. The first volume of JOHALT covered the Mwahavul, Ngas, Mupun ethnicities, and it comprises materials collected by Sylvanus Mangtit Nmang, Joseph Kwatmak, Obadia K. Tymaon, Zakaria Damina Goshit, John Gofwan Dyikuk, Lekyes P. Kwarkas, and Naanshep Dagum. The second volume contains the oral history texts of the Ron, Kulere, Kantana, Mada and Arum communities, collected to serve as supplements to existing archival and published texts.[275] One distinctive feature of the oral histories was their overly local focus and context. The students asked open-ended questions to extract as much information as possible from their informants, who spoke "at length unchecked, eliciting almost a stream of consciousness".[276] Through this technique, a massive amount of data was collected on various themes of the oral histories of the Middle Belt, especially Plateau communities. These themes include the advent of the Europeans and the impact of colonialism; wars and relationship with neighbors; the Missionaries and the coming of Christianity; and a few collections on traditions of migration.

This pioneering effort at publishing the oral histories of Plateau communities, for the first time in history, represented a turning of seasons. According to Nengel, it was responsible for harmonizing the efforts of scholars interested in the minority societies and for putting the communities, hitherto unexplored, in the global research spotlight.[277] With the PHP, a region of discursive lacuna was identified and the institutional space within which to activate a historical consciousness framed in the politics of marginalization had been mounted. Students from various minority ethnic groups in the region were recruited to study their own local histories from the perspectives of those communities. This initial drive towards collecting and documenting the oral texts of the Plateau communities was intended to be the nucleus of a much larger archive of recorded sound.[278] In her introductions to JOHALT,

---

[275] David Tambo, "The Pre-colonial tin Industry in Northern Nigeria," *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts* 2, (1981), 1.

[276] Elizabeth Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas: An Introduction to their Oral History," *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts* I, (1981), IV.

[277] Interview with Professor John Nengel, Jos, 2012.

[278] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas: An Introduction to their Oral History,,"ii.

Isichei makes it clear that the peoples and histories among whom the oral texts emanated from were relatively little known and little described,[279] implying that the mainstream discourses were biased against the histories of the minorities. At the beginning, it was very difficult to make these texts available to the wider scholarly community due to publishing constraints. There were no adequate publishing houses then and the use of microfilm by local historians was quite limited. For example, a famous academic once confessed to Isichei that he had never read microfilm in his life.[280]

Another major academic undertaking, which heralded the threshold of the Middle Belt historiography, was the workshop on plateau history and weekly interdisciplinary seminar, both convened by the History Department UJ. In 1982, the papers presented at these workshops were published under the title *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*. This work is concerned with the high Plateau and the Benue lowlands to its south, two areas that have always been linked economically and culturally. In the words of Isichei:

> This study had its roots in something more than just the natural desire of scholars to study the area where they live and work. Nothing reveals the lacunae in Nigerian history more clearly than teaching the subject to undergraduates. Each year they complain that there is massive bibliography for Borno or Hausa land or Yoruba land or the Niger-Delta, while for the Plateau State area they are referred to a gazette written in 1933, and an ethnographic survey published in 1953. It is hoped that this volume will fill the gap.[281]

One can unpack the subtext of the PHP "by analyzing the truth of propositions and the relations that unite them; one will rise, therefore, from the visible body of sentences to that pure ideal architecture that the ambiguities of grammar and the overloading of words with meanings probably concealed as much as expressed".[282] The roots of the PHP, as alluded to above by Isichei, transcended an ordinary

[279] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," viii.

[280] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vi.

[281] Elizabeth Isichei, Preface to *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1982), xi.

[282] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 149.

academic quest for historical knowledge. It was part of the broader framework of the cultural assertiveness among the non-Muslim minorities of northern Nigeria. Underscoring the views of Isichei, one of her former students corroborates this argument thus: "the main thesis of her inaugural lecture[283] is that the history of the Plateau and by extension the whole of the Middle Belt has been marginalized, neglected and misinterpreted".[284]

Studies in the History of Plateau State was essentially based on the local history texts because all the authors, with one exception, were also involved in the collection of the oral histories of the local communities. The emphasis upon oral histories was a major departure from the hitherto anthropological and ethnographic approaches to Middle Belt historiography. The authors struggled to avoid the use of both published and unpublished colonial records.[285] Although the themes of this publication cover a wide range of issues such as art history in Plateau; migrations; proverbs among the Berom; intergroup relations; Islam and Christianity; mining and trade; and slavery; the theme of resistance against Jihadist penetration as well as British colonialism featured recurrently through the chapters. While J.H. Morrison wrote on Plateau societies' resistance to Jihadist penetration, Isichei focused on resistance against colonialism. The theme of resistance defines the nature and character of the relationship between the Middle Belt and Hausa-Fulani on the one hand, and the British on the other hand.

During the first eight years of the existence of the History Department at UJ, students from other parts of Nigeria, particularly Yorubaland dominated the department. For example, only 4 of the 35 undergraduate students between 1975 and 1983 wrote on Middle Belt societies. The remaining projects focused on South-Western Nigerian communities because of the predominance of Yoruba students in the department.[286] But the tempo and number of students writing on the Middle Belt communities increased astronomically between 1984 and 1988. Out of the 126 bachelors dissertations produced within this period, 63 were on Middle Belt

[283] Referring to the paper from which the above quotation is extracted.

[284] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2012.

[285] Richard Fardon "Review: Plateau Studies," *The Journal of African History* 24, no. 3 (1983), 386-387.

[286] Research Project Files, Department of History, University of Jos, (1975-2009).

ethnicities such as Berom, Ngas, Mwaghavul and Afizere on the Plateau; and the Tiv and Idoma on the Benue-Valley. The projects covered wide-ranging themes such as Christian missionary activities, tin mining on the Jos Plateau, political history and inter-group conflict.[287]

An observation of the dissertations undertaken from 1989 to 2009 reveals a similar concentration on the Middle Belt communities. More than 60 percent of what was produced during the period was on the minority ethnicities in Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Southern Kaduna and Southern Bauchi areas of the Middle Belt. And only about three percent of these represent studies on communities on the Muslim-dominated areas of northern Nigeria. Although the titles of the projects may not directly reflect the term Middle Belt, the underlying idea was to construct "alternative" narratives that would challenge and dislodge the "dominant" discourses on the minority groups. The thematic concentration of students' projects was a reflection of the local-initiative drive encouraged by its founders. While students prefer themes like inter-group relations and Christian missionaries, most of them wrote on local or ethnic histories of their respective communities. However, the actual textual production of Middle Belt histories by local historians began earnestly in the late 1980s because the initial drive of the PHP, like the NHRS, was geared towards collection and documentation of sources rather than actual historical writing.

The Benue Valley Project

The PHP set the tone for subsequent historical writings on communities beyond the Plateau. Indeed, "what has in practice developed at the Jos History Department is a network of interwoven projects"[288] on the Middle Belt communities beyond the local confines of the Plateau to areas as far as the Niger-Benue confluence and Borno. For example, while Charles Jacobs, worked on the Gbayi communities in Niger State before he shifted focus to Plateau and Benue areas, John Nengel and Lawrence Walu produced their research degrees on the area north of Jos and on the Goemai, respectively.

[287] Research Project Files, Department of History, University of Jos, (1975-2009).

[288] Elizabeth Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," iv.

The founding of BSU in 1992 added greater impetus to the local histories project. Like UJ, BSU articulated a deliberate community relation policy, whereby all disciplines would carve niches for themselves in practical relevance to the immediate community.[289] The History Department at BSU, founded on the path of the local-initiative drive, took a leading role in the production of the Middle Belt historiography of resistance.[290] Some academic staff of the department such as Mike Odey, Okpeh O. Okpeh and J.E. Agaba received their training at UJ where they were infused with the local history tradition.

When Charles Jacobs, another expatriate historian from Jamaica, left UJ for the History Department at BSU, he arrived imbued with the local history tradition as well as an aggressive passion for archival documentation.[291] In fact, he went to the extent of deploying his personal resources to reproduce virtually all the copies of archival files on Plateau and other adjoining communities, available at the National Archives Kaduna. His large collection of primary sources also covers areas of Benue, laying the foundations of what became the Benue-Valley History Project. [292] Following the refusal of UJ to renew his contract, Charles Jacobs left for BSU where he took an appointment as a history professor. The refusal to renew his contract was considered as most unfortunate by Plateau historians because he left with a massive collection of archival records, which he eventually donated to the History Department at BSU.

The first set of students graduated from the History Department in 1998. A cursory view of the thematic trend among the students between 1998 and 2012 shows that more than half of the students wrote on local communities within Benue

---

[289] Introduction to *Benue State University at 20: achievements, Challenges and Prospects* eds. Oga Ajene, Mathieu A. Adejo and Member George-Genyi (Makurdi: Benue State University Press, 2012), 10.

[290] Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[291] Mike O. Odey, John Nengel and Okpeh O. Okpeh, "Immortalizing Professor Charles Cremwell Jacobs," in *History Research and Methodology in Africa: essays in Honor of Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs* eds. Mike O. Odey and Okpeh O. Okpeh (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2007), 3.

[292] Some of these documents were lost to poor or lack of storage facilities. The good news, though, is that the British Library has recently begun digitising the documents under the Endangered Archive Project.

State. For instance, out of the 50 undergraduate projects produced between 1998 and 2005, 41 were on Middle Belt communities in and around the Benue area.[293]

The emphasis on local history[294] at Jos and Benue has been described as "a simulation of Ibadan and ABU Schools of historiography" and "a new variant of history that gets facts from documents and juxtaposes that with what the people say about themselves to create a new narrative".[295] The novelty of the Middle Belt historiography is described in terms of resistance around the themes of warfare, agitation, valor, power and authority. It is not a history about Islam or subservience, according to Okpeh. Rather, "it is a history of struggles against official history".[296]

Claims about novelty and shifts in historiographical discourse, using clichés like "new narrative" or "new variant" are open to multiple meanings and interpretations and, therefore, often difficult to qualify. If we take the notion of "new variant" of history, for instance, to mean "a more thoroughgoing shift in the nature of historical practice",[297] what then is novel about a practice that privileges the deployment of orality in historical production in the context of post-colonial Nigeria? In terms of empirical data collection and documentation of the histories of minorities in the Middle Belt region, there were major advances since 1970s. However, the Middle Belt historians have not properly articulated a theoretical or conceptual shift that we can translate as a paradigm shift from the mainstream discourses. The scholarship is no doubt reactionary as some of the Middle Belt scholars claim[298] and

[293] Research Project Files, Department of History, Benue State University, Makurdi, (1998-2012).

[294] The crisis of relevance that engulfed the discipline of history following the impact of the neo-liberal policies of successive military regimes, has triggered a shift in thematic focus away from local history, colonial and Christian missionary activities in the Middle Belt to contemporary issues such as gender discourse and international studies in order to attract relevance especially in a competitive market-driven economy. When the department realised this rising trend away from local history, it attempted to restrict the students to their local areas.

[295] Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[296] Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[297] Gabriel M. Spiegel, "Revising the Past/Revisiting the Present: how Change Happens in Historiography," *History and Theory* 46, no. 4, (2007), 3.

[298] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2013.

supplementary in terms of data collection.[299] In the case of the latter it can be argued that the Middle Belt historiography has broadened the frontiers of Nigerian historical scholarship in terms of themes and geographical coverage, but according to Monday Mangwvat, not in terms of a sustained ideology that pushes and redefines the Middle Belt in the light of contemporary historiographical debates.[300] In the same light, Middle Belt Historiography, according to Bala Takaya, is also not focused as a machine. Although it is difficult, from the forgoing to see the Middle Belt historiographical posturing as having inaugurated, paradigmatically and causally, an articulated counter-discourse,[301] a close reading of the historical writings therefrom reveals a particular mode of discourse and textual tradition[302] standing apart from the established national and Hausa-Fulani-centered narratives.

During the 1990s, the crisis of relevance that engulfed the discipline of history following the impact of the neo-liberal policies of successive military regimes triggered a shift in thematic focus away from local history, colonial and Christian missionary activities in the Middle Belt. Students began to shift their focus to contemporary issues such as gender discourse and international studies as a strategy for attracting relevance especially in a competitive market-driven economy. When the History Department in Jos University realised this rising trend away from local history, there was an attempt to redeploy students' focus to the local communities.[303]

---

[299] Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat, Jos, 2013.

[300] Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat, Jos, 2013.

[301] Interview with Professor Ibrahim Bello-Kano, Kano, 2013.

[302] Karin Barber defines textual tradition "as a community's ethnography of itself." See, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

[303] Zakaria Goshit, "Trends and Patterns in Historical Research and Writing…," 5. According to Sati Fwatshak "The upsurge of conflicts since the 1990s has attracted the attention of historians who in response turned their search light to inter-group relations. This is best exemplified by the University of Jos, where the theme of inter-group relations has been focused on by a majority of the PhD students. For example between 1989 and 2005, when about 15 PhDs were awarded, about 5 of the candidates, representing 33.33% wrote on inter-group relations. This might be because since 1990s the Middle Belt has been the theatre of various ethno-religious conflicts including the Tiv-Jukun, Jukun-Chamba, Tiv-Alago, the Jos Plateau crisis of 2001-2004. In February 2005, the Benue state University organised a national conference on the crisis in Middle Belt, while recently too, Nasarawa State University organised a national conference on inter-group relations in Nigeria between 8th

The ideological imprints of the Middle Belt struggle on the PHP are not explicitly discernible in the early historical writings as the term Middle Belt is clearly circumvented. Occasionally, Isichei makes reference to "Central Nigeria" to describe the region. The two scholars, who pioneered the Middle Belt historiography, as pointed earlier, were expatriates. Constrained by local political and social pressures, they therefore "performed their requisite duties in the most perfunctory manner – fearing controversy, participating in the university community only as observers, being overly sensitive to local prejudices, and in general shying away from any position where they may be forced to take a moral stand".[304] Their allegiance to the profession and the ideal of objectivity was more central other than forms of extra-academic loyalties.

The emergence of indigenous scholars ultimately revealed the ideological linkages between the Middle Belt politics of identity and academic history. However, this is not to put the Middle Belt politicians at par with the intellectuals. What the intellectuals did was to appropriate or borrow the rhetoric of marginalization and the discourse of internal colonialism, originally produced by Middle Belt activists, and somehow deploy it as a narrative device for historical production. Following the emergence of history departments and the local history projects in the Middle Belt, the historiographical view of the Middle Belt as a "secondary theme" began to wane considerably. In fact, the minority ethnicities in the area were now accorded a sort of historiographical privilege as "dual colonial subjects" by a new generation of Middle Belt historians writing with a vengeance and in dissident tone. The ethnic minorities are being reconstructed as victims of "double colonialism"[305]: a "Muslim Hausa-Fulani colonialism" plus British Colonialism. The remaking of the minorities as "special" victims of colonialism is pursued through the discursive strategy of the so-

---

and 11th June 2005. In terms of practical approaches however, social scientist did better in crisis responses. They have not only written volumes of books on Nigeria's conflicts, they have also established NGOs and centres on conflict and peace studies thus beating history again to a mere philosophical discipline". Sati Fwatshak, "Vistas in Post-Cold War Historical Scholarship in Nigeria," paper presented at the 50th Anniversary of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ibadan, (2005).

[304] Jennifer C. Ward, "The Expatriate Academic and the African University," *Africa Today* 18, no. 1, (1971), 35.

[305] Interview with Professor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2013.

called "internal colonialism". While "deconstructing" pejorative colonial constructions of the Middle Belt peoples as "stateless", "pagan" and "segmented" societies, the historians have turned these labels into convenient writing and claim-making devices.

Writing Dissent: the Textual Tradition of Middle Belt Historiography

The Middle Belt historiography has been described by some of the famous historians of the region as a "reactionary historiography" [306] in the sense that it is construed chiefly in reaction to colonial and Hausa-Fulani centered texts. For Okpeh Okpeh, it is a "historiography of resistance",[307] driven, according to Sati Fwatshak, by "ethno-cultural nationalism".[308] Drawing on not only the intellectual resources and discourses of Elizabeth Isichei and Charles Jacobs, who pioneered the historiographical focus on minorities in northern Nigeria, but also on the philosophy of "emancipation from Hausa-Fulani hegemony", charted by Middle Belt activists such as Joseph Tarka, Jolly Tanko Yusuf, Joseph Gomwak, Paul Gindiri and Dan Suleiman, the Middle Belt scholars have produced a large body of literature, seeking to confer agency to the narratives of the ethnic minorities, and dispel the colonial and Hausa-Fulani views of their histories. The narrative of marginalization and resistance has been the fundamental theme running through the textual histories of the Middle Belt societies, as written by their historians. In view of this, thus, we can speak of a Middle Belt textual tradition.

In 1978, David Tambo described a stereotypical textual tradition that was, according to Isichei "already ceasing to exist" during the 1980s.[309] This stereotype emerged from a regime of textual practices going back to the Sokoto Caliphate and exploration narratives of European travellers in the 19th century through to the writings of colonial bureaucrats and anthropologists. The exposition of these literatures "reveals a stereotyped conception of the region which has existed since the

[306] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2013.

[307] Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013

[308] Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2013

[309] Isichei, "On Being Invisible," 1.

initial comments of the nineteenth century European travellers".[310] In writing about the communities of northern Nigeria, the European travellers wrote stories of "isolated, warlike hill-refuge groups" on the Plateau, which were reiterated in the Bauchi histories. The fascination with the "primitive" customs of the Plateau societies was shared by early twentieth century observers". [311] Thus, the methodological approaches of each succeeding generation of observers, and their selection of certain types of subject material to the exclusion of others has had a cumulative effect of reinforcing and amplifying these conceptions.[312] The main effect of this totalizing cultural narrative schema, which passed through generations of writers without loosing its core textual trademark (denigration of the minorities to the margins), was that the stories of the minorities were often written off.[313] However, there is little evidence to establish with precision the technologies of this textual exclusion. One possible explanation could be found within the context of the history of the struggle between the Muslim Hausa-Fulani and the non-Muslims in northern Nigeria. In popular Hausa mythology, there is a narrative, which orders northern Nigerian communities into two distinct cultural enclaves: ***Hausa Bakwai*** (Kano, Katsina, Daura, Rano, Zazzau, Biram) considered as the seven "legitimate" Hausa states; and the ***Banza Bakwai*** (Kebbi, Zamfara, Yawuri, Nupe, Yoruba, Gwari, Jukun/Kwararrafa, Igala, Borgu and Gurma) pejoratively dubbed as the "illegitimate" states. Although, scholars have long discredited the veracity of these narratives,[314] the communities in the former category have been frequently described as "stateless" due to the absence of centralized authorities and their vulnerability to foreign domination. The ***Hausa-Banza*** narrative has continued to be reiterated and reproduced in varying forms and shades in school texts and popular historical discourse. While the legend is still popular among the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, the Middle Belt communities, which

[310] Tambo, "Hill Refugees," 215.

[311] Tambo, "Hill Refugees," 215.

[312] Tambo, "Hill Refugees,,"215.

[313] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[314] Abdullahi Smith in his seminal essay "Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausa land" casted serious doubt about the authenticity of the Hausa Bakwai legend. See, *A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 1987), 59-77.

roughly correspond to the *Banza Bakwai* cultural and spatial imaginary, have outrightly rejected it as a negative profiling. Although the origin of this narrative is still enigmatic, the *Hausa-Banza* dichotomy to some extent replicates the division between the Muslims communities and some non-Muslim Middle Belt minorities, which in turn reinforces certain stereotypical narratives about the former. The cultural meaning of the word *Banza* includes "any person who is outside the table of affinity".[315] Going by this definition, thus, there is little wonder why the Middle Belt peoples, which happen to be outside the Hausa cultural affinity, were labelled as *arna*[316] or *gwarawa*.[317] The Sokoto Jihad and the emergence of the Caliphate widened the division between Muslims and non-Muslims. Indeed, the earliest recorded evidence of the *Hausa-Banza* discourse are contained in Muhammad Bello's *Infaq-al-Maysur* (1813) and *Raudat al-Akfar* of Abd al –Qadir al-Mustafa (1824).[318]

While it is difficult at the moment to explicate, with certainty, the context and politics that engendered the pre-colonial "textual silence" on Middle Belt communities, these forms of characterizations of the non-Hausa, non-Muslim communities spilled over into the dominant discourses of the colonial and even postcolonial era. The intertextuality between European travel narratives, the discourse of Muslim writers and colonial anthropological accounts largely formed the epistemological premise against which Middle belt historiography of resistance is framed.

With these ideas in mind, we can identify at least two discernible strands of textual production on the Middle Belt: the "macro" and "micro" literatures. While the former approaches the Middle Belt as a wider regional phenomenon, and attempts to

---

[315] G. P. Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary and English Hausa Vocabulary*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 79.

[316] This is the Hausa word for pagans – *arna* (plural) and *arne* (singular).

[317] This can translated as persons who are ignorant of the Hausa culture or unable to speak the Hausa language. See Dahiru Yahya, "Zazzau: the Bridge between the Hausa and Banza Bakwai: an Assessment," a paper present at conference organized by organized by Axis Research Agency and Zazzau Emirate Council on "History of Zazzau from Pre-Jihad Period to Date" at Arewa House, Kaduna, December, 2009.

[318] Muḥammad Bello, *Infāq al-maisūr f ī taʾrīkh bilād al-takrūr.* Bahijah Shadhili ed, (Rabat: Maʾhad al-Dirasat al-Ifriqiya, 1996). The MSS copies of *Raudat al-Akfar* are available at the NHRS library, A.B.U. Zaria.

offer a broad ranging synthesis of the discrete histories of the minorities in order to engender a shared historical consciousness, the latter presents the histories of the individual communities as microcosm of the larger narrative. Both, however, are construed within the discourse of resistance and marginalization.

Paul Logams's *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: a Study in Political Identity* represents the prominent text in the series of the macro literature. Although written as a work of political science, the book is widely celebrated among Middle Belt historians as an excellent historical exposition of the Middle Belt question. Most of the historians interviewed for this dissertation describe the book as a classic "encyclopedia" of Middle Belt history, an essential monograph, "which every true Middle Belter should read because it is the most detailed and profound history of the region".[319] Originally written as a PhD dissertation, the author was encouraged by his colleagues to publish it in a book form. The book was published in reaction to some of "the attempts by those who are opposed to the idea of a Middle Belt to wish it away, and the clear signs of ignorance of what Middle Belt is all about".[320] The roots of internal colonial relationships, for Logam, "were from a colonial system which the British incorporated with the Middle Belt groups in 1900. In the process of incorporation before 1940, British administration subordinated many Middle Belt groups into the Islamic society".[321] The book is rich in data and the historical approach deployed by the author makes it more like a work of history than political science. It is organized into ten chapters: "theoretical framework"; "the Relationship between Islamic Societies and the Non-Islamic Groups and Societies in Northern Nigeria"; "Society and Political Process of Incorporation into the Islamic Society before 1900," "Foundations and Origins of the Sociopolitical Identity for the Middle Belt Movement in the Period between 1900 and 195," "Christianity, Churches and Christian Communities among the Middle Belt Groups and Societies," "Underdevelopment and the Development of the Middle Belt Groups and Societies": "Institutional Development and sociopolitical Identities and Consciousness achieved

[319] Chom Bagu, "Ethno-religious Violence in Northern Nigeria and Reparations," text of a lecture delivered at the public presentation of the book *Boko Haram: How Religious Intolerance Threatens Nigeria* by John Isiyaku, *Sunday Standard*, August 8 (2010), 8.

[320] Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*, 1.

[321] Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*, 1.

among the Middle Belt Groups and Societies," "Ex-Servicemen and the European educated in Tribal Unions, Associations and Political Organizations among the Middle Belt Groups and Societies"; Political Growth and Development of the Middle Belt Movement": and "Political Influences of the Middle Belt Movement under Military Government in Nigeria". According to Logams, "The roots of internal colonial relationships were from an indigenous Islamic colonial system, which existed in the region between 1804 and 1900 and which the British territorially incorporated with Middle Belt groups in the new political unit of the North in 1900".[322] Thus, he asserts that the internal colonialism perpetuated by the Islamic society under the supervision of the British was responsible for the activation of minorities' consciousness and the rise of the Middle Belt movement,[323] representing an attempt by the non-Muslims of the area at throwing off the cultural yoke of the Islamic north. This book represents the magnum opus of Middle Belt identity scholarship, as most Middle Belt histories particularly the macro texts draw on.

On a similar philosophical footing, Yusufu Turaki writes on "The Institutionalization of the Inferior status and Socio-economic Role of the non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial hierarchical structure of the Northern region of Nigeria". This work shows how the British colonial administration entrenched and institutionalized a regime of Hausa-Fulani cultural and political supremacy over the non-Muslim groups of the Middle Belt. Although Turaki limits his analysis to Southern Zaria (now Southern Kaduna) his exposition deploys the narrative of internal colonialism and the textual strategy of marginality, which isolates and treats the non-Muslim groups in the Middle Belt as the "exclusive" victims of colonialism. For Turaki the consolidation of Hausa-Fulani hegemony was premised on "false histories, ethnographies and racial theories, which exacerbated pre-colonial rivalries and animosities" [324] between the non-Muslims and Muslims of Northern Nigeria. Like Logams, Turaki argues that the "non-Muslim groups were subordinated to Hausa-Fulani rule and political control (internal colonialism)". Turaki accuses the British colonial administrative regime of

[322] Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*, 2.

[323] Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*, 1.

[324] Yusufu Turaki, "The Institutionalisation of the Inferior status and socio-economic role of the non-Muslim groups in the Colonial hierarchical structure of the Northern region of Nigeria: a Socio-ethical analysis of colonial legacy," PhD. thesis, Boston, (1982) p. 421.

using racial theories of superiority in writing off the non-Muslims in their colonial ethnographic and historiographic enterprise.

In 1993, Mathew Hassan Kukah further blazed the trail of the historiography of resistance with his ***Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria***. Kukah, a Roman Catholic priest, examines the methods used in the entrenchment of Hausa-Fulani hegemony and the manipulation of religion for political purposes in northern Nigeria.[325] This work represents another classic case of the narrative of internal colonialism from the vantage point of religion. The author traces the origin of Hausa-Fulani hegemony to the Sokoto Caliphate, and argues, "that the ascendancy of Hausa-Fulani hegemony has coincided with the alienation of the non-Muslims". According to Kukah: "studies on Northern Nigeria have tended to concentrate on the caliphate and Islam, with the rest of the region consigned to insignificance".[326] Kukah's book, like Logams's, is very historical in approach. In his introduction, Kukah pays a resounding tribute Logams and Turaki:

> Turaki and Logams have undertaken excellent studies, showing the nature of the sociopolitical responses of the peoples of the Middle belt to political developments in the region, using their personal and direct experiences as sons of the soil to discount some of the mythological fallacies expressed about the Middle Belt peoples especially in colonial and Islamic literature.[327]

Kukah identifies six major institutional mechanisms through which the Hausa-Fulani hegemony was entrenched: Ahmadu Bello University Zaria; the Northern Nigeria Development Corporation (NNDC); the Bank of the North; the New Nigeria Newspaper and the Federal Radio Corporation Kaduna. Although the term Middle Belt is not reflected in the title of this work, the subtextual ideas replicate the Middle Belt grievances and narrative of resistance against Hausa-Fulani hegemony.

Niels Kastfelt, an expatriate historian of Middle Belt Christianity, in his book ***Religion and Politics in Nigeria: a Study of Middle Belt Christianity***, brings out the role of Christian missionaries and Protestant churches in the emergence of Christian

---

[325] Kukah, ***Religion, Politics and Power***, xii.

[326] Kukah, ***Religion, Politics and Power***, xii.

[327] Kukah, ***Religion, Politics and Power***, xii.

westernized and bureaucratic elites opposed to the traditional Muslim elites in Northern Nigeria. Although the book is primarily concerned with the Adamawa axis of the Middle Belt, its overall narrative framework fits within the discourse of marginalization and resistance:

> The non-Muslim people accused the British colonial administration, and often with good reason, of favoring the Muslim Fulani elite in the emirate. Everywhere in Adamawa the Christians, including those associated with the Danish mission churches, played a leading part in resisting what they saw as Muslim Fulani expansionism, backed by British colonial officers.[328]

In the non-Muslim areas of Adamawa, the churches provided the regional political networks, and the Christian elite provided the leadership for ethnic movements and political parties around which the Middle Belt cultural movement crystalized. The use of historical discourse by politicians towards the end of the colonial period was growing in momentum. The political speeches of the Bachama politicians were replete with references to the exploits of past Bachama leaders who were often quoted and used as models of Bachama resistance against Hausa-Fulani. The instrumentalisation of history was achieved through the reinterpretations of religious rituals; the manipulation of ethnic categories; the reinterpretation of traditions of origin; and the revival and adaptation of old personal names, clothes and music.[329] On the whole, the making of the Middle Belt identity, for Kastfelt, resembles what Terrance Ranger dubbed "the invention of tradition".

Baba Thomas Bingel in his PhD thesis "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt A.D. 1400-1900", sees the Middle Belt from the perspective of historical demography and analyzes the historical origins of the problem of population size and distribution in the Middle Belt with particular reference to Niger province in colonial Northern Nigeria.[330] By the 1990s, the time of writing the thesis, the settler-indigene question was being hotly debated within the Middle Belt, particularly in

---

[328] Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*, 2.

[329] Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*, 8.

[330] Baba Thomas Bingel, "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt A.D. 1400-1900: an explanation of the role of Historical and Environmental factors in shaping the population of Niger Province," (PhD. Diss. A.B.U., Zaria, 1991), 13

Plateau State. It was, therefore, not out of place to historically investigate the population size and distribution in the Middle Belt. Bingel espouses the antiquity of the ethnic minorities' within the region in order to dispel the claims of the so-called settlers to indigeneity. Rather than a melting pot of multiple identities, the Middle Belt region is interpreted as the original point from where many ethnic groups dispersed to other parts of Nigeria. One of the implications of the distortion of the traditions of origin of the Middle Belt communities has been the assertion that there was no human population in the region prior to 16th century.[331] Using the cases of Ebira Bingel argues that the area "suffered more from out-migration of its people than it benefited from immigration".[332]

As part of the long search for "proper identity" of the diverse peoples of the Middle Belt, some thirty young scholars decided to put together the results of their fieldwork on the area. The result was the publication in 2001 of *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*. This volume, supported financially by the various state governments in the Middle Belt, heralded the empirical saturation of Middle Belt historiography. The book opens with a major caveat:

> Until recently, the Central Nigeria area has been looked upon by researchers as a residue region that only reacted to events happening outside it such as the impact of the Sokoto Jihad. Of the impact of the Jihad, much has been written but strictly from perspective not emanating from Central Nigeria area. Reactions of Central Nigeria peoples to both the Sokoto Jihad and British have been largely discussed from the perspectives of the conquerors.[333]

The book is organized thematically under five broad parts: Origins, migrations and environment; political organizations, origins, growth and re-organization of Central Nigerian States; the economy; colonial experience; and inter-group relations. The chapters in this volume seek to redress the historiographical imbalance endangered by colonialist discourse. In the first section, which attracted the greatest attention, nine Middle Belt historians set the background with a geographical description, origins and

---

[331] Bingel, "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt," 207.

[332] Bingel, "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt," 12-13

[333] Introduction to *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, xxi.

formation of ethnicities, population and language in the Middle Belt region. Patrick Dawan, in his short essay, "Aspects of the Geography of Central Nigeria Area", sketches a geographical description "to provide the necessary foundation upon which to construct the history of the people of Central Nigeria". The next chapter, authored by an archeologist, Atoato Igirgi, deals with the archaeology of the Middle Benue axis of the Middle Belt region. Deploying evidence from agricultural practices and Nok pottery, Igirgi draws the provisional conclusion that "viewed integrally, the archaeological evidence from the Benue Valley ties in working with that from other zones, with illuminative potential on some aspects of early Nigerian history".[334] On the whole, Igirgi makes a case for archaeology to assume a more anthropological posture by transcending its status as a mere technique for historical research, so that it could reasonably extend backwards the knowledge concerning the peoples and cultures of the Middle Belt region.[335]

Baba Thomas Bingel in his contribution entitled "Population, Environment and Economic Development in the Central Nigeria Area" examines the problem of population expansion and the centrality of the Middle Belt to demographic movement. Viewing the Middle Belt as a laboratory for examining demographic problems in Nigeria, Bingel argues that "with the rapid expansion of population in Central Nigeria, there is a gradual build-up of pressure on land and natural resources which is increasing tremendously, and that the resources in this region, for decades have been exploited at levels far beyond their sustainable productive capacity".[336] One of the explanations offered for this is the desiccation of the Sahara in the "core" northern Nigeria, which pushes the population into the Middle Belt areas.

The remaining six chapters of the first section of the book focus on traditions of origins and migrations; Sati Fwatshak on the origins of the Chadic speaking groups in the Middle belt from the perspective of the Bornoan tradition; B.F. Bawa on the origin, migrations and early history of the lowland communities of Plateau State";

---

334 Atoato D. Igirgi, "Emerging Perspectives of Nigeria's Early History as Inferred from Archaeological Research in the Middle Benue Valley," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria area*, 24-25.

335 Igirgi, "Emerging Perspectives of Nigeria's Early History," 30.

336 Baba Thomas Bingel, "Population, Environment and Economic Development in the Central Nigeria Area," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria area*, 38.

Idris Shaba Jimada on the origins of the Nupe"; J.O. Ogbaji on the origins and early history of the Igede"; Joe Iyo on the origins, migrations and settlement patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley"; and Saleh Dauda on the establishment of the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. While dispelling the view that the peopling of the Middle Belt region was a function of migration, each of these essays attempted to show the autochthony of the indigenous communities to the Middle Belt. They, however, acknowledge the role that migrations, cultural intermingling and exchange have played in the peopling of the Middle belt. [337]

Thirteen other historians handle the section on political organizations and economy of the region, spanning the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods. Okpeh Okpeh, opens this section with an essay on the pre-colonial political history of the Idoma people. In his critique of the dominant narrative on the pre-colonial political history of the Middle Belt communities, Okpeh posits that "the so-called "stateless" societies, including the Idoma had all attributes of government, the interactive and dynamic process of which ensured a balance between power and authority".[338] Ade Obayemi, one of the earliest academic protagonists of Middle Belt historiography, examines the history of the Nupe in present Niger State through the story of Tsoede, the King of the ancient Nupe Kingdom. Using king-lists, Obayemi concludes that "the Tsoede story substantially represents historical realities", and that the king-lists, though non-impeccable contain real elements that link the Tsoedian times with the present.[339] While Toryina Varvar, a Tiv historian based in the History Department at Benue State University, dispels the view of the Tiv as a "stateless" society in pre-colonial Nigeria, Joseph Ukwedeh makes a case for the centrality of internal dynamics in the foundation of the institution of the Attah kingship in the Igala Kingdom. J.A. Ohiare in his chapter on the Ebira argues that "contrary to the held notion that centralized authority was the creation of the British it was indeed a product of Ebira-Tao response to Bida invasion". Like Ukwedeh, Mailafiya Filaba

---

[337] Terna Gbasha, Review of *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria area* eds. Aliyu A. Idrees and Yakubu A. Ochefu, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37, no. 2 (2004), 372.

[338] Okpeh O. Okpeh, "The Pre-colonial Political Organization of the Idoma People," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*,146.

[339] Ade Obayemi, "Tsoede, Etsuzhi and Nupe History before 1800," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, 187.

stresses the importance of internal dynamics in the historical development of the Nasarawa Province, which attracted migrants from other parts of Nigeria.

The section on economy comprises of chapters by Mohammed Sani Abdulkadir on cloth production in 19th century Igalaland; Idris Jidda on agriculture in Nupeland; Zakariya Goshit on food crisis in the Plateau during the Second World War; Kwaghkondo Agber on the Tiv economy in the colonial era; James Obiegbu on Wome in the economy of Abuja; R.A. Olaoye on Ilorin textile in the 19th century; and Charles Jacobs on Berom's pre-colonial economy. The central thrust of these chapters on economic histories, despite their variations in regional focus, is to show how regular capitalist production in the colonial era had undermined the pre-colonial economy of the Middle Belt region.

The last two parts of the volume, dealing with intergroup relations and colonial experience, comprises chapters written by thirteen historians and a museum curator. Yakubu Ochefu, former President of the Historical Society of Nigeria and the current Chairman of the Aboki Publishers, examines intergroup economic relations in the Lower Benue Valley. For Ochefu, with the expansion of the southern boundary of the Sokoto Caliphate to the Benue Valley, "the area was subjected to severe slave raids that retarded economic activity". Carolyn Nnanus, a museum curator, in her chapter on intergroup relations among the peoples of Lokoja, rejects the popular notion that the people had been in constant conflict during the 20th century. The last four chapters here cover intergroup relations among the Gbayi and their Southwest Neighbors; the Nupe and their southern neighbors in the Niger-Benue Confluence; intergroup relation in Borgu; and the relations between the Sokoto Caliphate and the polities of the central Nigerian highlands. The last part of the book deals with the important theme of colonial experience among Middle Belt societies. The narrative trademark common to these contributions is the theme of resistance to colonialism: from Magaji Yamusa's gallant encounter with the British, the Lalin and Latok uprising in the Benue Basin, to the subjugation and resistance of the polities of Jos Plateau, Idomaland and Egbirraland.

As the politics of identity escalated following the return to civil rule in 1999, the Middle Belt scholarship grew in dimension and intensity. In 2001 *The Right to be different*: *Perspectives on Minority Rights, Cultural Middle Belt and Constitutionalism in Nigeria* appeared on the scene. This book was the result of a three-day conference on the peoples of the cultural Middle Belt, which was held in

Jos in 2001. The book is made up of eleven chapters authored by Middle Belt scholars, activists and former military and police chiefs. Although the overriding theme of the book is the 1999 constitution vis-à-vis the position of Middle Belt minorities, the various chapters speak to diverse issues around identity, resistance, economy, and politics in the area. Sam Egwu opens with a discourse on state and class in Nigeria and the context for framing Middle Belt identity. Although he acknowledges the "historicity" of the Middle Belt identity, Egwu suggests that, "it has remained an imagined community, with ethnic and class cleavages that question its internal cohesion and solidity".[340] He sees the notion of minority identity as socially and politically constructed. Egwu's class-based and constructivist approach to the Middle Belt question stands dramatically at variance with the subsequent chapters, which present the Middle Belt and the minority identity as a kind "historical a priori", with the exception of Etannibi Alemika's chapter on the framework for autonomy and local self governance. Alemika notes that the fears of the minority communities are the product of disproportionate resource distribution resulting from poor governance, fear of discrimination and domination entertained by the minorities; he also contends that politicized identities are social and political constructions.[341] The rest of the essays echo the narrative of internal colonialism. Bala Takaya is of the view that "what the minority groups experience is oppression, not mere relative deprivation, and it is a carryover of a long standing internal colonialism; a sad legacy that was foisted on them by British colonialists who chose to tuck the minority groups under emirate hegemonies for their (British) own administrative convenience".[342] In his chapter "the Political Economy of Resistance in the Cultural Middle Belt", Potter Dabup, a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, explicates the ways in which Hausa-Fulani hegemony was foisted on the Middle Belt minorities. Dabup asserts that, under British protection, Islam was imposed on Northern Nigeria including the

---

[340] *The Right to be different: perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria*, eds. Nankin Bagudu and Dakas C.J. Dakas (Jos: League for Human Rights, 2001), 12.

[341] Etannibi E.O. Alemika, "Ethnic Minorities in Nigeria: Constitutional Democratic Framework for Autonomy and Local Self-Governance," in *The Right to be different*, 100.

[342] Bala Takaya, "The Question for Sovereign National Conference: Practicalities and Challenges in the Nigerian Federation," in *The Right to be Different*, 116.

Middle Belt region. He, however, extols the ability of the Middle Belt communities to resist, in his words, the "imperialist Hausa-Fulani". "The people of the Middle Belt", according to him, "cherished their autonomy and their religious and social ways of life and saw no reason why they should exchange their own superior cultures to that of the Hausa-Fulani which they consider alien and therefore unsuitable".[343] Similarly, in his essay "the Peoples of the Cultural Middle Belt", Air Commodore Dan Suleiman [344] alleges that, the Jihadists envisioned and strove to carve out an administrative empire comprising of two distinct class systems between the *Hausa Bakwai* and the *Banza Bakwai*. The *Hausa-Banza* narrative, as we saw in the previous chapter, is a popular discursive tradition in the intellectual history of the Hausa people. Suleiman underlined the importance of Middle Belt resistance to Hausa-Fulani hegemony by arguing that the Fulani Jihadists never colonized the *Banza-Bakwai* kingdoms and "all the nationalists", according to him, "that resisted this onslaught now constitute what we call the cultural Middle Belt".[345]

In 2007, *The Middle Belt of Nigeria* was published in Makurdi, Benue State. Edited by two historians and a sociologist, this book is a collection of chapters by scholars from the disciplines of history, drama, languages, political science and economics. In his foreword, Olayemi Akinwumi, the current President of the HSN, notes that, since the publication of *Studies in the History Central Nigeria Area*, scholarly attention on the peoples of this region (Middle Belt) has increased. He identifies three overlapping consequences of this development on Middle Belt historiography. First, it opened up a new vista for a critical interrogation of the histories, cultures and politics of the peoples. Secondly, and corollary to the preceding point, the new scholarship is challenging hegemonic historical narratives of the Middle Belt communities in the light of new evidence. The third consequence was the decolonization of Middle Belt historiography, which in turn is facilitating the drive towards "mainstreaming the Middle Belt in the broader Nigerian history".[346]

---

[343] Potter Latir Dabup, "The Political Economy of Resistance in the Cultural Middle Belt," in *The Right to be Different*, 127-128.

[344] He was a former military governor of Plateau State.

[345] Dan Suleiman, "The Peoples of the Cultural Middle belt: A Cultural Perspective," in *The Right to be Different*, 158.

[346] Olayemi Akinwumi, Foreword to *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria*, vii.

The latest addition to this bourgeoning dissident textual tradition is Moses Ochonu's *Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt*. Ochonu offers a nuanced analysis of the stakes involved in the making of Middle Belt consciousness and the history of resistance against what he terms "Hausa imperial agents". He attempts to conflate British colonialism with Sokoto Caliphate's style of governance using such neologisms as "Anglo-Caliphate rule", "Hausa-Fulani subcolonialism", or the "Hausa-Caliphate". In his own words:

> Hausa-Fulani subcolonialism was a colonial template of Anglo-Caliphate rule. It took shape against the background of a canon of colonial and caliphate knowledge that viewed the cultures, religions, and political traditions of the Middle Belt as obstacles to be overcome in the interest of cheap, uniform colonial rule in Northern Nigeria. The idea of supplanting Middle Belt cultures and institutions as a way of preparing the non-Muslim peoples of the region for indirect rule through the instrumentality of Hausa-caliphate ideas, institutions, cultures, and personnel was a logical outgrowth of this prior ideological ferment.[347]

Like most of the other works discussed previously, *Colonialism by Proxy* raises fundamental issues associated with the British colonial consolidation of Hausa-Fulani hegemony and the reactions of the Middle Belt peoples. Although he acknowledges the limits of the "Hausa-Fulani colonials" within the larger colonial political and ideological orbit in which they operate, Ochonu recognizes the "unique decision-making agency of the Hausa-Fulani colonials", particularly outside their colonial administrative districts.[348]

Another publication is *Themes on Nigerian History* by Okpeh Okpeh and Sylvester Ugbegili. This book was intended to be "a meta-narrative on the history, cultures and peoples of Nigeria." It covers the pre-colonial and colonial histories of the Yoruba, Igbo, the Igbo, the Tiv and the Idoma. A major theme of Nigerian history, which is conspicuously missing in the volume, is a theme on the Hausa-Fulani. The authors attempt to justify the exclusion of the Hausa-Fulani and other Nigerian communities thus: "in scoping and dimensioning this volume, we were cautious not to overload our themes and confuse the idea behind the book…thus, several themes were

[347] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 22.

[348] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 209.

scooped, but only few were chosen on the basis of their topicality and relevance to our national life".[349] Paradoxically, one of the authors told the present author that the silence on the Hausa-Fulani was an oversight.

The micro works usually deal with ethnic histories rather than Middle Belt as a wider regional or cultural phenomenon. Within the Middle Belt itself, some ethnicities have received more scholarly coverage than others. In the Plateau axis, for example, the Berom, Anaguta, Mwaghavul and Tarok are covered most relative to the Gamaye, Mupun, Ron, Kerang and Mpan. The Tiv and Idoma, as the largest ethnic groups in the Benue Valley, have received more attention from historians than their neighbors such as the Igede. It is interesting to note that even these individual histories, like the macro texts, frame the minorities as victims of Hausa-Fulani politics and hegemony. Okpeh Okpeh in his work "The Idoma and Minority group Politics in northern Nigeria 1944-1960: a Study in an Aspect of the National Question" blames the British for "harboring a deep-seated prejudice against the Idoma" and endorsing "Hausa-Fulani" hegemony by superimposing "alien chiefs" from the Muslim North on the Idoma people. The British colonial administration in Idoma land, for Okpeh, was prosecuted on the basic premise that the non-Muslim societies had no centralized political and social organizations. Consequently, there was the "imposition of alien personnel and concepts of justice and administration as well as the Hausa language" [350] on the Idoma people who were hitherto autonomous of Hausa-Fulani control.

Furthermore, in the struggle for the production of history, historians in the Middle Belt are gradually losing out to non-professionals, who are producing a large chunk of community histories. Sen Luka Gwom, a seasoned civil servant, has authored over 10 books on different aspects of the history of Jos.[351] Stephen Mallo, a mining engineer, wrote a history of Ron in Plateau State. Nendimma Gonet wrote The

---

[349] Okpeh O. Okpeh and Sylvester I. Ugbegili, *Themes on Nigerian History: peoples and Cultures*, (Ibadan: Vast Publishers, 2013), 1.

[350] Okpeh O. Okpeh, "The Idoma and Minority Group Politics in Northern Nigeria 1944-1960: a Study in an Aspect of the National Question," (PhD Diss. University of Jos, 1994), 153.

[351] Some of these titles by Sen Luka Gwom include: *History of Jos and Political Development of Nigeria*; *The Berom and religion: Practices and prospects* (1995); *The Berom Tribe of Plateau State Nigeria* (1992); *History of Wase Local Government Council of Plateau State of Nigeria* (1994); *This is Shendam* (1991) ; *Berom Dictionary* (2010).

Rudiments of Kingship in Yil-Ngas in 2013 as a bold attempt to preserve and project Ngas culture for future generations.[352] The rise of these "amateur histories" in the Middle Belt, as Goshit describes it,[353] is associated with the settler-indigene question, identity politics and the struggle for representation.

On the whole, the recent Middle Belt textual productions, put together, represent a considerable departure from the narratives of European travellers', Muslim and colonial anthropological and ethnographic writings. If there is anything conceptually binding the macro and micro texts of Middle Belt histories in a framework, it is the Middle Belt peoples' sense of resistance that seeks to dispel the British colonial and Hausa-Fulani narratives of the region; and the reimagining of the status of the ethnic minorities as the "exclusive" victims of double colonialism in Northern Nigeria.

History Writing and the Settler-Indigene Debate

On the 1st of January 2014, Chris Olakpe, the Commissioner of Police, Plateau State Command, dispatched a crew of four Divisional Police Officers to halt the launching of a book entitled *The Truth about the Hausa of Jos* sponsored by the Jasawa Development Association. Several policemen were sighted manning the venue of the event. In an interview with *Daily Trust*, Alhaji Ibrahim Sani Abubakar, a member of the book launch committee, accused the police of supporting their adversary (the indigenous populace). He asserted that the stoppage of the event was meant to undermine the success of the public presentation of the book. The book was published in the wake of rising ethno-religious tension and identity politics around the ownership of the city of Jos between the "indigenous people" of Jos such as Berom, Anaguta and Afizere on the one hand, and the so-called Hausa-Fulani "settler community" on the other. Jos is the capital of Plateau state, which has over the past two decades come under global media spotlight as one of the most conflict-prone cities in Nigeria. The Jos conflict is typical of the growing tide of settler-indigene

[352] Nendimma D. Gonet, *The Rudiments of Kingship in Yil-Nga*s, (Jos: Willota Pres, 2013), vii.

[353] Interview with Zakaria Goshit, Jos, 2013. See also chapter six for a discussion on this.

divide in various parts of the Middle Belt. The crisis is aggravated by the fact that the "autochthonous peoples, backed by other "indigenous" groups elsewhere in the State, feel they have a right of ownership of Jos, its land and resources.

The politics of settler-indigene heightens the struggle over the production and appropriation of history as a means of staking claims to citizenship, thereby compounding the problem of national integration in Nigeria. The question of which ethnicity owns a particular place is important for its inhabitants because it forms the basis for determining citizenship and the political and socio-economic advantages attached to it such as political appointments, access to federal appointments, university and scholarship slots. The question of national integration itself became more problematic because, as Ibrahim James argues, the level of instinctive loyalty to Nigeria among Nigerians and the peoples of the Middle Belt in particular is below the minimum necessary for political stability.[354] Between 1980 and 2010, more than 60 settler-indigene related communal clashes have been reported in many parts of the Middle Belt, notable among which include: the Hausa-Fulani versus Kataf in Zangon Kataf in Southern Kaduna; Tiv versus Azara in Nasarawa State; Bachama versus Hausa in Adamawa State; Tiv versus Jukun in Taraba State; and the "indigenous" ethnic groups Afizere, Anaguta and Berom versus Hausa-Fulani in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. In most of these conflicts, the non-Muslim "Middle Belters blamed the Hausa-Fulani Muslims for the violence, describing them as "non-indigenes", "settlers", and "migrants" from the territories of the defunct Sokoto Caliphate".[355]

The settler-indigene question is not only about rights to citizenship. There is a religious coloration to it that is usually downplayed in scholarly discourses. Majority of the people that are tagged "settlers" in places like Jos are Muslims, seen by the "autochthons" as disciples of 19th century Fulani "Jihadists". The settler-indigene contestations are fueled by a specter of Muslim Hausa-Fulani domination, premised on a conspiratorial view of history, which alleges a grand design to Islamize the region. With the explosion of identity politics the Hausa-Fulani communities living in

[354] Ibrahim James, "Integration and Delayed Integration in the Middle Belt of Nigeria," in *The Settler Phenomenon in the Middle Belt and the Problem of National Integration in Nigeria*, (Jos: Midland Press, 1998), 153.

[355] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 1.

the Christian dominated areas of the Middle Belt assumed the status of villains. In fact, the grievances of the Middle Belt peoples were framed in the context of memories of pre-colonial and colonial era of what Ochonu describes as "hegemonic practices of Hausa-Fulani "imperial agents".[356]

Identity making and the politics associated with it involves framing and reframing of existing narratives of origin to suit certain claims to citizenship rights and land ownership. Therefore, identity contestations in the Middle Belt have resulted in the revision of traditions of origin as a strategy for reclaiming historical patrimony and pursuing contemporary political and social agendas. The content of these traditions of origin do not merit detailed treatment here. Our interest is to map out the intertwinement of settler-indigene contestation and the Middle Belt historiography. In the case of Jos, the various traditions of origin of the peoples have been collected by colonial ethnographers as well as by students who worked under the Jos Oral History Project. While many informants interviewed by the Plateau students in 1978 affirmed the theory of external origin of the Plateau peoples,[357] the rise of identity politics in 1980s engendered the production of identity histories, splitting historians into two broad scholarly camps: "migrationists" and the "autochthonists". The Middle Belt historians seeking to legitimize the claims of minorities to exclusive rights over the founding and ownership of places like Jos espouse the theory of autochthony. They rely on archaeological evidence from the Nok culture to defend their thesis on the antiquity of settlement both in the lowland and the high Plateau. The works of the Middle Belt historians on the question of origin resembles those described by J.A. Atanda as "anti-diffussionists",[358] who oppose the migrationist paradigm, by pointing in the direction of a series of complex local linguistic and archaeological evidence to espouse autochthony. The migrationists on the other hand hold the view that the settler-indigene dichotomy has no basis in Nigerian history and that the movement of peoples from one part of the country to another has been an ongoing phenomenon from time immemorial.

---

[356] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 1.

[357] For detailed information concerning these traditions of origins see *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts* I and II.

[358] J.A. Atanda, "The Historian and the Problems of Origins of Peoples in Nigerian Society," *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, no. 3, (1980), 74.

The earliest attempt at teasing out the debate between migrationists and autochthonists was made by Isichei. Using evidence from a doctoral thesis on the Plateau societies, she maintains that the present populations of Plateau have lived there only since the 17th century. She then raises some fundamental questions about the veracity of such traditions of origin as memories of past movements and as possible fabrications in response to political stress and challenges of the 19th century or of the 20th. Isichei suggests that neither subscribing to the extreme skepticism which would see all such traditions as response to some social and political need, or accepting them all as literally true, nor rejecting the improbable movements from outside will solve the problem of origin for the peoples of Plateau.[359] This is true of all other ethnicities in Nigeria.

B.F. Bawa opines that although the peoples of the Plateau might have lived there for centuries, it is not clear whether the present inhabitants are the direct descendants of the first settlers,[360] the makers of the Nok civilization. On the Tiv in the Benue Valley, Joe Iyo suggests the possibility of migration and intermingling as the basis for the formation of the Tiv ethnic community.[361]

In 2004, Yusufu Bala Usman in collaboration with Shaba Jimada and Barira Mohammed and in solidarity with the migration theory of origin published an article challenging the claims to autochthony by the Plateau historians. The authors, quoting the works of some prominent adherents of the settler-indigene divide, concluded that "we are all settlers". They posit that "all human beings are settlers on earth and those who think that they are not settlers, but somehow rooted in a particular soil, and, inherently, own, and, naturally, possess, the piece of land they now live on, are only fooling themselves".[362] Yusufu Bala Usman had been the most vocal critic of the proponents of identity historiography in Nigeria since the 1970s. The philosophical cornerstone of identity histories in Nigeria, which has come to be widely propagated

---

[359] Isichei, Introduction to *Studies in the History of Plateau State*, 7.

[360] B.F. Bawa, "Origins, Migrations and Early History of the Lowland Communities of Plateau State," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, 86.

[361] Joe Iyo, "The Origins, Early Migrations and Settlement Pattern of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria c. 1475- 1900 A.D.," in *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, 120.

[362] Yusufu Bala Usman, et al., "We are all Settlers," *Analysis* 4, no. 3, (2004), 8.

since 1990s is the view that Nigerians exist in tribes and in ethnic groups, and that this had been the natural order of things since time immemorial – a process, according to this view, that was only disrupted by colonialism in the 20th century.[363] In his critique of the "we are all settlers" theory, Sati Fwatshak faults Bala Usman and his colleagues of customizing the theory of common origin to the peoples of Plateau State. He asserts that the indigene-settler phenomenon in Nigeria "is not a mere figment of imagination but a practical and constitutional one".[364] The argument of the proponents of indigeneity is premised on the assumption that regardless of the movement of history and its fluid processes, certain people are not entitled to certain rights because history has shown that their ancestors came from somewhere.[365]

As the settler-indigene contestations and conflicts worsened in the Middle Belt region, scholarly conferences were convened by research centers to address the issue. In one of such meetings in Abuja, Monday Mangwvat told a gathering of scholars that approaching the settler-indigene question superficially amounts to doing injustice to scholarship. He adds: "you can neither deny indigeneship nor settlership. The thing is what we do with them".[366] Paradoxically, he pointed elsewhere: "prior to the colonial period there were no "settlers" on the Jos PlateuauPlateau to worry any body". He continued that the question of ownership of Jos have been authoritatively settled by judicial commissions/panels of inquiry on the recurring Jos crisis in favor of the indigenous ethnic groups: Afizere, Anaguta and Berom. He concludes that any further reference to the Hausa-Fulani as the founders and owners of Jos is plain mischief making and provocation of the native owners.[367]

---

[363] Yusufu Bala Usman, "The Historicity of the Peoples and Polities of Nigeria: observations on Historical Consciousness and Historiography," in *Beyond Fairy Tales: selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman*, (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre, 2006),124.

[364] Sati Fwatshak, "Reconstructing the Origins of the Peoples of Plateau State: questioning the "we are all settlers" Theory," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 16, (2005-2006), 125.

[365] Interview with Professor Abdullahi Ashafa, Kaduna, 2013.

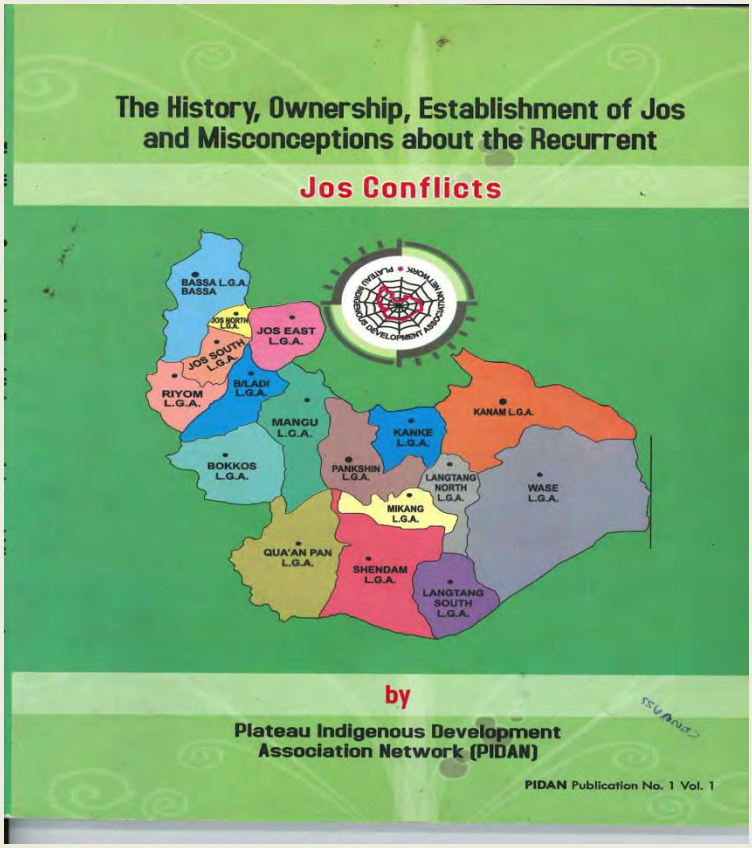
[366] Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat, Jos 2013.

[367] Monday Mangwvat, "Historical Insights on Plateau Indigene-Settler Syndrome, 1902-2011," paper presented at a Workshop on Citizenship and Indigeneity Conflicts in Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development and Development, Abuja, (2011), 4-5.

However, even the establishment of the various judicial commissions of inquiry to look into the conflicts in Jos has failed to forestall the recurrence of the crisis. Irked by such stalemate, both the "indigenes" and the "settlers" under the auspices of their respective ethnic associations resorted to the production of community histories to legitimize their claims to indigeneity and citizenship respectively. The Plateau Indigenous Development Associations Network (PIDAN) started with the publication of *The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconception about the Recurrent Jos Conflicts* in 2010.[368] In view of the sensitivity of the settler-indigene issue, the book was addressed to several national and international institutions including the institutions of history: archives, universities and libraries. In his foreword, Mangwvat describes the publication as "the most authoritative on the subject matter". For him, "the authors have laid bare the thick pall of ignorance that has over the years enveloped the questions of origins, claims of ownership and the colonial process of the establishment of Jos city".[369] The publication looks like an annotated index of archival reports concerning Jos Plateau.

[368] Similarly, the Mwaghavul Development Association has for the first time sponsored the publication of a book titled *Towards a Mwaghavul History: an Exploration* (Xlibris Corporation, 2011).

[369] Monday Mangwvat, Foreword to *The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconception about the Recurrent Jos Conflicts*, (Jos: Dan-SiL Press, 2010), xxiii.



Picture 2: Cover page of the book published by PIDAN.

In response to this publication, the Hausa community in Jos, under the auspices of the Jasawa Development Association (JDA) published their own historical narrative of Jos, *The Truth about the Hausa in Jos*, to dispel the claims of the "indigenous" communities. However, as shown at the beginning of this section, the attempt at launching the book was clamped down by the authorities.

Even the Federal Capital of Nigeria, Abuja, is afflicted by the indigene-settler syndrome. Abuja was made the capital of the federation in 1991. Although the Federal Government declared it as a "no-mans-land" and "ethnically neutral", those who consider themselves as the "original" inhabitants of the area: Amwamwa, Bassa, Egbura, Gade, Ganagana, Gbagyi, Gbari, Gwandara and Koro, accused the government of taking over their ancestral land. Meanwhile the Hausa-Fulani community of Abuja felt deprived of the status of full citizenship of the area. As a result, an association of Abuja Hausa-Fulani indigenes was formed as a platform to articulate their grievances of marginalization. A committee on history was constituted

and charged with the responsibility of writing a history of the Hausa-Fulani in Abuja.[370]

In the Benue axis of the Middle Belt, the Tiv-Jukun conflict represents another case of the settler-indigene problem. The Tiv and Jukun had lived in relative mutual coexistence since the 19th century, but this had degenerated into mutual suspicion and conflicts in the 1990s. The crisis has always been about the settler-indigene question between Tiv and the Jukun, [371] and occasionally involving the Hausa-Fulani community in parts of the present Benue State. While the Jukun regarded the Tiv as "settlers" in Benue and Taraba States, the Tiv claim that they have lived there for centuries. And the Hausa-Fulani people in Benue and Taraba States are considered by both Tiv and Jukun as "settlers". The exclusion of the Hausa-Fulani from the citizenship of Benue State, using the instrument of the settler-indigene divide, reflects the Tiv and Idoma social imaginaries of an awe-inspiring Hausa-Fulani community.[372] The Tiv, on the other hand, are perceived by smaller ethnicities such as Igede (who consider themselves as the rightful inhabitants of the state) as constituting a hegemonic block. For example, the "settler" status of the Hausa community has been questioned by an Igede historian, Silas Okita who sees the Hausa-Fulani as the first inhabitants of Makurdi, the capital of Benue State. This controversial position is, however, unacceptable to both Tiv and Idoma historians.[373]

Exclusivist practices on the basis of settler-indigene dichotomy are at odds with the objectives of social cohesion and nation building. The writing of ethnic histories and counter-histories rather than address the problem is fanning the embers

[370] I held a group interview with the members of this committee at the National Archives Kaduna in 2014, during their fieldwork for the history project. They recounted narratives of exclusion and marginalization by the Gbayi community in matters of federal appointments and access to resources.

[371] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Benue, 2013.

[372] Ochonu's "Colonialism within Colonialism…".

[373] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Benue, 2013. Okita asserts that Charles Jacobs, the expatriate historian who pioneered the historiography of the Benue Valley, was himself involved in this local politics of historical production as he assembled a lot of materials and groomed young historians that will help the Tiv cause in the settler-indigene contestations. When the claim about the Hausa being the first inhabitants of Makurdi was made and the Tiv historians were disputing it, Okita challenged them to refute it historiographically if they had contrary evidence.

of mutual hatred and suspicion among the affected ethnicities. The categories of "settler" and "indigene" are to say the least perilous discursive strategies that must be eschewed in the interest of peace and stability. As Ibrahim James puts it "it is not possible to call people settlers where they have lived for more than a century and their children do not know any other place except where they were born. There must be a process of integration to assimilate them."[374] Nigeria is a highly mobile society. People are always on the move and they will continue to move. "From experience" James notes, "we know that the "settler" are more prosperous than the "indigenes" and this generate hatred".[375]

Despite the label of settlers that is usually thrown around the Hausa-Fulani communities, they have had profound cultural influence on the minority groups so much that even place names in the Middle Belt areas bear Hausa names. This is not, however, to suggest that the Hausa founded the places, but the fact that they "named" or "renamed" them with Hausa names meant that they had profound cultural influence on those communities.[376] The heavy dosage of Chadic cultural influence on the peoples of the Middle Belt is widely recognized, but how the Chadic immigrants succeeded in implanting their culture on the indigenous peoples remains unknown.[377] Virtually each Middle Belt community struggles with a Hausa name and a local place etymology.[378] Archival records refer to peoples and communities with their Hausa names rather than the indigenous appellations. Such toponymic difficulty has been

[374] Interview with Professor Ibrahim James, Kaduna, 2014. In 1998, Ibrahim James along with other two scholars wrote a book on the settler-indigene problem in the Middle Belt. He pointed out: "we wanted to demonstrate especially to the Government of Plateau State under Jonah Jang, the amount of settlement and intermingling that had taken place in his domain. Unfortunately, the government was not interested until when the crisis later developed in Jos and other parts of the Middle Belt; then they realised that what we were saying was correct".

[375] Interview with Professor Ibrahim James, Kaduna, 2014.

[376] Interview with Professor Okpeh Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[377] Sati Fwatshak, "The Origins of the Chadic Speaking Groups in Central Nigerian Area: a Reassessment of the Bornoan Tradition," in S*tudies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, 65.

[378] Ibrahim James, "The Derivations and Meanings of Place Names in the Middle Belt of Nigeria," in ***The Settler Phenomenon***, 124. In this chapter, Ibrahim James provides comprehensive lists of the Hausa derivations of the indigenous names of places in most of the minority communities in the Middle Belt.

one of the major challenges of the Middle Belt resistance historiography. The historian of the Middle Belt region begins with a problem of terminology. Although a number of places still bear Hausa names, there is a move among Middle Belt peoples to reverse the names of these communities into their local etymologies.[379] All the same, the rejection of the more familiar Hausa names in preference for local ones, according to Isichei, complicates rather than explicates the complex histories of the Middle Belt ethnicities.[380]

The challenge of dislodging such practices associated with Hausa-Fulani culture and history, which have developed as expressions of cultural identity among the Middle Belt groups, is no less problematic. Hausa versions of place names are still widely used in both public and scholarly discourse. The minorities particularly those in Jos and Southern Kaduna hardly speak their local languages or wear traditional attires to project their cultural distinctiveness from the Hausa-Fulani. For example, a survey conducted in 1984 among the Yargam of Plateau State reveals that most people below the age of 30 cannot speak their native language.[381] Similarly, the Berom on average speak the Hausa language instead of their local language.

We have thus far examined the ways in which the Middle Belt was construed as a textual tradition premised on claims of marginalization in northern Nigeria. Yet struggles over cultural and historical legitimation through the production, management and consumption of historical knowledge are not confined to history books, academic debates and history departments. They are often embedded in concrete in institutions of the history machine such as archives, where evidence is created, stored and imbued with "legitimacy" and "authority".

---

[379] For example, a professor of history at the University of Jos adopted a local name in 1994 because of the growing concerns about identity. The Ngas of Plateau have translated Nigeria's National Anthem into their local language. Dictionaries of local languages were also written as part of this growing ethno-cultural nationalism in the Middle Belt.

[380] Isichei, Introduction to *Studies in the History of Plateau State*, 2.

[381] Mathew Kaju, "How Hausa Gobbles up Minority Languages," in *Linguistic Minorities and Inequality in Nigeria*, (Jos: League for Human Rights, 2003), 126.

Conclusion

The chapter has brought out some the complexities, challenges and intellectual cleavages associated with the production of a subnational historical narrative within the context of Nigerian and northern Nigerian regional historiographies. The writing of histories in Nigeria, particularly in the Middle Belt, is much more complex than is usually thought because of the linkages between politics, identity and historical knowledge. The synergy between historians' attempts at reclaiming the historical dignity of minorities and the discourse around marginalization by Middle Belt intelligentsia is more than accidental, because the historian cannot choose to be neutral; he writes in a moving train[382] that is propelled by irreconcilable allegiances, which make the train functions and breakdown at certain points. For example, the politics of settler-indigene has impacted on the direction of the Middle Belt historiography and facilitated the activation of a resistant historical consciousness and among the minority ethnic communities. The Middle Belt historiography, as a form of "textual resistance", has continued to grow as more universities were established and students trained within the region. Nonetheless, despite its structural disfigurements, the Nigerian history machine, as a national discursive policing, retains some control over the major institutions of history such as the National Archives.

[382] Howard Zinn, "What is Radical History," in *Past Imperfect: alternative Essays in American History from Reconstruction to the Present*, eds. Blanche Wiesen Cook et al. II (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1973), 322.

Chapter Four

"Dissident Histories" and the Struggle for Archives

Introduction

The operation of the Nigerian history machine is tied to the National Archives. Since the Middle Belt historiography is premised on orality and supposed to offer alternative narratives to institutional history, ethnic minorities typically dread the National Archives as one of the institutions used in robbing them of their historical dignity. This chapter takes off with an examination of the range of records at the National Archives Kaduna (NAK) where the colonial files on northern Nigeria are kept. This is with a view to teasing out the role of the National Archives in the formation of minority histories. The ambivalence in Middle Belt historians' claim of "archival transgression" on the minorities, on the one hand, and their dependence on the National Archives in challenging the institutional marginalization of minority histories, on the other is also examined. Rather than a simple database of docile and dusty files waiting to be excavated by experts, the National Archives represents an epistemological organization, a machine for the configuration and management of bureaucratic history. The chapter looks at the circuits of archival consumption by users beyond conventional historians such as legal practioners. Viewing the archives as a "confluence of method and politics", the chapter attempts a survey of the politics of archival data and entanglements between the National Archives and Middle Belt Dissident historiography.

The National Archives Kaduna

With the opening of the Kaduna branch of the National Archives in June 1957 and accessioning of the files of the Secretariat of the Northern Provinces, records soon began to pour in. Following the integration of departments with ministries in the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions, non-current records were offered to the National Archives then known as the Records Office. The permanent building of

NAK was formally commissioned in 1963, and some 51,000 files of the Kaduna Secretariat were transferred there.[383] Like the two other regional offices in Ibadan and Enugu, the one in Kaduna became responsible for the records of all the Northern provinces: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Ilorin, Kabba, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, and Zaria. The holdings at NAK are related to the administrative development of Northern Nigeria from the inception of colonial government in 1900 to 1959. There are records of the Secretariat of the Northern Provinces (SNP) 1900-1959, records of the Premier's Office 1956-1966, and records of the defunct ministries and parastatals of the then Northern Regional Government.[384] The Kaduna archive is in custody of some of the oldest Arabic manuscripts in northern Nigeria, dating back centuries. These records deal with the activities of Muslim traders, Muslim missionaries and adventurers. Other records available include old and current Newspapers.

Archives represent a particular mode of historical production and regime of "truth". National Archives serve to catalog national histories using indexing techniques that allow and restrict access to documents. All records emanating from a single agency are treated as a Group. On receipt of any accession, the records are then examined, identified, arranged and ordered into subgroups, classes and subclasses, series and subseries to reflect their institutional origins. These archival operations arise from the fact that records from government agencies are usually received without much order. Generally, the records of the National Archives in Nigeria exist in three main categories: bound volumes, filed papers and loose papers. The bound volumes are often arranged and described in relation to their function and the activity that produced them. The common records that fall under this broad categorization include: registers, intelligence books, dispatches, judicial books, letters' books, minute books, books of account and diaries. Among these, intelligence books constitute an important source of information on the anthropology, ethnography, geography, history, and economics of all districts and communities, jotted by Colonial Field Officers. They contain detailed reports such as the name of village, latitude, longitude, population, type of race, name of village head/chief, and other villages of

[383] National Archives of Nigeria, "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives," I (1970), 101.

[384] National Archives of Nigeria, *Guide to Sources of Nigerian History* (Lagos: 1995), 72.

same tribes. A typical intelligence book measures about 13 inches long, 16 inches wide and 2 inches thick.[385]

The establishment of archives, in derridean terms, involves a process of "domiciliation" or "house arrest" of records, using some topological and nomological procedures through which the archive is accorded with a "power of consignation".[386] The National Archives of Nigeria is involved in editing sources regarded as being of national importance, especially in projects of national pedagogy such as Nigerian history.[387] Such process of "consigning" of colonial records in Nigeria was primarily aimed at constructing a national narrative regardless of the ethnic or spatial origin of the records. Therefore, the primary identity articulated in the National Archives is that of their provenance; that is, of the regulatory authority behind them,[388] in this case the Nigerian state. All histories of multiple constituent units of the nation are, therefore, appropriated and embedded in the records as microcosm of a national narrative. The interest of the government in centralizing archives is tied to the objective of integrating diverse ethnicities into the Nigerian state. Once files and registers were "exiled" from the field of practice, that is, from hands of private individuals and government departments, they become "visible" and "invisible" objects, and "incarcerated" in a "prison of history" (the National Archives). Through practices of selection and appraisal, documents are accorded visibility and invisibility. They become visible because they are selected from a multitude of documents and imbued with discursive properties as sources of history. Their invisibility is acquired once they are removed from the "site of practice" or their place of origin, and consigned to stack rooms from which searchers are barred. In other words, the process of archiving contrives as much it as suppresses the conditions and possibilities of historiography.

We are not implying, though, that the National Archives are simple tools of the history machine through which discrete records are appropriated and processed

---

[385] National Archives Nigeria, "Archive Memorandum Repository Services (2)," no. 5, 1-9.

[386] Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2, (1995), 10.

[387] Stefan Berger, "The Role of National Archives in Constructing National Master Narratives in Europe," *Archival Science* 13, I (2013), 1-22.

[388] Berger, "The role of National Archives," 7.

into sources of Nigerian history. The rise of the National Archives of Nigeria was accompanied by the enactment of a critical tradition of rereading colonial archives by the nationalist historians. While unpacking the ideological subtexts and preconceptions of colonial archives, historians, however, had to depend on the same, sometimes pejorative, sources in writing both colonial and in some cases even pre-colonial accounts of Nigerian history. Alas, the ephemeral success of the nationalist school of history against colonial historiography, as we saw in chapter two, was followed by the breakdown of the national history machine. Thus, the National Archives transfigured into an icon of epistemic transgression and exclusion, particularly in the eyes of minority ethnicities. The Middle Belt historians assert that they have been historiographically disenfranchised relative to their Hausa-Fulani compatriots in the making of the National Archives. It is alleged that the colonial record-keeping regime in Northern Nigeria favored largely the Hausa-Fulani in terms of documentation. According to Okpeh Okpeh, there is a wide difference in terms of the average number of files that were kept on comunnities in the Middle Belt and communities in the Muslim North because the colonial government was not interested in the modus vivendi of the the former.[389] In view of the British colonial admistrative expediencies, societes classified as lacking in centralised precolonial political systems, were merged under the preexisting centralised polities for administrative convinience. This meant that the British had to contrive something to get the Middle Belt communities affiliated to the colonial administrative machinery.[390]

The charge of neglect of minorities by the colonial regime is farfetched, for while the documents were products of colonial bureaucratic activities and meticulous ethnographic observations, they were collected and serialised by Nigerian historians and archivists. As for the argument concerning the silencing of minority voices, it is very difficult to establish definitively at what stage of the creation of the archives the voices of the minorities were hushed to the margins. The easiest way to reconstruct archival silence is where records are deliberately classified as "confidential", and

[389] Interview with Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Makurdi, 2013.

[390] Interview with Professor Ibrahim James, Kaduna, 2013.

therefore, off-limits for researchers.[391] An interrogation of archival policies and practices in Nigeria reveals that, with the exception of access policy, which stipulates 25 years as the period required for documents' maturity, and the everyday glitches associated with running of the archives, access to documents has not constituted any major impediment for historians. In many countries, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups are confronted with the challenges regarding access to and organization of archives because they did not participate in the creation of the National Archives. But in other national contexts, such as Nigeria, historians try to explain away the fact that the National Archives contains volumes of records concerning their cultures and histories of ethnic minorities.

The National Archives often engenders ambivalent feelings among the writers of Middle Belt dissident histories who see them first as vestiges of the colonial surveillance regime in northern Nigeria, and at the same time, as potential sources for recovering their marginal voices and claims to "autochthony" and "indigeneity".[392] Such methodological ambivalence is not unique to historians of the Middle Belt. Professional historians are generally trained to be skeptical about sources especially those emanating from colonial archives. But this type of sources cannot be outrightly dismissed owing to their biases and ideological framework. They contain a multitude of first hand observations concerning the colonial processes and practices of governance. The British colonial regime did a good job in collecting historical, anthropological and administrative data on all the districts and villages of the provinces of Northern Nigeria, Muslim and non–Muslim areas alike; though the records have their limitations in terms of the ideological framework on which they are premised.

The British brought, as Field Officers to the Middle Belt, trained ethnographers, linguists and anthropologists such as Charles L. Temple, author of *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria* and Charles K. Meek, who wrote *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*. In fact,

[391] The only case of embargo on archival records at NAK is the records of Oputa Panel, which are still being kept out researchers.

[392] Kimberly Christen, "The Politics of Search: Archival Accountability in Aboriginal Australia," a paper presented at Media in Transition 5 Conference, (2007), 9-10.

these men devoted greater ethnographic and anthropological attention to the smaller ethnicities because of the implicit assumption that the disparate minority societies were more difficult to govern than say the established and centralized emirates of Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Bauchi and Daura. Therefore, the colonial officers covered the minorities in detail more than they covered the Hausa-Fulani dominated areas. For example, if we consider the number of files on Plateau Province alone, they are bigger in size and more voluminous relative to those on Kano and Katsina put together.

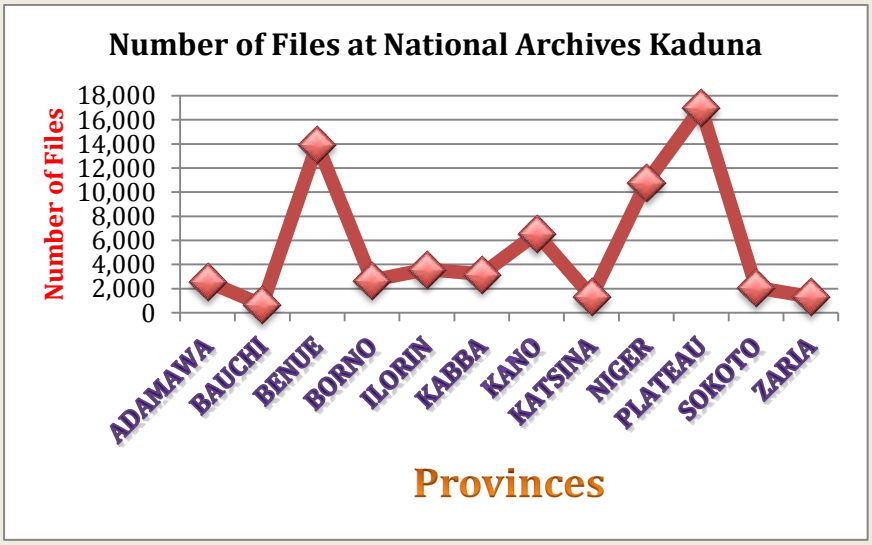


Figure 3: Number of files at the National Archives Kaduna by Provinces

From the above diagram, it could be seen clearly that the Middle Belt provinces of Plateau and Benue have the highest number of collections. The second largest collection after the Plateau Province is Benue Province with over 15 thousand files. While records from Makurdi (Benue) are marked MAKPROF, under which there are 5 divisional records and 10 distrct records, the records from Plateau and Niger Provinces are classified as JOSPROF and MINPROF respectively. The informtion in these files is basically concerns the minority ethnicities in the defunct Northern Nigeria. In terms of consumption of the archival records, MAKPROF and LOKOPROF are the most sorted and consulted by users, as reported by the head of the search room at NAK.[393]

[393] Interview with Salawu Olatunji, Kaduna, 2013.

A cursory look at the above chart shows that the claim of archival neglect or marginalization of Middle Belt minorities is farfetched. Nay, the Middle Belt communities were actually privileged in terms of colonial archival production especially in relation to the emirates of northern Nigeria such as Kano, Katsina, and Zaria. However, the availabilty of Arabic manuscripts allowed for the writing of the precolonial histories of the emirates under the NHRS, a fact interpreted as a historiographical disadvantage on the part of minorities.

There is no doubt that archival institutions embody the hegemonic images of their makers, but as Stefan Berger argues:

> The importance of National Archives to the construction of national master narratives was more alleged than real, and its symbolic value greater than its actual impact. In other words, the grand stories that came to structure many people's understanding of the nation's historical development were not constructed out of prolonged engagement with National Archives, but were told in a particular historical–political situation and out of particular sets of ideological–normative commitments of the national historians[394]

The Middle Belt dissident historiography is associated with the politics of marginality among the minorities of northern Nigeria, whose proclivity for cultural and historical parity with their Hausa-Fulani neighbours creates incentives for narratives of victimhood and exlusion. Although claiming to be based on oral tradition, Middle Belt histories draw heavily from the records of NAK. Even works on precolonial histories that would have ordinarily depended on oral sources, are usually contingent upon colonial records from the National Archives. For example, in his study of the non-Muslim groups of Northern Nigeria, Yusufu Turaki consulted 107 Zaria Provincial Files (ZARPORF) at NAK. Thse of National Archives has in fact been a ritual among undergraduate and postgraduate students from various Nigerian universities. Citing sources from NAK is customary and often equated with scholarly novelty among academic historians in northern Nigeria.

In all fairness, there is no gainsaying that the extensive documentation of the lives of minorities in the colonial archives can be seen as part of a control regime

[394] Berger, "The role of National Archives," 6.

because of the assumption in the colonial establishment that the Middle Belt minorities, as "preliterate" and non-centralized communities, required closer ethnographic surveillance and documentation to get them effectively pacified and affiliated to the colonial administrative machinery.

Lawyers in the Archive: settling Land, Chieftaincy and Boundary Disputes

Historians are not the only clients of the National Archives. There is a diverse community of users ranging from academics, legal practitioners, and government officials. Recent scholarship on archives calls into question the traditional meaning and function of archives as the professional preserve of the historians. A survey of the users of NAK from 1994 to 2010 shows that the size of private and official searchers far outstrips that of academic searchers including historians and other scholars.[395]

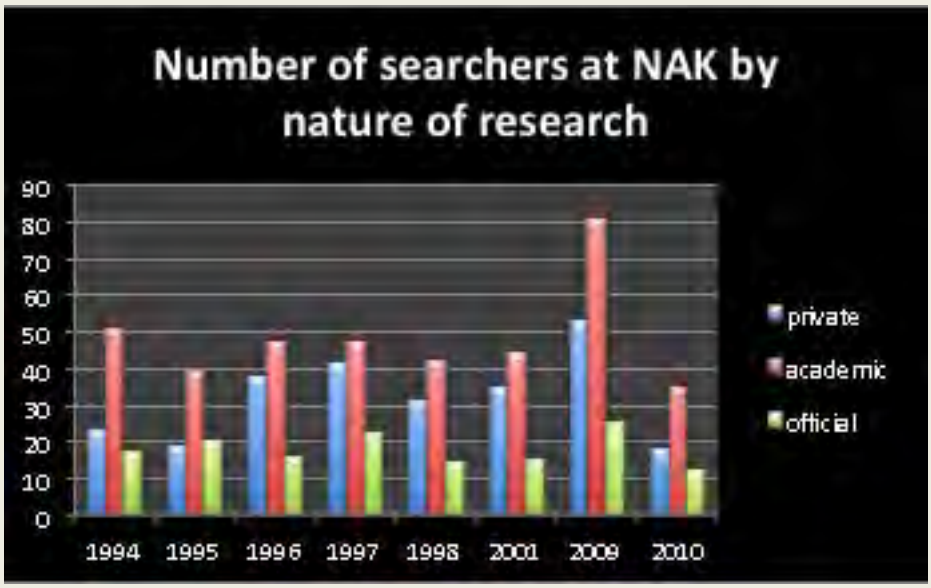


Figure 4

As "cultural agents of facts production," [396] archives serve lawyers and leaders of ethnic communities searching for evidence in legal cases, social and for political

[395] During my fieldwork at NAK I observed that the attention and services archivists usually pay to private searchers differs from the way they treat academics, especially students.

[396] Ann Laurer Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, no. 87, (2002), 87.

causes. For researchers, "the document in the archive has the attributes of authenticity, contemporaneity, and the unique tangibility of a real moment captured in material form," implying the prominence of archives as primary sources. Although the historian and legal practitioner share a strategy of turning to the archives for evidence, lawyers do not require any training in source-criticism to decipher archival data in the courtroom. Terms like "historical jurisprudence" and "historical adjudication" have been used to refer to the settlement of court cases using archival evidence. The legal practitioner is primarily interested in evidence that will help him support the case of his client. The legal approach to archives has been described as "law office history"; in other words, "the selection of data favorable to the position being advanced without regard or concern for alternative data or proper evaluation of the relevance of the data proffered".[397] The professional historian considers this as an eccentricity foisted on legal practioners by their professional training.[398]

Putting the archives on trial

With the upsurge of conflicts relating to land, chieftaincy and boundary matters, NAK has become a research hotbed for lawyers and ethnic associations. There is, thus, a dramatic shift in the status of colonial files, dealing with land and chieftaincy matters, from conventional sources of colonial history to viable instrument of legal proceedings. The users register show that majority of the non-academic searchers are legal practitioners as demonstrated in the graph above. Between 1995 and 2010, over 50 legal practitioners were at NAK in search of records relating to chieftaincy, land and boundary issues in Jos, Makurdi and Southern Kaduna. But the highest number of disputes, which archivists attend to relate to chieftaincy matters.

What happens when a legal practitioner enters the institutional space of archives? Let us look at one instance of litigation over a royal palace in a Southern Kaduna community to illustrate the engagement of the legal professionals with archives. Although the case is yet to be decided by the court of law, it is used here to illustrate how lawyers engage with historical evidence in settling disputes within a

[397] John Phillip Reid, "Law and History," *Law Review* (1993). Available at: http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/Vol.27/iss1/9

[398] Reid, "Law and History".

Middle Belt context. The case involves a dispute over the ownership of the present palace of the Kagoro Chiefdom in Kaura Local Government, Kaduna State. The plaintiffs claim that since the creation of the Kagoro Chiefdom, there has been no official, permanent royal palace and that every successive chief had to convert part of his personal residence into a palace. On the other hand, the defendants assert that the palace is a public institution. Following several futile searches for relevant documents at the local Government council, the plaintiffs resorted to NAK in search of a file, which, as they were informed, shows decisively that the palace had been taken over by the government from the defendants. Therefore, the former hired a lawyer to search for the said document at the archive.

The lawyer arrived at NAK on the 26th October 2013. He consulted 15 files on Jema'a District from 1920s and the 1950s and found a useful file containing minutes of communication between Gwomna Awam and the district officers in charge of the Kagaro District of Zaria Province. These files deal with matters relating to financial estimates of certain public works carried out in Kagoro Chiefdom. According to the lawyer, the records in those files show evidence of reimbursement in which the former Chief of Kagoro and the progenitor of the plaintiffs, Gwamna Awam, requested reimbursement for the cost of building the palace, which was approved by the Colonial Resident Officer. The lawyer was intrigued! For him, it was actually fascinating to discover documents of the correspondence between the former Chief of Kagoro and the Colonial District Officer, showing specific evidence of government's stake in the ownership of the palace. In his own words:

> Such discovery strengthens the defense case. The whole file was important and if I tender such document in court they will see the sequence of how everything happened. With such archival information I could just imagine if these things took place as if as I was there.[399]

The major concern of the lawyer was to find corroborative evidence that would support the case of his clients, brushing aside any possible counterevidence. When asked what he would do with counterevidence should he encounter any at the archives, he said that since he was paid to defend his client, the tendency is to hide contrary evidence from the opponents. Although legal practioners, like professional

[399] Interview with Barrister Irimiya Samson, Kaduna, 2013.

historians, are taught to be fair and honest within the canons of legal discipline, in practice they try as much as possible to maximize the chances of their clients to win court cases.

For lawyers, an archival document is more central than oral evidence in the court of Law. Once certified as a true copy of what is in the archive, a document is admissible in court. It can be tendered directly to the judge without passing through any witness. The National Archives Acts of Nigeria stipulates that a copy of or extract from any record or archives in the National Archives, including microfilms and photocopies of such a copy or extract purporting to be duly certified as true and authentic by the Director or by the custodian of the public archives in any place of deposit where such record is kept, and authenticated having impressed thereon the official seal of the council or of the place of deposit, shall be admissible in evidence if the original would have been admissible in evidence in any proceedings.[400] Where the veracity of a certified copy of an archival document is in doubt, the archivists are called upon to tender the original and verify the authenticity of the former. [401] For example, the head of search room of NAK was called upon to Akwanga in Nasarawa State and Jos on two occasions regarding chieftaincy disputes where he presented files from Jos Province on the basis of which a verdict was reached. He, however, laments the practice where people would bring all sorts of fake documents for certification.

There have been reports of unscrupulous attempts at sabotaging archives and a rising trend among searchers to connive with archivists in forging or even destroying records in order to gain undue advantage over their opponents in courts of law. On the 6th of March 1987, a university lecturer got a 10-year prison sentence for stealing documents from the National Archives Ibadan. There was also a case of a land dispute in a High Court. The lawyer for one of the litigants went to the National Archives and found documents which if tendered would defeat his case. He, therefore, offered to bribe the archivists not only to keep these documents away from consultation by his

[400] Federal Ministry of Information, "National Archives Act," in *Nigeria Laws of Information and Communication* I (Abuja: Bologi Nigeria Limited, 2009), 90.

[401] Interview with Salawu Olatunji, Kaduna, 2014.

opponents but also destroy them.[402] Similarly, there are reports of missing public records at the National Archives Kaduna. For example, there was a case of a student who consulted some crucial files on the tumultuous area of Southern Kaduna, Zongon Kataf, and the Jema'a District for his undergraduate thesis in 1980s. But when he visited again in 1997, although the files were there, the records of the files were missing. And these were records concerning issues to do with land and chieftaincy among the Hausa, Katab, Kaje and Bajju communities in Southern Kaduna. The advent of identity politics has had some implications on the National Archives as important archival documents were reported to have been destroyed, removed or stolen from custody by desperate ethnic groups seeking to assert certain social or political claims, or deny others the opportunity of accessing counterevidence; this is in addition to dilapidation of the records as a result of poor conservation practices. This practice is usually perpetrated in connivance with mendacious archivists.

Since archival practice reflects and reinforces a privileging of "settler" voices and narratives over "indigenous" ones, of written over oral records", the making of narratives of autochthony would require "alternative archives" to legitimise and consolidate Middle belt dissident narratives. The only local branch of the National Archives within the Middle Belt is located in Jos. And apart from copies of some of the records available at the archives in Kaduna, most of the documents in Jos archives are gazzetteers of the Plateau State Government and newspapers.

Until the 1970s, with the inauguration of the Jos Oral History and Literature Texts as a kind of "marginal archive", which documented the oral histories of several Middle Belt communities, there is no evidence of written documentary heritage among the minorities. Under the auspices of Charles Jacobs, similar attempt was made at constructing an archives for the minorities at Benue State University. Although, the documents available originated from the private collection of Jacobs (as copies of the originals at NAK) the idea was to create a repository of records on the ethnic minorities, particularly those on the Benue Valley. But even at this stage, there was an allegation that Jacobs, though an expatriate, was building the archives to support the cause of the Tiv against the Idoma. Thus, even within the context of the

[402] Audu Momoh, "Archives and the Liberalization of Access," in *The Nigerian Archivist* I, no. 1, (1989), 24.

Middle Belt minority question vis-à-vis the Hausa-Fulani, there is another micro tension driven by local grievances among the Middle Belt minorities.

Conclusion

The struggle for historical representation, in dfeiance of the dictates of the Nigerian history machine, represents a legitimate form of resistance against distortions and silences in the records of the National Archives. The drive towards the production of dissident histories in the Middle Belt has been facilitated and inhibited by the institutional practices of the National Archives, which collects and indexes discrete documents and transform into national records. The documentation of ethnic minorities by colonial officers resulted in the availability of massive archival records on the Middle Belt areas. But the historian working to produce dissident histories on the basis of these records is entangled in a "critics paradox". Trapped between the subjectivity and utility of institutional records in the production of Middle Belt historiography, the author of minority history is implicated in a constant struggle with a state-protected knowledge regime, the National Archives of Nigeria.

Although the colonial origins of the National Archives allowed for the entry of pejorative accounts and profiling of the Middle Belt societies, the claim by Middle Belt historians of archival marginalization is not defensible. Distrust and misuse of National Archives owing to ethnic and political competition in the Middle Belt constitute impediments to the functioning of the Nigerian history machine has led to the misuse of archives. The National Archives is no longer the preserve of historians; it has become a cultural institution hosting a diverse community of searchers.

However, among the institutions of history in Nigeria, the museum is invested with more institutional authority than the National Archives to collect and catalogue materials from different communities for the purpose of producing a shared national history. In curating items and indexing them, not only are dominant narratives solidified, the National Museum represents another critical site of history-making where the dominant narratives are relayed through national galleries and the silencing of other people's civilization is also sustained.

Chapter Five

Manufacturing Bridges across Cleavages: National Museums and the Politics of Symbolic History

> The question we should be discussing is how to use the artistic-spiritual expressions of the component nations of Nigeria to build a prosperous and stable state. This question arises because it is clear to all we cannot melt them down and remould into one expression. We cannot even federate them like we have done with the peoples who and whose ancestors produced them. (Adiele Afigbo, "The Museum and Nation building," 1985, 53).

> If we take this view as a framework for interrogating the Unity Museum, we may possibly see in the unity gallery a disunity platform and a podium for comparing ethnic achievement in antiquity. (Babajide Ololajulo, "Whose past?: Unity museums, memory production," 2010, 11).

Introduction

The above epigraphs serve to introduce us to another salient function of the Nigerian history machine; the making of national narrative through the museum institution. Although, the role of public museums in the production of historical knowledge and identity is widely acknowledged, the conditions and circumstances around which history is made in museum context are rarely the subject of historiographical discourse. The National Museums like the archives are not apolitical institutions where historical records are neutrally displayed for pedagogic and aesthetic consumption. Like institutional records in the National Archives, artifacts are removed from their sites of use either through archaeological process of collection or treasure hunting by treasure-mongers. The practice of curatorial taxonomy involves a transfiguration of the status and utility of artifacts into something else that functions differently. Such a process of de-contextualization and re-contextualization transforms artifacts into objects of attention, meaning and culture.[403] "By their very presentation at a heritage site, ideas are fixed, authenticated, and made credible in the

[403] Mary Bouquet, *Museums: a Visual Anthropology*, (London: Berg, 2012), 121.

minds of the public. Expressions of non-dominant players may be excluded and "othered" or appropriated and encompassed by this system, and through public exhibits made digestible to the dominant culture."[404] The museum offers a space where the nation can be imagined through a process described by Benedict Anderson as "political museumising".[405]

Unlike history books and journals, which basically provide literary entry points into national imagination, the museum combines the edifying and imaginative thrust of verbal expositions and narrations with the concreteness, authenticity, and authority associated with material display.[406] But while museums are empowered by the Nigerian state to collect, organise and display material cultures from different ethnicities, they are deeply contested sites of knowledge production where a kind of micro-politics takes place behind the scenes of exhibitions. History is "forever out of the grip of those who attempt to place all sorts of controls over its representations, meanings and consequences".[407] Although it has been argued that museum-going is not a ritual of citizenship in most postcolonial states in Africa, and did not play a crucial role in defining national identities, the appropriation of discrete material cultures in the process of nation building is deeply problematic and contested by Middle Belt minorities.

This chapter examines the functions of the National Museum as a history-making institution, being an important component of the Nigerian history machine. The chapter begins with a discussion around the ownership of the famous Nok heritage, which has been appropriated as national heritage and contested as the cultural and symbolic capital of the Middle Belt, by Nigerian government and local communities respectively. Then it examines the curatorial practices of the National Museums in Jos, Makurdi and Kaduna and the institutional contradictions associated with the museum project and practice. The re-enactment of local histories through performances such as dances and cultural festivals by Middle Belt local communities

---

[404] Susan Ashley, "Heritage, Resistance and Praxis," in *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 31,no.3,(2006).Availableat:http://www.cjconline.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1746/1860

[405] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 2006), 183.

[406] Bouquet, *Museums: a Visual Anthropology*, 111.

[407] Shamil Jeppie, "Introduction: New History?," in *Toward New Histories for South Africa: on the Place of the Past in our Present,* ed. Shamil Jeppie (Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004), 2.

is also examined. The chapter concludes with an examination of visitors' guestbooks with a view to teasing out the interplay between museum narratives and images on one hand, and visitors' narratives and imaginations of history on the other hand.

Appropriating Nok Antiquities

The Nok village, located in Jaba Local Government in southern part of Kaduna State (considered a part of the Middle Belt) is widely reputed as the primary site of terracotta figurines in Nigeria. The Nok culture came into public knowledge since the colonial period when accidental discoveries during tin mining operations brought to light objects that were subsequently named after the Nok village in 1929. Since then, more discoveries of similar objects have been made in other parts of northern Nigeria. At present, the spatial scope of the Nok culture covers areas such as the Nok village itself, Jema'a, Wamba, Yelwa, Katsina Ala, Taruga, Kagara and parts of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. With more discoveries coming from Sokoto and Katsina, the area now extends roughly over an area of three hundred miles. While the Middle Belt intellectuals see the region as coterminous with the "spatial Middle Belt", [408] archaeologists refer to it as the "Jema'a Federation".[409] However, since most of the Nok specimens originated from these sites, the local populace consider the Nok materials as the cultural vestiges bequeathed to them by their forebears. As a result of these competing claims, the Nok archaeological heritage suffers from three kinds of epistemic transgressions: national appropriation by the Federal Government of Nigeria; the rendering of the heritage as a minority culture of the Middle Belt; and its appropriation by European archaeologists and cultural institutions.

[408] James, *The Settler Phenomenon*, 1.

[409] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, 2013. The Nok village was formerly in Jema'a Local Government Area before the creation of Jaba Local Government.

Map 5: The Nok Culture Region.[410]

Seen in the light of Nigeria's cultural policy, the Nok cultural materials, along with other material cultures such as Igbo Ukwu culture and Ife arts, which originated among the Igbo and Yoruba in South Eastern and South Western Nigeria respectively, have been officially designated as national heritage. Antiquities from Nok and other adjoining areas adorn the galleries of National Museums in Nigeria and even museums in other parts of the world. They are treated as Nigeria's cultural property "inherited" from primordial ethnic communities. As long as the cultural relics remain beneath the surface of the earth, and, thus, invisible to local communities, they are treated as anonymous national property, waiting to be excavated by state-commissioned scientists.

Legal instruments are deployed in order to ensure that the state maintains its grips over heritage production and management. In 1974, the Antiquities Decree was enacted, prohibiting the buying or selling of any antiquity to any person other than the Director of Antiquities or a body or person authorized by him/her. And people in possession or control of antiquities were required to register them with the Antiquities Department (now National Commission for Museums and Monuments). Under this decree, the Director was empowered to buy any antiquity from any person,

[410] Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nok_culture#mediaviewer/File:Nok-map.png

compulsorily, for a fair price.[411] The power of local governments to retain excavated materials was withdrawn as early as 1977 by Decree 77. [412] The official justification for the appropriation of antiquities is that the value of recorded knowledge of Nigeria's past cultures outweighs their functional and local utilities; for such knowledge leads to a better understanding and appreciation of Nigerian history.

In contrast, some historians and archaeologists consider the Nok artworks as the "cultural pride of the Middle Belt communities",[413] a "minority culture"[414] and the ontological "grounds for Middle Belt historiography".[415] These three propositions or degrees of regional appropriation are all premised on the projection of a Middle Belt regional identity back in time.

Furthermore, disputes over rights of ownership of Nok's symbolic and cultural capital transcend the boundaries of Nigeria. A number of global legal instruments for the regulation of cultural artifacts exist as constrains to both the regional and national appropriation regimes. Nigeria has lost many of its valuable artifacts to illegal excavation, theft and trafficking of antiquities particularly in the 1990s. Additionally, some artifacts sent to Europe and America for exhibition, as claimed by some museum curators interviewed by this author, never returned to their places of origin or galleries in various Nigerian museums. There they remain inaccessible to Nigerians, "who are the rightful owners and who dearly need the intrinsic meaning of these especially significant items, which express the uniqueness of their cultural heritage".[416] The manner in which the cultural objects were collected, purchased, received as gifts or plundered during colonial wars complicate the politics of cultural

---

[411] Federal Antiquities Department, *Antiquities Decree*, No. 9, (1974).

[412] Anthonia Fatunsin, "Nigeria: the Case of Jos Museum," in *Museums and Archaeology in Africa*, ed. Claude Daniel Ardoun (The Smithsonian Institution, 1997), 74.

[413] Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos 2013. The official logo of the Centre for Middle Belt Studies is a Nok terracotta head, implying the symbolic significance of the Nok heritage to Middle Belt consciousness.

[414] Interview with Professor Ibrahim James, Jos 2013.

[415] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos 2013. For Jemkur, the atomistic nature of Middle Belt historiography is associated with the failures of archaeological research on Nok culture.

[416] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter*, 3 no. 42, (2012), 6.

property. For example, all nations who are party to the 1972 UNESCO Convention regarding the protection of World heritage agree that, while fully respecting the sovereignty of the states on whose territory cultural heritage are located, they are also appropriated as constituting world heritage under the protection of the international community regarded as a corporate system.[417] It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the finest antiquities discovered on Nigeria's soil have legally, but often illegally, found their way to metropolitan museums in Europe. During a stakeholders meeting, the traditional chiefs of Nok community requested that Nok objects sent for scientific analysis in Germany should be returned and that the Nok area should be listed as world heritage site.[418] The head of the German archaeological team in Nigeria, Peter Breunig of the Goethe University, Frankfurt, argued, however, that his team had worked on the Nok site for twenty years and that many people misunderstood the job they were doing.

On the 30th October 2013, a major exhibition of the Nok culture titled "Nok: Origin of African Sculpture", opened in Frankfurt, Germany. Ironically, the materials were exhibited in Europe rather than in Nigeria where the heritage was excavated. The Nok exhibition in Frankfurt came under strong criticism from Nigerian archeologists. The German archaeological team was berated for undertaking "unethical" investigations of the Nok sites, involving the exportation of excavated materials without any proper memorandum with the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. The Archaeological Association of Nigeria also suspected the project of excluding the local communities of the Nok valley, including community leaders and traditional chiefs. As a result of mounting pressure, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Archaeological Association and the Germans. This allowed for the participation of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and UJ as project collaborators. Nonetheless, the fact that the exhibition of the highly valued Nok cultural heritage was first mounted in a foreign country (Germany) was seen to undermine international best practice and rob Nigerians of the opportunity of interpreting their heritage and patrimony. The

[417] United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization, *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, 16 November 1972. Available at: Portal.unesco.org

[418] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter* 3 no. 42, (2012), 2.

president of the Association of Nigerian Archaeologists, Zacharys Gundu, illustrates more graphically the outrage against the international appropriation of Nok culture:

> By starting the exhibition in Frankfurt, the European audience has been effectively privileged over Nigerians whose forefathers were directly responsible for the Nok culture. German scholars have also been effectively given a first opportunity to skew the interpretation of the Nok finds to reinforce European historiography and align with the philosophy of universal museums. The organizers of the exhibition have done this by exhibiting the Nok materials in dialogue with contemporary Egyptian and Greco-Roman sculptures. In the despicable philosophy of universal museums, the Nok materials are incompetent to stand alone before a European audience, hence the attempt to compare them as primitive art against figurative European art. While we are not against international collaboration, we must be accorded the right to interpret our past and be the first to enjoy it and benefit from the education that comes from exhibiting it. [419]

Similarly, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments was alleged to have facilitated the "academic colonization" of Nigerian heritage and archaeological resources. But it should be noted here that the German archaeological team presently operating on Nok sites enjoys a kind of comparative advantage in wealth and technologies of production (funds, expertise, and machines) over their Nigerian counterparts. And this is not because Nigeria is too poor to afford the technologies of archaeological production, but due to government's general apathy towards knowledge production, especially cultural and historical knowledge.

The Memory of the World project launched in 1992 by UNESCO accentuated the drive towards appropriation and globalization of heritage. This program was established on the premise that the "world's documentary heritage belongs to all and, therefore, should be preserved for all, protected for all, and accessible to all, for the sake of mutual understanding, respect and dialogue". All material cultures registered in the Memory of the World Program are, therefore, "the legacy of the past to the

[419] Zacharys Anger Gundu, "The Nok Frankfurt Exhibition: Matters Arising," (2013); see also "Nigerian Archaeologists Protest German Exhibition of Looted Arts," November (2013). Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/201311181614.html

world community of the present and the future". [420] In line with the UNESCO mandate, the Nigerian Minister of Education inaugurated a committee in 2007. With membership drawn from National Archives and National Museums, the committee was commissioned to among other things identify, document, preserve and promote national heritage expressions to be included in the world database. The paradox, however, is that despite the abundance of important heritage materials in the country none of these made it to the 2013 UNESCO Memory of the World list. [421]

On the local scene, the eruption of identity politics in the 1980s alerted Nigerian ethnicities to the relevance of cultural and historical symbols in identity negotiation for resource access at the center. There is, thus, a resounding proprietorship friction around the Nok cultural heritage between the Federal Government, the sites or local communities from which the materials originated on the one hand, and between cultural institutions in Nigeria and world cultural organizations on the other. There is no doubt that the Nok culture predates the entity called Nigeria. But questions around whether the figurines were contracted by kings or commoners; or thought of as a patrimony of a particular kingdom; an erudite familial lineage or belonging to some obscure deities, have remained perplexing questions in Nigerian archaeological and historical discourse. However, the fact is that the progenitors of the Nok heritage did not produce it for Nigeria.[422]

[420] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Memory of the World General Guidelines*, revised edition, 72, (Paris, 2002), 2.

[421] The 2013 registered heritage and 2014 nominations are devoid of any entries from Nigeria. It is very likely that no submission was made from Nigeria for both the 2013 and 2014 nominations.

[422] Kwame Anthony Appia, "Whose Culture is it?" *New York Review of Books*, 53, no. 2, (2006) Available at : http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2006/feb/09/whose-culture-is-it/

Picture 3: Nok Terracotta Heads[423]

In the quest for national history, competing local narratives are institutionally smothered or forgotten, and where there is tension between local and national agendas, "powerful institutions are there to remind us of our heritage and compel us to forget other histories". [424] The "Nigerianisation" of Nok culture requires a deliberate and subtle suppression of local narratives, while a narrative delinking and decontextualizing the Nok sites from the local people was contrived. This was facilitated by the absence of evidence, proving beyond reasonable doubt that the present inhabitants of the Nok region are direct descendants of the original makers of Nok objects. In fact, to make matters worse, the makers of the Nok materials were said to have mysteriously vanished around 500 AD.[425] The silencing of Nok culture is complicated by the absence of corroborative records, either in any indigenous form or in the vast historical literature of ancient Egypt, Greece, or Rome. Neither the works of medieval Islamic chroniclers from the 10th century, nor the 14th century

[423] Available at: http://www.pinterest.com/pin/530298924847133529/

[424] Robert Shannan Peckam, "The Politics of Heritage and Public Culture," in ***Rethinking Heritage: Cultures and Politics in Europe***, ed. Robert Shannan Peckam (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 7.

[425] Appiah, "Whose Culture is it?: Unity museums, memory production,".

manuscripts from Timbuktu reveal any illuminating records of these cultures east of the Middle Niger, which presumably had gone for a thousand year.[426] Oral histories, as argued by Ade Obayemi, are silent on Nok culture obviously because it is too ancient and general to persist specifically in human memory.[427] As a result of this institutional and textual silence, the focus of all scholarly work has been mainly on the artworks rather than the makers of this magnificent heritage. Although "archaeologists have travelled to and met the Nok locals who have told the stories that their ancestors passed on to them on the origin of the Nok people and the Nok culture from generation to generation",[428] the agency of the local peoples and the historicity of their oral traditions have been written off through academic discourses.

In order to get more accurate chronological data on the Nok culture, archaeologists collected more datable materials. Aided by the advent of new techniques of absolute dating, such as dendrochronology and thermo luminescence methods, about twenty new samples of the Nok terracotta were dated between 300 BC and 700-800 AD at Oxford University in 1978, thereby filling the temporal void between ancient and contemporary Nok people, according to archaeologist, Joseph Jemkur.[429] And because of the close similitude between Nok's highly decorated figurines, especially the human heads, with images from photographs of the native peoples taken by colonial ethnographers in 1950s, archaeologists have suggested that there was a continuous occupation of Central Nigeria (otherwise called the Middle Belt) from the Nok period to the present.[430] The spatial and temporal distance between the original manufacturers and the present consumers of Nok heritage is partly responsible for the competing claims of rights to ownership among contending stakeholders: the people of Nok, the Middle Belt and the Federal Government.

---

[426] Frederick John Lamp, "Ancient Terracotta Figures from Northern Nigeria," *Art Gallery Bulletin*, Yale University, (2011), 49.

[427] Ade Obayemi, "States and Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence Area," in *Groundwork of Nigerian* History, 147.

[428] Patrick J. Darling, "The Rape of Nok and Kwatartkwashi: the Crisis in Nigerian Antiquities," Culture without Context, 26, (2000) URL: http://www2.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/iarc/culturewithoutcontext/issue6/darling.htm

[429] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos, 2013.

[430] Interview with Professor Joseph Jemkur, Jos, 2013.

Our discussion of the structural assault inflicted on the Nok culture by government and other history institutions will be incomplete without reference to the attitudes of local communities who, for religious, cultural and economic reasons, have added their own strand of cultural plunder. Both Christianity and Islam, the dominant religions in the Nok culture region, frown at figural representation, which is essential to most indigenous African religions. In 1983, the local people of Dan Baure, a village west of Zaria city, informed Patrick Darling of their "exemplary" destruction of terracottas, typically regarded as fetishes.[431] This local attitude to antiquities underlie the thinking of some traditional leaders whose anathema for pre-Islamic and pre-Christian history was expressed in outright refusal to allow excavations. For example, there have been reports of many refusals by local communities to allow digging especially in the areas further south towards Suleja. And this has been frequently reported as a major impediment to mass diggings.[432]

Considering the contestations around issues to do with the mining, interpretation and preservation of such valuable historical resources, to what extent have they served to produce cultural bridges across cleavages in the nation-building process? In view of the Nok region as a moving cultural frontier that continues to "colonise" more spaces beyond the Nok Village, it has been argued that the discovery of Nok culture has obliterated the current political boundaries of Nigeria, thereby putting aside all ethnic sentiments[433] and providing the much-needed evidence of cultural intermeshing and assimilation among the various people of Nigeria. According to a leading archaeologist, Graham Connah, the style of the Nok figurines was adopted by a range of iron-using farming societies of varying cultures, disputing the claim that the Nok heritage is the[434] sole cultural patrimony of Nok people.

Archaeology furnishes history with hands-on technology and data for historical writing, though the dearth of supporting oral and written evidence compounds the temporal and spatial ruptures of the Nok findings. In an attempt to fill

---

[431] Darling, "The Rape of Nok and Kwatarkwashi: the Crisis in Nigerian Antiquities".

[432] Darling, "The Rape of Nok and Kwatarkwashi: the Crisis in Nigerian Antiquities".

[433] Akata," National Museums and nation building," 13.

[434] Graham Connah, *Forgotten Africa: an Introduction to its Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 120.

this void, historians such as A.F.C. Ryder, have compared the sculptures of Nok with those from other parts of the country and suggested, or better still, speculated that the answer to the Nok puzzle lies in the Nigeria-Benue Confluence area. However, Obayemi maintains that while reports from the Nok region suggest temporal overlap between the Nok and Ife traditions of clay figurines, the attempt at bridging the spatial rupture had been futile. He criticised the methodology of researchers in this respect, and berated the assumption that sculptural similarities noticed between Nok figures and those of Ife were tantamount to cultural unity in Nigeria. He concludes that, "this was too wide a generalisation to be true".[435] The main thrust of Obayemi's thesis on the unity of Nigeria's cultural history from the perspective of Nok culture was that "if there was any cultural diffusion at all it was around the Niger Confluence area where all the languages in Nigeria are fairly represented".[436] This archaeological approach to Niger-Benue Confluence[437] was particularistic in that he was merely looking for aspects of the cultural histories of the Middle Belt minorities. While historians and archaeologists were busy debating the meaning of the cultural objects discovered in various archaeological sites in the country, the Nigerian government was appropriating them as national heritage and representation of Nigerian history. The idea of deploying material culture as a technology for the production of national history was very central to the operation of the Nigerian history machine and its subnational variants.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that the possibility of Nok antiquities being appropriated as Nigerian or any material cultures having the capacity to manufacture a national historical consciousness is doubtful in the context of postcolonial Nigeria.[438] This point brings us to the issue of how material heritage is curated and the competing interpretations given to them by contending stakeholders.

---

[435] Ade Obayemi and Gloria Emeagwali, "Methodology in Nigerian Historiography," *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, 10, no. 3, (1980), 134.

[436] Interview with Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Abuja, 2014. Olayemi is the current President of the HSN and one of the disciples of Ade Obayemi.

[437] The term Niger-Benue Confluence is widely used in academic discourse. It is less tricky than Middle Belt because of former's association with the famous rivers Niger and Benue. See Introduction to this thesis for its meaning and usage.

[438] Ololajulo, "Whose Past?: Unity Museums, Memory Production," 2.

Seeing Nigerian Histories through National Galleries

The cultural policy of the Nigerian Federal Government particularly after the Civil War in 1970 was to have a National Museum in each of the states of the federation. The government introduced a new cultural policy of vigorous national integration. Museums of National Unity, a national pledge and National Festival for Arts and Culture (NAFEST) were initiated as postwar strategies to promote national unity. Of particular note is the National War Museum in Umuahia, established to remind Nigerians of the price they paid to achieve national unity. Today, there are around fifty museums spread across the country, with a concentration around southern Nigeria and the Middle Belt region. These museums are located in the capital cities of the states of the federation.

As instrument of knowledge production, museums have been described as "sites of persuasion" and a "way of seeing".[439] They seek to produce and superimpose their version of history and regime of truth over contending visions of the past. Reducing cultural production to a homogenized form of spectacle is a difficult social engineering, which is driven by a "desire to link, in a spiritual sense, the present generation to their predecessors". The "National Museum has as part of its agenda the representation of the nation to itself. But that view of the nation's self has to be constructed and must acknowledge or deny the diversity of the people who are contained in it". [440] In Nigeria, the credo of National Museums is "unity in diversity". While acknowledging the makers of the artifacts as great artisans who lived in a golden age, the display techniques serve to create distance between the viewer and the objects in galleries. Histories seen from the lenses of glass cases can be fascinating. But as items are removed from their sites of origin and ordered according to present symbolic standards, they are striped of their intrinsic value as animate objects. The process of consigning them to galleries ensures their transfiguration from cultural

[439] See Howard Morphy, "Sites of Persuasion: Yingapungapu at the National Museum of Australia," in *Museums and communities*: *The Politics of Public Culture*, eds. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 472; and Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution press, 1991), 1-32.

[440] Howard Morphy, "Sites of Persuasion,," 472.

property to museum objects; a shared national ancestry and cultural symbols whose historical utility is extended to all Nigerians, hence worthy of state protection and custody for posterity. The museum, as a historical institution, embodies "a site of contention where national histories and personal memories are often at odds".[441] While histories exhibited in National Museums may belong to Nigerians, the memories they evoke are deeply implicated in the politics of symbolic history. The mere act of consigning and exhibiting cultural objects in glass cabinets do not translate into a national narrative; infusing museumgoers with national consciousness through exhibition would require acceptance of the curatorial narratives on the part of the visitors. Thus, the capacity to create a mass-mediated spectacle of Nigerian history in National Museums has been doubted. According to Afigbo, the National Museums are only national because they belong to the Nigerian state, which established and runs them.[442] Since public museums are state-funded and driven by official cultural policy, they are by their nature governmental.[443] But questions around the "nationality" of museums are in themselves premised on faulty essentialist approach and the oversimplification of the complexities of the Nigerian nation. The assumption is that museums will discharge their nation-building role effectively once there is an "agreed national philosophy of history".[444] The question of nation-building and history-making is more problematic than is usually thought. It is even trickier when we ponder deeply over the essence of the notion of a national philosophy. As a byproduct of colonialism and a reflection of the crisis of postcolonial nationhood, museum practice in its essentialist and artistic premise does not translate into automatic ontological bridge to a homogenous Nigeria; it is virtually impossible to project the inconsistent and pluralistic construct of Nigeria in a straightforward exhibitionary space. For instance, whose narrative among the over two hundred discrete ethnicities of Nigeria would feature in the national galleries and, therefore,

---

[441] Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," *History and Theory* 36, no. 4, (1997), 44.

[442] Adiele Afigbo, "The Museum as Historical Record," in *The Museum and Nation Building*, 100.

[443] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibitionary Complexes," in *Museums Frictions* …, eds. Ivan Karp et al., 35.

[444] Afigbo, "The Museum as Historical Record," 100.

form the basis or thread of the curatorial story? The notion of a nationalist philosophy or an overarching museum narrative is problematic even in the context of totalitarian regimes such as former Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany where the state dictated the organization of research institutes and historiography. The inclusion and exclusion of narratives and ideas in national exhibitions is associated with hegemonic practices.

Exhibition is "a field in which the intentions of the object's producer, the exhibitor's arrangement and display of the objects, and the assumptions the museumgoer brings to the exhibit all come into play".[445] The intersection of these competing interests often generates feelings of exclusion among a range of visitors especially from the local communities where museums are sited. Thus, "people who otherwise might not worry about the content or purpose of a museum may come to care quite passionately when their expectations, based on their own experience and memory, are thwarted, and they will express those passions publicly".[446] The National Museum is envisioned as a mechanism of the history machine to manufacture a national symbolic history by aggregating disparate material cultures. Admittedly, the National Museums, in theory, struggle to sidestep explicitly provincial classificatory regimes and exclusionary practices in their exhibitions. This strategy underlies the reason why terms like Middle Belt and other regional identity markers do not feature in museum exhibitions. For museum practitioners in the National Museum Jos, for example, the Middle belt denotes a charged political term, and therefore, inappropriate as a basis for curations. The popularity the term has acquired within academy is usually associated with the writings of historians and activists who show their open solidarity with Middle Belt identity as they write ethnic histories of their local communities.[447] However, beyond the semantics of Middle Belt identity category, it is important to note that the operational framework of the National Museums is subtly implicated in identity politics and "culture wars" among local communities competing for representation. Although most representative artifacts originate from the local communities there have been many reports of local protests

[445] Ivan Karp, "Culture and Representation," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, 14.

[446] Susan Crane, "Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum," *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (1997), 48.

[447] Interview with Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, Curator Jos Museum, 2013.

against particular exhibitions by disgruntled communities who feel underrepresented. While National Museums have been established in virtually all states of the federation, the distribution of heritage resources is quite disproportionate across different national cleavages. Archaeological sites and resources in Nigeria do not correspond to the boundaries of ethnic communities. For instance, the Nok terracottas are largely housed in Jos and Kaduna museums. At the National Museum Makurdi in Benue State, the historic objects on display are mainly from communities within the state. Further down South Western Nigeria, objects from Yoruba land dominate the collections of the unity museums in Lagos and Ibadan; and since it is practically impossible to manufacture antiquities for all the discrete ethnic communities in Nigeria and have them deposited in all the National Museums across the country, museum authorities have to contrive some all-embracing exhibitionary techniques – the national galleries.

In Jos Museum, the permanent exhibition forms the nucleus of the gallery. Objects are exhibited to reflect national character with materials from most of the major ethnicities in Nigeria: the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv, Idoma, Berom, Afizere and Rukuba. There are two main archaeological displays in the permanent exhibition gallery. On entering the gallery, there is a display of the Palaeolithic period. This display is intended to trace the evolution of man's technological history from the Oldowan to Acheulian industry within the Nigerian context. The second archaeological display features Nok culture collections. In this display are representative examples of some of the best Nok pieces. Display cases are filled with sequences of artifacts each named and positioned within a supposedly unifying framework, and temporally divided into a three-age oriented phases. The official narrative of the Nok exhibition in Jos Museum emphasises and portrays the symbolic similarities between the pieces recovered from different Nok sites as a clear indication of cultural unity among the various peoples of the Nok area and beyond. The objects are placed in a legitimating context to project a linear progressive Nigerian history. According to the official guide, a visitor to the gallery cannot help but admire the striking similarities between these pieces, excavated from different Nok sites, some of which are hundreds of kilometres apart. "The phasing of evidence reveals emphasis

on technology…with the implicit categorization of peoples through the curator's perception of their technical achievements".[448]

The ethnographic materials on display show the artistic skills of various Nigerian peoples. There are carved facemasks from Igbo and Idoma communities, Benin and Ife bronze castings, Hausa and Yoruba musical instruments, Hausa and Fulani traditional dress and other materials from the Jukun peoples. The concrete realities of these exhibitions, however, reveal deep exclusionary practices, as many ethnic communities did not make it to the national gallery of the Jos Museum. This is the indispensable reality of museum displays; an internal contradiction that museums hardly acknowledge because of their commitment to institutional goals as a professional and official site of historical pedagogy.

The theme of the National Museum Kaduna is "Unity in Diversity", which, according to the curator, is premised on the notion of cultural relativism.[449] There are two main exhibitions in this museum: the gallery of Nigerian prehistory and the ethnographic gallery. The former, mounted in 1975 as part of post-war cultural strategy to foster unity among diverse Nigerian communities, runs into to the present to this date (2014). In this gallery is curated the story of man's technological achievement in Nigeria.[450] The objects of the galleries were collected from selected Nigerian communities and representation is, therefore, disproportionate. Although one cannot fail to see the paucity of artifacts in this gallery, the museum authorities envisage completing the story as more prehistoric artifacts are collected. Despite the gap in the gallery and the heterogeneity of the available artifacts, the curator of the museum asserts that such "diversity translates to equal representation". The postulation is that the diversity devours cultural and religious stereotypes when visitors from different cultural backgrounds see similarities between their culture and the cultures of other groups.[451] Yet, in practice, not all visitors see their cultures on display. Many museums receive complains about underrepresentation from

---

[448] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*: *museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 36.

[449] Interview with Jafaru Dauda, Curator National Museum Kaduna, 2013.

[450] Federal Department of Antiquities, *Guide to the National Museum Kaduna*, (nd), 1.

[451] Interview with Jafaru Dauda, Curator National Museum Kaduna, 2013.

communities who feel excluded from national galleries. This is evident in the visitors' responses in Kaduna Museum, where they complain about the absence of artifacts from many communities. Of particular interest are the impressions of the guests who felt that the minorities of the Middle Belt region are underrepresented in the galleries.[452] A visitor wrote that the "prehistory of the minorities should be brought to the galleries". As if to encourage this politics of symbolic representation, visitors were asked to fill evaluation forms in which they have to state their preference among the cultural relics on display. The survey shows that most visitors chose Nok culture as their preference.

On the surface, the motto "Unity in Diversity" embodies an interesting cliché of multicultural representation. A closer examination, however, reveals a contradiction in museum practice occasioned by two opposing practical tendencies – integration and fragmentation. While committed to the philosophy of unity in diversity, noted Curator of Kaduna Museum, "we have to be sensitive to the cultural expectations of the local people".[453] Visitors espouse their preference for one culture over another within hypothetically national or unity galleries. Notwithstanding the national thrust of the museum policy in Nigeria the concrete ways in which visitors engage curatorial styles reflect deep-rooted historical and cultural cleavages.

The collections of the National Museum Makurdi illustrate even more openly the paradox of the National Museum project. In this museum the exhibition is titled the "Lower Benue exhibition". As the theme of the exhibition suggests, both the archaeological and ethnographic sections of the museum exhibit materials belonging to the major ethnic communities in Benue State: the Tiv, Idoma and the Igede, thereby undermining the very institutional philosophy upon which the museum was founded. Artifacts are arranged around themes such as religion, agriculture, warfare and technology. And the objects displayed are ordered thematically in cabinets to portray the culture and history of the major ethnicities. In the same vein, the ethnographic exhibition represents materials from the everyday life of the three communities, such as domestic utensils and musical instruments. Notwithstanding the preponderance of local cultures in the contents of these exhibitions, a number of local visitors from Benue state within which the Makurdi museum is located observed the

[452] National Museum Kaduna, "Museum Audience Research for Adult," (nd).

[453] Interview with Jafaru Dauda, Curator National Museum Kaduna, 2013.

need for more representation of the local communities.[454] The visitors did not see the need to expand the scope of the exhibition by incorporating more objects from other Nigerian communities. The Makurdi museum seems to be operating somehow outside the display policy of the national museum project. This, according to the Curator of the museum, is due to the absence of any written mission statement around which exhibitions can be anchored. [455]

To avoid the risk of undue generalisation, it is important to underline the point that the above analysis, is not meant to simply depict the national galleries as podiums of cultural and ethnic chauvinism. There were instances in which the galleries succeeded in arousing a kind of patriotic fervour in visitors. The visitors' registers of Jos Museum show that a number of visitors were actually impressed by the display and exhibition styles. Many, impressed by the splendour of images displayed, declared to be proud Nigerians. The Jos Museum, for instance, houses a lot of fascinating collections that visitors, no matter their preconceived imaginations about Nigerian history, cannot help but admire the range of exhibitions. It is the only museum that has a transport exhibition, depicting some of the earliest mechanised vehicles used on the Plateau including Bedford kit cars and Albany lorry.

[454] National Museum, Makurdi, "Visitors Guestbook," (2014).

[455] Interview with Yashim Isa Bitiyong, Curator National Museum, Makurdi, 2013. Although laws establishing the National Commission for Museums and Monuments govern National Museums, it is not clear what she meant by the absence of "a clear written mission statement".

Picture 6: A locomotive train at the transport exhibition. The train was made in Leeds in 1908 and assembled in Nigeria in 1921.

Picture 7: A German Ford Kit car made in 1915.

The popular wing of the transport exhibition is the rebuilt section of the Bauchi Light Railway, which ran between Jos and Zaria from 1914 to 1957 when it closed, and the remnants were deposited at the Museum. In addition to this, there is a three hundred yard section of track, a shunting engine, a locomotive with two coaches and several inspection and track-laying vehicles. Although these objects represent an aspect of colonial power and technology, which facilitated regular capitalist exploitation, they are nonetheless deployed as a crucial social technology of the

Nigerian history machine and in projecting the foundations of modern Nigeria, being a colonial construction. This is not implying that nations, which emerged beneath the ruins of colonial contradictions, are less authentic or somehow phony inventions. All nations are imagined political communities that should be distinguished based on the style in which they are imagined rather than the fallacy of their cosmic and ontological claims. [456] The history machine has been one of the conventional technologies with which modern nations are visualized and articulated.

Visiting Museums in a Climate of Conflict

As earlier alluded to, museumgoing is not a "ritual of citizenship" in Nigeria. A survey of visitors' patronage conducted in Jos Museum reveals that foreigners and students of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions constitute the main visitors. [457] The majority of the people in the countryside are ignorant about the presence and role of the museum as a history institution. Even town dwellers have proved difficult to convince about the importance of the museum. Most visitors to Jos Museum, both adult and children, patronize the zoo unit of the exhibition more than the archaeological and ethnographic galleries, which reinforce the view of museums as sites of amusement. For example, while the zoo section recorded the highest number of visitors, reaching 496,164 between 1997 and 2002, the archaeological and ethnographic galleries attracted 274,031 visitors. Generally, the peak period of visitor turnout is usually during festivities like Eid and Christmas celebrations.

[456] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

[457] Interview with Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, Curator Jos Museum, 2013.

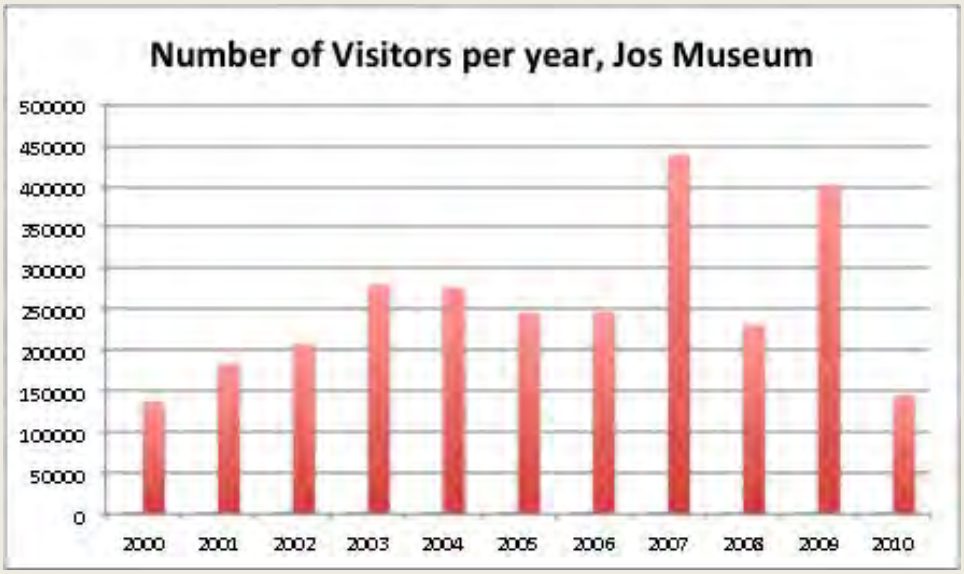


Figure 5: Number of vistors per annum, Jos Museum

The rate of turnout shows a steady rise in the number of visitors from 79,772 in 1997 to 137,551 in 2000. By 2008, the figure had risen to 231,003. It is ironic, that the rising tide of museumgoing in Jos coincided with the eruption of incessant conflicts in the State between 2001 and 2010. However, as the above chart shows, the highest visitor turnout was in 2007 and 2009, during which there were sporadic outbreaks with few casualties. In the period of serious violent conflicts and casualties, 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2010 the museum recorded fewer visitors.[458]

In response to poor patronage, especially by the natives of Plateau State, the then curator of Jos museum, Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, initiated a mass public sensitization campaign intended to educate the general public about the activities of the museum and their importance to cultural and historical patrimony. A team of researchers, comprising of historians, ethnographers, archaeologist and heritage officers was in effect constituted. In order to reach out to different local communities within Plateau State, local craftsmen and community leaders were incorporated into the team. This was followed up with courtesy calls to those communities as a gesture of cultural solidarity. The outreach project covered communities in the Northern part of Plateau State: Bassa, Jos North, Jos South and Jos East Local governments. According to Carolyn:

[458] National Museum Jos, "Visitors Guestbook," 1985-2012.

> During our outreach to local communities, one of the reasons they gave for their distance from the museum was that they felt the museum was featuring materials from places other than their own communities. We discovered that very few collections from the local areas were on display, even though we had some collections in stock. They also felt that the Jos museum was a foreign institution, hosting only foreigners. From this evaluation, it was discovered that the people who were supposed to be the direct beneficiaries of the museum were not patronizing. [459]

The attitude of the local people to the Jos Museum is a reflection of not only the level of consciousness or education about the activities of the museum, but also representational politics among local communities. In order to enlist their support and encourage them to surrender artifacts and ethnographic objects in their possession, the natives were made to understand the negative implications of the "invisibility" of materials from their communities on the representation of their cultural history. "History is passing you by!" were the instructive words of the museum officials. The locals were introduced to the museum as a place that serves to preserve their history and cultural heritage. In this way, their consciousness was awakened and they started, on their own, to collect artifacts and donate to the museum in order to register their historical presence. [460] One of the effects of the public enlightenment campaign was the scramble for representational spaces by the local communities some of which went to the extent of building replicas of their traditional architecture and donating videos of cultural festivals. The official narrative is that these cultures and histories are going extinct, because the local communities have no institutional and professional capacity to preserve and conserve their own heritage materials.

Although formal education in history or cultural studies may reinforce critical engagement with museums, they are not preconditions for patronizing as well as protesting museum exhibitions. Communities engage with museums in ways that do not necessarily depend on formal education. Practices of removing artifacts from their original spaces and displaying them in museums estrange local communities by obliterating communal authority over provenance. However, local people are not

[459] Interview with Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, Curator National Museum Jos, 2013.

[460] Interview with Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, Curator National Museum Jos, 2013

wholly precluded from contesting or reclaiming ownership of the materials.[461] The friction between local communities and the museum, as noted earlier, is not simply around the meanings that exhibitions seek to produce, but also over the ownership of cultural property. In the absence of a critical engagement between museumgoers and curatorial narratives in Nigeria, museum exhibitions tend to be driven by impressionistic rather than functional pedagogy. This aesthetic approach to display concentrates on the so-called "unique craft works" or "master pieces of art", thereby excluding other works lacking "artistic appeal". Therefore, the technique of historical production at the level of museums ignores as much as it incorporates material cultures in their display.

Histories on the Margins of National Galleries: the Quest for Minority Museums

With the rise in 1980s and 1990s of multiculturalism as a philosophy of inter-cultural governance, there was a new impetus for museums to try and listen to minority voices. However, the practice of "locking people in rigid identities" has been critiqued as a denial of the "dynamic and agentic dimension of identity construction".[462] In Nigeria, for instance, the politics of marginality is a very complex one, reflecting the typical incongruities of a multi-cultural society. Given the multiplicity of ethnic composition, as obtained in other heterogeneous societies, it has been practically impossible to collect, frame and relay the cultural symbols of the various ethnic communities as a microcosm of Nigerian history in national galleries. In a country with over 160 million people and more than 250 ethnicities,[463] most of the micro ethnicities are barely visible in the national galleries. And since the conventional wisdom of museum practice discourages the rise of ethnic museums in

[461] For example, visitors usually complain about the prohibition of photographing the antiquities on display.

[462] Caroline Howarth and Eleni Andreouli, "Has multiculturalism failed? The importance of lay knowledge and everyday practice," Available at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/socialPsychology/faculty/caroline_howarth/Howarth-and-Andreouli-paper-FINAL.pdf

[463] Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact book*, Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html

Nigeria, a number of the so-called ethnic minorities have for long remained on the margins of national galleries.

It will be unfair to say that all Middle Belt minorities were excluded in the construction of Nigerian museums.[464] Visibility largely depends on the context and geographies of exhibitions. There are communities, defined as minorities in public discourse that are, in fact, majorities in their localities. And some communities enjoying majority status and privileges in other local contexts could be regarded as minorities in broader contexts. For example, all the artifacts in the national gallery of Makurdi Museum comes from the Tiv, Idoma and Igede people of Benue State. The Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon ethnic communities are invisible within the "national" gallery. On the whole, a number of the so-called "majority" communities in the context of Middle Belt identity politics enjoy a position of pre-eminence in the National Museums in Jos, Kaduna and Makurdi.[465] And taking the argument that Nok culture is a "minority culture" into consideration, it will be difficult to defend the position that minorities are excluded in National Museum galleries.

Owing to the importance attached to Nok antiquities in Nigerian history, and perhaps also in a spirit of cultural appeasement to local feelings, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments established a museum in Nok village in 2003.[466] As a modest museum, the main exhibition includes: an archaeological gallery; a shrine; a cave; and the house of Bernard Fagg, the colonial bureaucrat who initiated the idea of the Jos Museum and the preservation of the Nok heritage. Although officially conceived as national in outlook, the Nok Museum project was

[464] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Makurdi, 2013.

[465] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Makurdi, 2013. The early proponents of the museum idea in Nigeria particularly during the colonial period were not politically inclined. For one, they were not Nigerians. They were mostly professionals interested in exotic arts. In Benin, "what may be appropriately reckoned as evidence of the detachment of these works from the Nigerian reality is the reaction of a Benin monarch to the return of four Benin pieces of antiquity bought back at Sotheby's in 1980. The king had expressed his frustration at having the art works kept in Lagos, the former Federal capital, instead of Benin City, their original homes thereby implicating popular imagination of the works being Benin rather than Nigerian". See, Ololajulo, "Whose past?: Unity museums, memory production," 4

[466] In 2006 the Kaduna State Government earmarked 20.8 million naira for the development of the Nok Archaeological Museum in Jaba Local Government Area.

interpreted and appropriated by the Nok community as a historical landmark in their quest for self-actualization.[467] The people have always regarded themselves as an ethno-cultural community of culture and great antiquity. It is not surprising, therefore, to see how, in 2004, the Museum marked the International Museum Day with a huge public turnout, involving participants such as traditional chiefs; government functionaries; and members of the academy; students; traders; and farmers from various parts of Southern Kaduna. In his keynote address, the Chairman of the occasion, Inuwa Zom Kassim, noted that the "Nok Museum, though belated in its establishment and recognition by the Federal Government is nevertheless a worthwhile venture".[468] The Head of the History Department, Kaduna State College of Education, Gidan-Waya saw the occasion as a forum for a "multidisciplinary approach" to the study and preservation of cultural heritage. He appealed to the Federal Government for an increase in the budgetary allocation to Museum in order to help it perform its function of building bridges across cultures.[469] During the second year of its existence, the rate of visitors to the Nok Museum stood at 210 people for the whole year; and most of the visitors came from the Middle Belt communities of Jos, Nasarawa, Kwoi, Kafanchan and the people of the surrounding villages of Nok. These were mostly students from tertiary institutions such as College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State and Nasarawa State University, Keffi.[470]

Notwithstanding the huge number of ethnicities, broadly regarded as minorities, the institutional framework of museum practice in Nigeria generally inhibits the possibility of the rise of ethnic museum projects on a large-scale. It is for this reason that, unlike in other national contexts such as China and Australia for example, ethnic museums whose philosophy and practice is anchored on the projection of ethnic minorities' identities do not exist in Nigeria; perhaps with the exception of a recent case where some prominent and wealthy Middle Belt

[467] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter* 5, no. 1 (2005), 32.

[468] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter* 5, no. 1, 32-33.

[469] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter* 5, no. 1, 33. One of the problems of the Nok Museum from its inception was that the Head of the Education Unit, responsible for guiding and explaining the meanings of artifacts, was new in the industry and not proficient in the local language of the natives.

[470] National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Annual Report* (2004).

intelligentsia commissioned a local museum project in Langtang Local Government of Plateau State in 2013. A sum of 15 million Naira was generously donated by ex-military Generals of Middle Belt extraction like T.Y. Danjuma for the construction of the Tarok cultural museum under the aegis of Tarok cultural organization, Ngwang Ishi O'Tarok.[471] The project, according to Tarok elites, was meant to encourage the development of the Tarok community not just in physical infrastructure but also in the production of knowledge on the peoples' history and culture.[472] Thus, the utility of an autonomous history machine for the making of minority histories is also being increasingly recognized in the Middle Belt region.

The recent explosion of heritage politics in the Middle Belt might not be unconnected with the escalation of ethno-religious conflicts in the region. Museum exhibitions and narratives claim a particular worldview, which "order" objects in ways that would inculcate particular ways of seeing and being and enlighten visitors about the symbolic meanings of the histories being told through the galleries. Yet, visitors do not go to museums with empty minds. Their knowledge bases (preconceived ideas and historical imaginations) are often at variance with the institutional histories that the museums are supposed to articulate. [473]

Since national "exhibitions deliberately highlight continuities across cultures, showing, for example, similarities in pottery made by different ethnic groups",[474] there has been a trend towards re-imagining identities and a struggle for curatorial visibility and representation among local communities in Jos museum. In the production of this linear continuity across discrete material cultures, artifacts that do not fit well into the narrative framework are, therefore, side-lined. Where there is no fitting framework, the similarities of these discrete materials are emphasized to engineer a sort of cultural continuity.

---

[471] "IBB, Danjuma donate to Tarok Museum Project.," *Daily Trust* August 24 (2013).

[472] "IBB, Danjuma donate to Tarok Museum Project". The number of books appearing on Tarok history by "amateur" historians, usually ex-military officers, has increased tremendously relative to other ethnicities in Plateau State.

[473] Corrine A. Kratz and Ivan Karp, "Museum Frictions: A Project History," in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* eds. Ivan Karp *et al*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 3-17.

[474] Karp, Introduction to *Museums and communities*, 3.

The contest for symbolic representation among the minority ethnicities is also visible in the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA)[475] section of the Jos Museum. MOTNA is a magnificent open-air exhibition complex where some of the finest traditional architectures of some selected Nigerian communities have been recreated. Some of these replicas include: the Rukuba Compound; Afizere Compound; Tiv Compound; the Iregwe Compound; Mbari House; Kano City Wall; Katsina Palace and Zaria and Ilorin Mosques. The philosophy of the MOTNA project is that acquaintance with the glories of Nigerian architectural heritage would "liberate" visitors from inferiority with respect to foreign achievements in the field of the built environment. Naturally, most of the local communities in Jos and even more from other parts of the country are not represented in this appealing exhibition. Some of the local communities in Jos such as Anaguta and Langtang, whose ethnic architecture are not re-enacted, have been crying marginalization as well. Even the Berom, considered as politically powerful in Plateau State, has only recently secured permission from the museum's commission to erect a replica of their traditional compound in MOTNA.[476]

[475] The MOTNA is designed by a Polish architect professor Z.R. Dmochowski, was commissioned in 1983.

[476] Interview with Musa Usman, Education Officer, Jos Museum, Jos 2013.

Picture 8: The Afizere Compound in MOTNA.

The museum component of the Nigerian history machine, despite its structural defects, maintains its regime of cultural appropriation and processing of ethnic minority histories. But marginal histories have a kind of internal mechanism for survival through practices such as orality and cultural performances.[477] In the particular case of the Middle Belt communities, the National Museum Jos provides a good case of the meeting of performative local histories and national exhibitions; a site where contested visions of the pasts are reenacted.

Even the siting of museums and declaration of national monuments in Nigeria has often generated tension among stakeholders of the Nigerian history machine. In 1986, Ade Obayemi succeeded Ekpo Eyo, as the Director of the museum commission. The former was reported to have attempted to site two training schools, School of Museology and the Centre for Field Archaeology in his hometown, Ife-ijumu, in present Kogi State. Some members of the commission's governing board kicked against the idea. A committee was set up to assess the significance of the site and report back to the commission. Eventually, the School of Museology was sited in Jos in 1990 and the Centre for Field Archaeology, which had earlier commenced operation in Ife-Ijumu in 1990, was moved to Jos in 1992.[478] By 1993, the two schools were merged together to become the Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies. The institute has been the nucleus for museum training in Nigeria, albeit offering only a postgraduate diploma in Archaeology and Museum Studies.

Performing Middle Belt Histories

On the 6th of May 2014, residents of Jos in the Middle Belt region spurned the forces of ethno-religious violence, which had befallen the city for years, to celebrate their

[477] Due to the growing awareness among the minorities about the erosion of their cultural heritage the politics of place naming and culture has remained a concomitant feature of the Middle Belt narrative of "emancipation" and cultural nationalism. Communities' place names as well as names of ethnicities in the Middle Belt are being changed from their Hausa derivation to indigenous names.

[478] Sola Inuejulawo, "The Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Jos," *National Commissions for Museums and Monuments Newsletter* 1, nos. 9 & 10, (1995), 20.

culture and their history. Various ethnicities turned out in their traditional gears, performing their respective cultural histories on the streets of Jos. Berom youths appeared with their bows and arrows, quivers and charm pouches. The Afizere group flaunted their cultural regalia. While the Tiv from Benue State performed in their traditional black and white colors, the Afizere, Anaguta, Angas, Berom, Idoma, Igala, Irigwe, and the Tarok communities also appeared in their traditional colors. Some of them were clad in animal skin – a performative act showcasing their hunting exploits, and others wielded spears and arrows to reenact their pre-colonial military prowess. Applauding and photographing the varieties of cultural performances were tourists and spectators.[479] This was on the occasion of International Museum Day, which is set aside for the celebration of museums and their engagements within the public sphere. From the streets of Jos city these historical performances are taken to Jos Museum[480] where different Middle Belt communities mark the museum Day with a series of festive performances.

The foregoing story represents a typical example of the production of marginal histories through cultural performance and the deployment of symbolic systems as opposed to institutionalized presentation of history in schools and museums. The performative reading of humanities and social sciences allows us to see different human activities within the purview of performance. Richard Schechner in his seminal work *Performative Theory* views performance broadly as any activity that "can take place anywhere, under a wide variety of circumstances, and in the service of incredibly diverse panoply of objectives".[481] Thus, "when individuals or groups express or embody or interpret or repeat a script about the past, they galvanize the ties that bind groups together and deposit additional memory traces about the past in their

[479] Yusufu Aminu Idegu, "Jos Cultural Feast defies Security," *The Nation*, May 27 (2014) Available at: http://thenationonlineng.net/new/jos-cultural-feast-defies-insecurity/

[480] Apart from exhibiting cultures, National Museums have become "event producing" institutions, which range from public programs such as seminars and symposia. Between 1995 and 2008 the Jos Museum has organised three seminars where academic professionals presented talks on different aspects of museum practice especially around the role of museums in nation building.

[481] Richard Schechner, *Performative Theory*, (London: Routledge, 1988), x.

own minds".[482] In this light, historical writing is not the only way through which Middle Belt ideas are produced and reproduced. The Middle Belt communities are now taking to annual cultural festivals as a way of sustaining and reviving their historical and cultural heritage.[483] Through practices such as dances and rituals, ethnic communities reproduce their local histories through what has been rather derogatorily described as "fetish archives".[484] The rituals serve as alternative histories to "bureaucratic memory"[485] and institutionalized historical production that is at the core of the Nigerian history machine. In other words, "unofficial" histories produced by non-state actors of historical production such as families and ethnic associations are often at variance with versions of the past manufactured in museums, heritage sites and history departments. To be sure, the boundaries between "official" and "unofficial" histories are not always clear.

In Plateau State, there is a rich tradition of performative history among the local people. The *Punsung* Annual Cultural Festival among the Ngas is a good case of the deployment of cultural symbols in the activation of the past. During this festival, exhibitions of locally made items, magic displays, a cultural march, and traditional dances are conducted.[486] Among the Berom the great festivals began at Riyom, and moved in an orderly manner from one community to the next. The Rukuba, Irigwe and their neighbors invited each other to their hunting festivals and septennial dances.[487] Although these communities differ in their histories and cultures, the

---

[482] *Performing the Past: History, Memory and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds. Karyn Tilmas et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 12.

[483] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos 2013. Goshit notes: "it is a process of cultural redefinition. We are all proud of ourselves, and our cultures, no matter how small an ethnic group is. We are people with an identity and we want to continue to pass these on to generations. So we want to document it either in print media, electronic media or in books. And I saw something that amazed me. We have young boys who are Ngas musicians producing music purely in Ngas language. And UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism are supporting us".

[484] *Activating the Past: History and Memory in the Black Atlantic World*, eds. Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), xv.

[485] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria," 3.

[486] Anthony Goyol and Elisha, Dimka, *Pusdung: Ngas Festival of Arts and Culture*, (1999) Jos, 22.

[487] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," xxx.

festivals operate as a bridge for uniting families and communities, institutionalizing the values of traditional society,[488] and ultimately engendering a kind of shared past, thereby reinforcing the Middle belt minority consciousness and fraternity.

The escalation of hostilities between so-called natives and Hausa-Fulani community, particularly around settler/indigene and religious cleavages in Jos, all the more so complicates the role of the museum institution as a site of Nigerian history. In fact, the possibility of mounting an exhibition portraying Islam and Hausa-Fulani cultural heritage has been doubted by a prominent Nigerian museum historian, Silas Okita.[489] His postulation is that current exhibitions in museums located in the Middle Belt especially Jos do not highlight Hausa-Fulani contributions. Okita assumes that if there is something like that, the museum could be set ablaze by disgruntled locals in Jos. [490] In somewhat vindication of the fears expressed by Okita, the Jos Museum has recently concluded plans to close its national exhibition largely as a response to the dynamics of identity politics. A new exhibition titled "Echoes from the Plateau" was conceived according to the Curator, Jos Museum, as a response to two major issues. Firstly, Jos and other parts of Plateau State have, for long, been perceived as spaces for negative media publicity. Secondly, the museum has recognized the desire to take into consideration local feelings since most of the collections come from the vicinity of the Plateau State. It is envisioned that the new shift from national to local context would help in correcting the negative images of violence; projecting echoes of celebration, dances and music; and particularly bring the local people to the center stage of the exhibitions.[491]

In broader terms of Middle Belt politics, the National Museum in Jos has been a site of deep-seated contestations around religious histories. While the attitudes and expectations of museum visitors are usually taken for granted by museum officials, it is pertinent to note that visitors behaviour and reactions to displays is part of the exhibition process because they bring their own biases and make choices concerning

[488] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," xxxi.

[489] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Benue, 2013.

[490] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Benue, 2013.

[491] Interview with Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, Curator Jos Museum, 2013. Due to shortage of funds, however, the new exhibition is yet to take off.

what they view and how they interpretive them.[492] This is particularly the case with a group of Christian missionaries who, on encountering a gallery of religion in which the Quran and Bible are put side by side with traditional objects of worship from the local communities, outrightly rejected the official exhibition narrative. For the missionaries, it was a taboo to put traditional fetishes on par with Christianity. The museum guide, however, contended that the exhibition is simply designed to showcase the religious beliefs of the local people, insisting that the meanings the visitors give to the objects did not matter as along as these are treasured as sacred symbols of the religions they embody.[493]

The politics of symbolic history is also clearly evident if we consider visitors' comments between 1986 and 1989. A number of visitors mainly from Middle Belt communities vented their dismay at what they perceived as the "dominance" of Islamic symbolism in Jos Museum. The guestbook are replete with contestations against perceived bias against Christianity. The main opposition is premised on the visibility of replicas of the ancient Zaria and Ilorin mosques in MOTNA. For example, in 1985 three visitors from the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), Jos branch succinctly wrote, in rather poetic terms, "spread of Islam", "Fulanis" and "Jihad" [494] respectively on the remark column. These three adjectives together epitomize a sort of cultural and religious spectre for the non-Muslim areas of Middle Belt, which animates memories of the 19th Century Sokoto Jihad. Another visitor from Jos alleges that the museum is propagating Islam. In similar parlance, some visitors from the Apostolic Church in Jos posed some questions thus: is Christianity not a religion? Is this an attempt to justify Nigeria's admission into the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference)? Why is it that there are only mosque replicas, how about churches? Other visitors suggested, "Christianity should not be left out" of the exhibition. In his study of the politics of history in northern Nigeria, Neil Kastfelt describes this "paranoid historical thought" as "a conflict model of history in which the driving force, or the leading motif, or the grand design, is a

[492] Stephenie Moser, "The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge," in *Museum Anthropology* 33, 1, (2010), 28.

[493] Field Observation, Jos Museum, April 2013.

[494] National Museum Jos, "Visitors Book," 1985. These are detailed official records showing visitors names, nationalities, addresses and remarks.

confrontation between Fulani/Hausa and Bachama, and between Christians and Muslims".[495] The paranoia of Islam and the Hausa-Fulani communities in the Middle Belt is, therefore, carried into the museum from history texts, archives and other institutions of the history machine. The difference between the struggle for archives and museums is that the former is documentary and the latter is symbolic.

The fear of Muslim Hausa-Fulani coupled with the fact that the Jos Museum houses some of the oldest Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria, could explain this behind the scenes "museo-religious politics". The Jos Museum collection comprises of 1,500 manuscripts, written in not only Arabic but in Hausa and Fulani languages, the Ajami scripts.[496] However, the guestbooks do not particularly indicate resentment against Arabic manuscript heritage. The regular visitors to the museum hardly visit the library section to see the manuscripts. The paradox, however, is that while comments by disgruntled visitors may reflect their encounter with and impression of Islamic symbolism at the Jos Museum, it is pertinent to note that any attempt at removing these manuscripts from the museum to Arewa House would not be taken lightly by the Jos community. The evidence for this could be seen in the reactions of some Middle Belt intellectuals to a recent move to transfer the manuscripts to Arewa House in Kaduna. They are concerned about losing some of the best treasures in the collections of Jos Museum. The presence of the manuscripts in the museum has certainly been one of the reasons for its fame, among historians, as a "library" housing some of the highly valued primary sources of the pre-colonial history of northern Nigeria. On the part of the museum authority, the cost of relinquishing custody of such intellectual heritage could mean a reduction in scholarly patronage especially among historians.[497] Studies in cultural anthropology have shown us that material objects posses some forms of sociality. The objects of museum display, as cultural commodities, have their own "social life", to borrow Arjun's Appadurai's neologism. "They are the stuff of material culture which unites archaeologists with

[495] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History in northern Nigeria," 14.

[496] Salisu Bala, "A Short Description of the Jos Museum Collection of Arabic Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria,,"*Annual Review of Islam*, no. 11, (2012), 85.

[497] Some museum officials in Jos told this author that there is an attempt by some influential people from the north of Nigeria to move the manuscripts to Arewa House archives in Kaduna. The present condition of the manuscripts is to say the least dilapidated[497] and there are alleged attempts at removing them from Jos Museum.

several other kinds of cultural anthropologist,"[498] including particularly historians. When museumgoers "find that their memories of the past or their expectations for museum experiences are not being met, a kind of "distortion" occurs. The "distortion" related to memory and history in the museum is not so much of facts or interpretations, but rather a distortion from the lack of congruity between personal experience and expectation, on the one hand, and the institutional representation of the past on the other".[499]

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that most visitors who seemed to agree with the display content and style of exhibitions in Jos Museum were Muslims. They flaunted a euphoric appreciation over the presence of two replicas of the ancient mosques of Zaria and Ilorin, Katsina Palace and Kano city wall, the same images interpreted by the non-Muslims visitors as a visual re-enactment and commemoration of Islam and Hausa-Fulani politico-cultural practices. The politics of symbolic history, however, is not exclusive to Muslim-Christian contestations. At times, it reflects wider regional and ethnic cleavages in northern Nigeria. For example, one visitor from Borno was apparently disappointed over the inadequate attention paid to "the rich cultural and Islamic heritage of Borno".

The making of a national historical narrative is deeply problematic, especially where the epistemic linkages between institutions of the history machine are weak. The National Museum project, as we have seen in chapter one, emerged as part of the Nigerian history project. Therefore, the museums have been profoundly affected by the crisis that engulfed the Nigerian history machine. Although the National Museums have their own commission (NCMM), which coordinates archaeological researches, museums and regulates heritage sites with autonomous budgetary allocation from the Federal Government, they share some fundamental problems of poor funding and inadequate staffing alongside archives and history departments. But the National Archives, still under the tutelage of the Federal Ministry of Information, are worst hit by the break down of the history machine. In addition to theft and deterioration of documents due to poor conservation techniques, there is a general apathy among

[498] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1-5.

[499] Crane, "Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum," 44.

archivists as a result of poor remuneration and incentives. Nonetheless the National Archives have closer links with historians and History Departments than the National Museums. The obsession with textuality over materiality is still very profound among professional Nigerian historians. Although, aspects of Nigerian archaeology and material cultures are taught in History Departments, these do not go beyond textual and theoretical analyses of the artifacts. Very few teachers of history use materials from the National Museums as teaching aids in Nigerian history courses.

Conclusion

That the National Museum, as the "visual wing" of the Nigerian history machine, which produces physical images of the past, is overloaded with too many disparate material cultures is undeniable. It has to process Nok, Ife, Igbo Ukwu and other art cultures from different Nigerian communities into a coherent visual history of the nation. This is no less an easy epistemological operation. As a result, the National Museum represents a "messy" confluence where ethnic identities meet national imagination; a tension between a strong commitment to cultural unity and a strong commitment to cultural diversity. The National Museum constitutes a process of knowledge production that relies on cultural appropriation of discrete cultural symbols to produce national historical consciousness. Nonetheless the politics of and competing symbolic histories have frequently unsettled these institutional goals and practices. Although museum-going is not considered as a ritual of citizenship, there is a rising trend of patronage in spite of the conflict situation in Jos, associated with an interesting micro-politics that is happening in the background of national galleries. Despite the epistemic resilience of ethnic minority histories in the Middle Belt, the institutional power of the National Museums, through the mechanism of heritage and cultural governance (National Commission for Museums and Monuments) forecloses a mass movement for Middle Belt-inspired museums. All artifacts, regardless of provenance, officially belong to the Nigerian state, which regulates their collection and documentation. The cases of Jos, Kaduna and Makurdi museums show that the practice of communicating Nigerian history through museum displays is deeply problematic due to the incidence of identity politics.

Despite the problems associated with the production of history in Nigeria, the government is still left with the responsibility of fuelling the history machine. The

institutions of history in Nigeria, such as National Museums, History Departments and National Archives, still rely heavily on government subventions to function. Attempts by the Historical Society of Nigeria to attract other stakeholders, especially from the private sector to invest in historical production have not yielded any positive result. Notwithstanding the operational ruptures of the history machine, one critical sector of the knowledge production industry that fuels the textual production of the Middle Belt historiography have been publishers and printers of varying shades.

Chapter Six

Publishers, Printers and the Expansion of Middle Belt Historiography

Introduction

The making of history as a discipline, especially academic historical writing, is inextricably tied to publishing. Monographs, edited collections, scholarly journals are the tangible materials that build up a discipline and field; these are the materials that are crucial for the working of the machine that is the discipline of history. Moving the pendulum of the Nigerian history machine from museum to publishing, this chapter focuses on the role of publishers and printers in the making of Middle Belt historiography. Although publishers, unlike historians or museum curators, are not trained to write history, and may not necessarily be directly involved in historical interpretation, practices associated with publishing and printing have close links to the Nigerian history machine. Even institutions such as museums and heritage sites which have activities that depend less on publishing, and more on excavation and curation of archaeological artifacts may not function effectively without affiliating with printers and other publishing professionals.

This chapter focuses not only on scholarly publishing, but also on the linkages between amateur histories, journalistic writings and historical discourse. To be sure, we cannot afford to downplay the significance of historical writings by both academic and "amateur" historians in historicizing the Middle Belt discourse; notwithstanding the fact that their influence on the public sphere, relative to popular print, for example, is usually limited to the academic community of readers in universities, and the public only on rare occasions.[500]

[500] The history of popular press in Nigeria has shown that the industry has been less prone to the dictates of professionalism. They sensationalize history, which play a role in fanning the embers of primordial cleavages, and sometimes even remotely instigating communal violence.

Within the assemblage of the Nigerian history machine, the publishing industry serves as the lifeline of academic and popular history. It is publishing, for example, which mechanically processes and transmits ideas into books, journals, newspapers and magazines. As a mechanically driven process, thus, it powers the textual construction of historical knowledge by converting thoughts into physical objects of reading. When ideas are transmitted into books, journals and newspapers, they are infused with a kind of discursive fixity and transmuted into an immutable textual template for historical discourse. Like other mediums of historical communication, the book, at least in its printed format, is not the sole product of the writer. Roger Stoddard reminds us that, "books are not written at all. They are manufactured by scribes and other artisans, by mechanics and other engineers and by printing and other machines". [501] Our interpretation of Middle Belt historiography here underscores the primacy of publishing as the "real/concrete" "authorial textual technology" in the making history. If, as shown in the previous chapters, how National Archives and National Museum practices foreclose the possibilities of the making of minority archives and museums in Middle Belt communities, it could be argued that the emergence of professional and commercial publishing industry presented opportunities for the making and wider transmission of Middle Belt historiography.

This chapter examines the making of the Middle Belt historiography in the context of a regime of multiple publishing and printing trends and transitions. It opens with a history of publishing in northern Nigeria; examines the advent of book publishing in the Middle belt; the role of the so-called vanity press and amateur historians; and concludes with an appraisal of the role of print media/journalism in sensationalizing Middle Belt historiography.

Origins of the Publishing Industry

In order to the properly understand the role of the publishing industry in the production of Middle Belt historiography we have to revisit the origins of the book in northern Nigeria. Our approach here is not so much of a content analysis of history books. Rather, we are concerned more with tracking the dynamics of the publishing

[501] Roger E. Stoddard, "Morphology and the Book from an American Perspective," *Printing History* 9, no. 1 (1987), 9.

and printing wing of the history machine with a view to contextualizing the question of unequal access to publication between the Middle Belt and Muslim Northern Nigeria.

The history of print in the part of West Africa that is today Nigeria dates back to the 19th century when Christian Missionaries introduced printing presses in Lagos, Ibadan and Calabar. Although, the production of books in the northern part of Nigeria predates colonialism, available evidence suggests that printed books were firstly imported during the pre-colonial era.[502] Popular texts were mainly handwritten in Arabic script either as straightforward Arabic texts or Hausa and Fulfulde in Arabic script (Ajami). There was what is aptly described as "script-mercantilism" as opposed to "print-capitalism" in pre-colonial Muslim of Northern Nigeria.[503]

Conversely, there is no indication at the moment that either a book or manuscript tradition existed among Middle Belt societies in pre-colonial Nigeria. For example, there is no evidence of a local manuscript heritage from the indigenous communities of Plateau and Benue despite their spatial proximity to the Sokoto Caliphate. Apart from the oral traditions, collected by local historians in the late 1970s, sources of pre-colonial histories of these communities, as we saw in chapter two, largely derived from the writings of Islamic historians (particularly for the Plateau axis), European travellers' accounts and colonial ethnographic and anthropological writings.[504]

The colonial period saw the influx of books in Arabic and English,[505] and most importantly, the publication of colonial ethnographic and anthropological surveys, which set the phase for the incorporation of local histories into the universe of western hegemonic knowledge production.[506] This, coupled with intensive bible

[502] Murray Last, "The Book in Sokoto Caliphate," in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, eds. Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane B. Diagne (Cape Town: HRSC Press, 2008), 135-163.

[503] Last, "The Book in Sokoto Caliphate," 183.

[504] See chapter two of this dissertation.

[505] Last, "The Book in Sokoto Caliphate," 180.

[506] These literature, however, treat the non-Muslim communities of Middle Belt either as appendages of the Sokoto Caliphate or as an isolated "primitive pagan" communities, inimical to the civilization. The works by colonial anthropologists and missionaries were published outside Nigeria mainly by publishing houses in London. See chapter two for details on this.

translation into local languages by the Missions, resulted in the anthropological/ethnographic phase of Middle Belt historiography as well as the rise of vernacular Christian literature. [507]

With grants from the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, on the recommendation of the British Colonial Social Science Research Council in 1945, an intensive ethnographic project was launched for Africa. This was aimed at providing, in readily comprehensible form, an outline of available knowledge concerning the location, environment, economy, social systems, religion and political organizations of local communities under British colonial rule. A number of research institutions in Europe and Africa as well as anthropologists were incorporated to supervise the research.[508] The result was the publication of several books on the ethnic minorities of Middle Belt such as *Pagan Peoples of the Central Area of Northern Nigeria*; *People of the Middle Nigeria Region of Northern Nigeria*; *Peoples of the Plateau Area of Northern Nigeria*. [509] In this colonial ethnographic enterprise, the Tiv, Idoma, Igala and Nupe received more coverage compared to the smaller cultural and linguistic groups. For example, micro ethnicities such as Agatu, Akpa, and Etulo in Benue on the one hand, and Amo, Chen and Firan in Plateau on the other, were only covered in detailed information in the field reports of colonial administrative officers, "prepared especially during the I920s and 1930s in connection with local administrative organizations, and these have served as the basis for the partial ethnographic surveys

---

[507] For a discussion on how Christian missionary translation project influenced the Bachama community of the Middle Belt, see Neils Kastfelt, "The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria," 5.

[508] Laura and Paul Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, (London: International African Institute, 1969), v.

[509] Other examples of this anthropological literature on the Middle Belt areas are: *Akiga Sai, Akiga's Story*: *the Tiv Tribe as seen by one of its Members* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939); R.C. Abraham, *The Tiv People* (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1940); R.C. Abraham, *Dictionary of the Tiv Language* (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1940); Paul Bohannan, *Tiv Farm and Settlement* (London: 1954); Daryll Forde, *Peoples of the Plateau Area of Northern Nigeria Part 7* (London: International African Institute, 1956). See also Tambo's article, "The Hill Refugees," 210. The printed colonial administrative records: Registers; Intelligence Books; Dispatches; Judicial Books, Letters' Books, Minute Books, Books of Account and Diaries form the bulk of the current repository of National Archives Kaduna.

of the area".[510] However, apart from the colonial gazettes, which were printed locally by government presses, all the scholarly books on Middle Belt during this period period were produced by colonial institutions and foreign publishers such as the International African Institute, Oxford University Press, and the Crown Agents for the Colonies.

The first phase of local publishing began in Kano in 1910 with the production of primary school texts for children from all the Northern emirates. This process was accelerated by the introduction of modern lithography as a technology for book production. In 1930, a colonial Translation Bureau (later renamed Literature Bureau) in Zaria was founded with the mandate of producing schoolbooks in the Hausa language. By 1945, the Literature Bureau was transformed into a government publishing institution known as Gaskiya Corporation. The idea behind this publishing company was to create a publishing space for the production of vernacular histories as well as train Nigerians in the art of writing, editing, binding, printing and marketing of books. In addition to book production, Gaskiya published a vernacular newspaper in Hausa language, *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* (translated as "truth is worth more than a penny"). Despite the multiplicity of languages particularly in the Middle Belt, the colonial government chose Hausa as the preferred language of communication in Northern Nigeria. This particular language policy elevated the status of the Hausa language, spoken mainly in the Muslim emirates of Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zaria and Daura, to a lingua franca in colonial Northern Nigeria, thus augmenting the process of "Hausaization" of the Middle Belt. Moses Ochonu describes Hausa as representing something more than just a language of communication because, for him, "it is a category synonymous with certain ways of acting, making a living and worshiping God".[511] The Middle Belt, in contrast, is an area of great linguistic complexity with over 200 languages.[512] As a consequence of the elevation of Hausa the Middle Belters gradually became linguistically Hausa, and increasingly culturally and religiously anti-Hausa.

---

[510] Ballard, "Historical Inferences," 291.

[511] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 24.

[512] For a comprehensive account of the linguistic diversity of the Middle Belt region. See, J. A. Ballard, "Historical Inferences…".

In 1954 the Northern Regional Literary Agency (NORLA) was formed, marking the beginning of the second phase of local publishing. The Agency continued with book publishing in local languages, using roman script instead of Ajami, which was the dominant style of writing in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. However, because the printing machinery available then was not ideal for printing Arabic script, it was technically difficult to print books in Ajami script. Thus, using an improvised technique whereby the text is manually handwritten onto a small lithographic rotaprint machine, a few Ajami works were produced, nonetheless. But the demand for books in Ajami far outnumbered supply. There was a popular market for books, but trading in Arabic texts was left to Egyptian printers who sold them to Hausa middlemen. As for readers of Ajami texts, they had to rely on handwritten texts or hear the work recited.[513] Books on different kinds of literary genres such as poetry, fiction, language, religion and more particularly history were produced mainly in the Hausa language, and a few on Middle Belt languages such as Tiv, Idoma, Ebira, Igala and Nupe.

Gaskiya Corporation, particularly during the early 1960s functioned as a publishing institution for the construction of a One-North society in which different ethnic and religious communities would mesh into a shared Northern Nigerian political community. However, in order to avoid creating the impression that the minority communities did not matter in the Northern cultural project, the company pursued a multilingual policy. This was particularly necessary to prevent the institution from being seen by the Middle Belters as an instrument of Islamization and Hausa-Fulani cultural hegemony. To this effect, a number of books and newspapers in some Middle Belt languages were published. Similarly, special monthly periodicals were launched for each of the 12 provinces in the Northern Region: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Ilorin, Kabba, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, and Zaria. Six of the newspapers were in the Hausa language and the remaining eight in Tiv, Idoma, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Yoruba, Ebira, Igala, and Nupe. The vernacular books in these languages were, nonetheless, mere translations of Hausa works. Despite the

[513] Hussaini Hayatu, "NORLA and the Establishment of Publishing in the Former Northern Nigeria: an Overview from the Colonial Times to the Present," in *50 Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria*, ed. Hussaini Hayatu (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1991), 55-68.

attempt at constructing a culturally monolithic northern entity, the initial publishing enterprise, however, did little in terms of creating avenues for local historiographic production in the Middle Belt areas. In fact, the more the government tried to maintain its clutches on the Northern Nigerian history machine, towards cultural uniformity and shared history, the more the minorities saw this as a subversion of their historical and social imaginaries.

Unequal access to the resources of historical production between the Middle Belt and Muslim North was originally accentuated by the absence of indigenous writers from Middle Belt communities, and the fact that the publications were written mainly in Hausa and from a predominantly Muslim perspective, understandably because the great majority of the readers were Muslims. Naturally, the reactions of the minority, largely Christian communities to this publishing regime, particularly the prevalence of Hausa language, as the medium of vernacular literature, were not without suspicion. The industry was suspected to be a media tool for Islamic propaganda and maintaining northern hegemony.[514] The misgivings of the Christian communities about the publications were reported to have been tamed when a large number of mission stations in the North began to order a regular supply of *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* newspaper for distribution among their followers.[515] This, however, was not equal to pacifying the underlying grievances of the non-Muslims in the Middle Belt.

With the achievement of independence in 1960, the government of the Northern Region became even more conscious of the instrumentality and role of history in bridging the cultural, religious and historical cleavages between Middle Belt ethnic minorities and the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. The government under Ahmadu Bello heightened its grip over the publishing industry as well as other allied institutions like the Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS)[516] to ensure the continuity of a kind of shared Northern history in which the merits of One-North outlook were emphasized and the small-mindedness of a provincial/sub-regional

[514] Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, 67.

[515] East, "Historical Perspectives on Gaskiya Corporation," *50 Years of Truth*, 7.

[516] See Chapter two of this dissertation for details on the role of the NHRS in the production of history in northern Nigeria.

Middle Belt identity was underscored.[517] Other institutions of history such as the History Department at ABU, National Archives and Museums, as we saw in the previous chapters, were galvanized to synthesize community histories into a "grand" regional (Northern Nigerian) historical narrative.

However, the contest over historical meaning continued into the postcolonial period. This is evident on the newspaper pages of the early years of postcolonial Nigeria (1960-1966) during which Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region, embarked on campaign tours, not only to promote the ruling party, but also invite Middle Belters to Islam.[518] For example, the *Nigerian Citizen*, a local English newspaper published by Gaskiya Corporation reported that "Ahmadu Bello was following the footsteps of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio", a provocative headline that would have reactivated memories of the 19th Sokoto Jihad in the Middle Belt.[519] The pages of the *Nigerian Citizen* were littered with narratives of conversions of Middle Belt communities into Islam. According to Bala Takaya, even the figures of converts were inflated in radio programs to boost the image of the North as Islamizing,[520] and therefore melting into a single community.

The dissolution of the Northern Region following the creation of states in 1967 heightened the struggle for historical representation between Middle Belt (now comprising Benue-Plateau state and other communities within North Central State) and the Muslim North (comprising of Kano, North Western, North Eastern, and North Central States). With this administrative decentralization, driven mainly by a vicious cycle of communal grievances and demands for states by marginalized communities, the authority of the government over the history machine was accordingly relaxed and decentralized.[521] Gaskiya Corporation, the main publishing organ of the government,

[517] Mark Patrick Smith, "The Politics of Culture in Northern Nigeria," 176. During its heydays, Gaskiya Corporation was seen as one of the institutions founded to nurture and reproduce Northern hegemony, particularly its "mafia" sector, over the minority communities of the Middle Belt.

[518] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 193.

[519] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 193.

[520] Interview with Professor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2013.

[521] For instance, the photo files of Gaskiya Corporation dealing with the 1950s and 1960s were ordered to be burnt, following the military coup of 1966 and the assassination of the Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto.

transfigured into a mere commercial printing press, and some its major assets, including printing machines, editors, mechanics and other tools of production, were shared among the newly created states. Meanwhile, all the provincial newspapers were disbanded and the editors reverted to the Native Authority service from where they came from. NORLA was disbanded early in 1960 and all the books published under the literature agency were transferred to Gaskiya Corporation to be continued on a purely commercial basis. In 1965 when the newspaper division of Gaskiya was transferred to Kaduna under the *New Nigerian* Newspaper Limited, negotiations were started with Macmillan Publishers to set up a book publishing company in association with Gaskiya Corporation to keep the book publishing business going in Zaria. In 1966, the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company Limited was registered with Gaskiya taking 51 percent of the shares and Macmillan 49 percent.[522]

Consequently, Benue-Plateau State, which was spatially the closest administrative equivalent of the Middle Belt, inherited some of the printing machines of the defunct regional government Printing Press in Kaduna, [523] thus inaugurating a local printing press with a Middle Belt ideological undertone. In 1967, the Benue-Plateau State Government under late Joseph Dechi Gomwalk founded the Benue-Plateau Publishing Corporation and Benue-Plateau Printing Press (now Plateau Publishing Company and Plateau Printing Press) (PPC and PPP). [524] Although instituted primarily with the mandate of printing government documents such as gazettes, reports, and white papers, this printing press created a publishing space for a growing number of indigenous intellectuals in the Middle Belt.[525] Other publications by PPC include receipts and invoices; and the *National Standard* newspaper.

---

[522] Hussaini Hayatu, "NORLA and the Establishment of Publishing in the Former Northern Nigeria," 59.

[523] Interview with Simon Kuben, Jos 2103. Some of the old printing machines of the former Regional Government's Printing Press were moved by train from Kaduna to Jos, being the headquarters of the Benue-Plateau State. These machines have been in use since then. But the present Government of Plateau State has recently approved funds for the purchase of modern high-tech printing machines to compliment the old ones.

[524] Gomwalk was also the brain behind the first university in Middle Belt, University of Jos. So he is generally regarded as one of the important leaders and promoters of Middle Belt identity.

[525] Alternatives to *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* and *Nigerian Citizen* newspapers such as the *Middle Belt* and *Nigerian Standard* were founded to provide a mouthpiece for the voices of Middle

Until 1970s, following the promulgation of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree, which stipulated that 60 percent of equity participation in the publishing industry must be owned by Nigerians, foreign publishers were the dominant players in Nigerian Publishing industry. Thus, between 1960s and 1990s, more than 200 local printing and publishing houses emerged in Benue and Plateau alone. The most prominent among these were: Jos Museum Press (1963); Benue-Plateau Publishing Corporation, (1967, now Plateau Publishing Corporation); University of Jos Press (1984); Midland Press (1988); Aboki Publishers (1994). As a result of the proliferation of these publishing houses, book titles on Middle Belt regional history as well as individual community histories began sprouting locally, heralding the Middle Belt "ethnic histories machine".

Book and Journal Production: the Emergence of Middle Belt Publishing

One of the earliest publishing houses was the Jos Museum Press. Established in 1963, the Jos Museum Press deployed old Gestetner printing machines to produce books and teaching aids for a UNESCO bi-lingual School of Museum Studies in Jos. The primary focus of this publishing outfit, however, was the printing of official documents for the museum. The evidence available, however, shows that only one book on the history of the Afizere community in Plateau State has been published by this press.[526]

By the late 1970s, a large repository of oral histories, as we saw in chapter three, had been built in the History Department at the University of Jos under the Plateau oral history project. In order to draw the attention of the international scholarly community to this valuable primary source material, the department decided to seek partnership with international publishing houses to publish these oral histories for wider circulation. At a time when African, especially non-written history was still derided in the geopolitics of historical production, some international publishing cartels were cynical about the commercial and aesthetic merits of publishing oral

---

Belt minorities. Most of these alternative newspapers were framed within the politics of opposition against the Hausa-Fulani-controlled ruling party, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). See, Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola, "Political Communications: Press and Politics in Nigeria's Second Republic," *Africa Media Review* 5, no. 2, (1991), 36.

[526] A.M. Nye, *The Afizere (Jarawa) People of Nigeria*, (Jos: National Museum Press, 1988).

histories from Africa; and the prospect for scholarly publishing of the histories of a predominantly oral community like the Middle Belt was still uncertain. A major British publisher went to the extent of signing a joint publishing contract with the Department of History, but later withdrew from the deal.[527] It is not clear why the publisher jettisoned the contract.

To be sure, Jan Vansina's seminal rendition of oral history and its methodology has afforded historians the theoretical justification for the use of oral traditions in historical writing, especially with the English translation of his work in the 1970s.[528] And by the 1980s oral tradition has become an article of faith in African Studies, at least in the United States of America and Europe. But in African oral history collection, the theory of orality has outstripped its practice.[529] In addition to the dearth of publishing outlets there were very few scholars who were willing to expose their oral collections warts and all for critical scrutiny.[530] The standards of validating oral traditions, as laid down by Vansina in his Oral Tradition, were overly rigorous and "too high to follow" according to Elizabeth Isichei, the coordinator of the Plateau History Project.[531] What this means is, despite the growing recognition of oral histories within the community of Africanist historians, there were some local inhibitions around orality in Nigeria at that time.

Following several futile attempts at attracting international publishers, the Plateau Publishing Company was contracted in 1981 to print the oral texts in two volumes as the *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts* (JOHALT), which became the first history journal in the whole of the Middle Belt region. The production process was marred by financial constrains and the high cost of printing in Nigeria at that time. For these reasons, the first two volumes were reproduced using David Gestetner's cyclostyle copying technique with a small print run (100 each). This meant that the publication was not widely available to either the local or the

[527] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vii.

[528] See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: a Study in Historical Methodology*, Transl. H. M. Wright, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1972).

[529] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vi.

[530] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vi.

[531] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vi.

international scholarly community.[532] But the publication originally was not conceived of as a journal. The conviction of the series editor, Isichei, notwithstanding these publishing challenges, was that it was better to document and publish the oral histories of local communities as a means to conserve narratives and memories that were in the process of disappearing.[533] Isichei was, along with her colleagues and students in the department, very committed to popularizing these local histories and the Plateau History Project in particular. In 1982, she edited a volume titled, ***Studies in the History of Plateau State***, which was published under the imprint of Macmillan Press. This book was a result of collaboration between of local historians and expatriate scholars. Interestingly yet, the book was primarily based on the oral texts, which were hitherto declined by many international publishers; the difference, however, was that while the former was a synthetic product of the oral histories and historians' interpretation of those histories, the latter was basically a compendium of unprocessed, though transcribed, oral data with minor editing and annotation. However, this is not the place to examine the content of these publications as we have already discussed them in chapter three.

In 1984 the University of Jos Press (UJP) appeared on the Nigerian publishing business scene, with book and journal publishing as its main areas of production. Although the original focus was on the publication of scholarly monographs, the bulk of UJP's production has been done to meet the immediate printing needs of the University of Jos, usually news bulletin and examination papers, and other commercial printing services for outside customers. Some of the prominent publications by UJP are ***The Ham and their Neighbors in History*** by Ibrahim James,[534] and ***The Kaduna Mafia*** by Bala Takaya and Sony Tyoden.[535] With the rising

[532] Elizabeth Isichei, "On Being Invisible: an Historical Perspective of the Anaguta and their Neighbors," ***The International Journal of African Historical Studies*** 24, no. 3. (1991), 517. Copies of the two Volumes are not readily available even in the departmental library of the History Department, University of Jos. I managed, however, to obtain copies from a member of staff, which I use for the purpose of this work. The original cassettes of the oral interviews are preserved in the office of the Head of the History Department. Plateau Publishing Company also published ***The Tiv and Tiv Riots*** (Jos: Plateau Publishing Corporation, 1982).

[533] Isichei, "The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas," vi.

[534] Ibrahim James, ***The Ham and their Neighbours in History***, (Jos: Jos University Press, 1986).

[535] Bala Takaya and Sony Tyoden ***The Kaduna Mafia***, (Jos: University of Jos Press, 1987).

climate of religious tension in the Middle Belt the university press tries to avoid publishing on tumultuous issues such as religion. Many manuscripts have been rejected on the basis of this principle. Ironically, however, publishing with UJP is seen basically in terms of printing because the scholarly content of manuscripts is not a primary yardstick for determining what is published and what is rejected.[536] Authors of manuscripts are given absolute leverage to determine what their books would contain[537]; even scholarly texts are hardly given to experts for editing and review. From monotype to linotype printing in 1980s and 1990s, UJP has advanced to using computer technology in the printing of books and journals.

University presses in Nigeria are "caught between fulfilling their primary responsibility of promoting scholarship and research, and going fully public and commercial as profit-making organizations."[538] As a result, it has been difficult for university presses to compete favorably with commercial publishers and printers. By the 1980s, university press publishing in Nigeria had collapsed due largely to lack of government subsidy. However, as Ulrike Stark reminds us, a university press imprint "could invest a book with prestige and a contract with a reputed publishing house could be a step in an author's canonization".[539] Therefore, some writers, according to the Director of Printing at UJP, only use the university press imprint for promotion and commercial reasons.[540]

[536] Interview with Patrick D. Kevin, Jos, 2013.

[537] Interview with Patrick D. Kevin, Jos, 2013. According to Kevin, who is the Director of Productions, "even some of the lecturers own printing presses".

[538] Kwasi Otu Darko-Ampem, "Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A Case Study of the Policies and Practices of African University Presses," (PhD. Diss. University of Stirling, 2003), 118.

[539] Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: the Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 11.

[540] Interview with Eneche James, Jos, 2013.

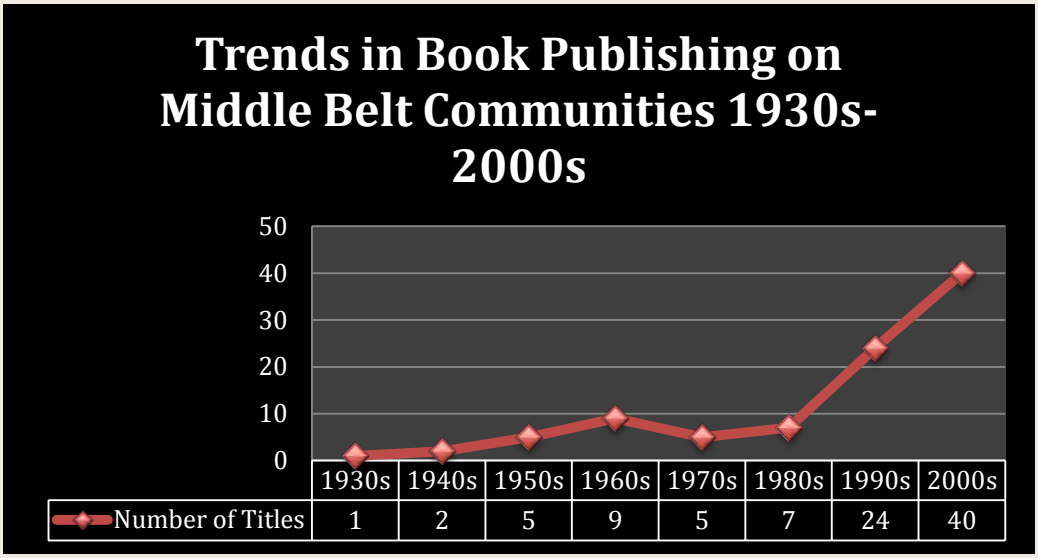


Figure 6: Trends in book publishing on Middle Belt Communities, 1930s-2000s.

Although the broad publishing trends presented on the above chart tell us little about their impact on Middle Belt historiography, they represent a significant trajectory of book publishing. The early and middle decades of colonial rule represent a period of "book famine". The number of publications on Middle Belt histories rise from one book in 1930s to 9 books in 1960. This slight increase was predicated on the achievement of independence in 1960, which placed the new country on the radar of international scholarly publication. The 1980s for Middle Belt marked the beginning of a season of "book boom". Between 1980s and 2000s the rate of titles more than quadrupled. Paradoxically, the rising trend of book production in the Middle Belt in from 1980s coincided with the period of acute economic crises, particularly in Nigerian educational and publishing institutions. The question then is why did the number of publications on Middle Belt rose significantly from seven titles in 1980s to 40 titles in 2000s?

There are some factors responsible for this seeming paradox in Middle Belt publishing. First, it should be reiterated that the 1980s was particularly gloomy for the publishing industry in Nigeria. The economic recession following the launching of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) negatively impacted on local publishing. The period witnessed dwindling investments and sales, deterioration of printing machines, rising production and retail cost, and the collapse of distribution networks.[541] There

[541] Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies*, 53.

was a shift of emphasis to local sourcing of raw materials for industrial manufacture, which led to dramatic rise in import duties on raw materials for industrial manufacturing. This meant that the publishing industry was starved of its basic raw materials, especially printing paper, which was grossly inadequate locally, but carried 40 percent import duty. Consequently, essential printing materials such as wire, thread, ink, glue and other spare parts for machinery became scarce because of high import duties. [542]

The main fallout of the economic crises and drastic state measures, which ironically activated the "book boom" in the Middle Belt, was the upsurge of identity politics. The deregulation of state-owned enterprises and the collapse of local businesses had the effect of exhuming and sharpening primordial divisions along ethnic and religious lines. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, alternative visions and imaginations (including Middle Belt) to the Nigerian state had become the main instruments of public and historical discourse through which competing ethnicities and other pressure groups negotiate access to resources at the center. [543] The failure to provide access to basic needs resulted in declining state legitimacy and the ascendancy of communal solidarities in knowledge production.

Like all identity-driven movements, propelled by claims of exclusion and marginalization, the Middle Belt movement needed its own instruments of communication rather than depend on state-owned publishing and media outlets whose philosophy of history has been towards more national and cultural integration than fragmentation. Thus, it was in the backdrop of the surge in identity politics that regional consortiums such as the Middle Belt Forum and the Centre for Middle Belt Studies emerged. In order to articulate their grievances more widely, given the constraints associated with the production of regional histories and identities, particularly within the context of institutions of the Nigerian and Northern regional history machines, it was necessary to devise alternative channels for the circulation of Middle Belt ideas.

---

[542] Ken M.C. Nweke, "Problems of the Availability of Books in Nigeria," *Journal of Library and information Science*, (1993), 24.

[543] For a detailed discussion on the role of Structural Adjustment on identity politics in Nigeria, see *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*.

In cognizance of this reality, some members of Middle Belt intelligentsia established a publishing industry with its own printing press, newspapers and magazines. The bigger idea at the initial stage, however, was to put a communicative and financial structure in place: publishing house, media house and a bank to sustain the Middle Belt struggle. This move was occasioned by a general feeling, among the Middle Belt intelligentsia, of institutional exclusion by the mainstream publishing and media houses in northern Nigeria. [544] They felt that they could not run the movement without a publishing organ to publish their ideas.[545] The result was the founding of Midland Press, devoted primarily to disseminating the cause of the Middle Belt. Midland was established in 1991, through the initiative of a Middle Belt activist, Minso Gazama. Since its inception, the Press has produced a number of titles on the Middle Belt such as *The Settler-Indigene Phenomenon* and *The Right to be Different* and *Christianity and Islam: a Plea for Understanding and Tolerance*. Since publishing is capital intensive, the proprietor of Midland Press has found it increasingly difficult to sustain the business as he continues the struggle on his own.

Aboki Publishers and Middle belt Historiography

In 1996 a group of Middle Belt scholars, headed by Yakubu Ochefu, former President of Historical Society of Nigeria, plotted a new publishing house, Aboki Publishers (AP), in Makurdi, Benue State. Headquartered in Makurdi, AP ventured into the publishing business with the aim of advancing knowledge production, especially in the Middle Belt region.[546] The company is one of the publishing houses in Nigeria with links to institutions such as the Nigerian Publishers Association African Publishers Network and the African Publishers Network.

---

[544] Mathew Hassan Kuka identifies Bank of the North, established in 1959 by the Northern Regional Government, as a mechanism for strengthening Hausa-Fulani hegemony. See his *Religion, Power and Politics*, 65. The North-South Bank was established to promote the development in Middle Belt region. It was, however, distressed and liquidated amidst banking crises in 2005. In addition to some of these regional institutions, most of the print and broadcast media houses established and controlled by Middle Belt states, particularly Plateau State became officially sympathetic to the Middle Belt course.

[545] Interview with Professor Ibrahim James, Kaduna, 2013.

[546] Aboki Publishers "Company Profile," (nd).

Amidst acute publishing crises in Nigeria, AP succeeded in unlocking an important code of the history machine. It revived and created new publishing outlets for Nigerian historians, and more particularly helped in expanding the scope of Middle Belt historiography. The company started with resuscitating some of the high-impact but dying history journals in the country. For instance, AP was responsible for reviving the Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN) and Tarikh. Describing the state of this crisis that befell JHSN, Ayodeji Olukoju writes:

> The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, published by the oldest professional society in Nigeria, was an internationally respected outlet for scholarly research. It appeared regularly and was widely subscribed by scholars in Africa and in the West. The same could be said of the Ibadan History Series, books published by Longmans, which disseminated research by outstanding scholars. But, by 1980, both publications had practically died, though the Journal managed to appear twice in the 1980s.[547]

By 1991, due to a prolonged moratorium in the publication of JHSN, the backlog of unpublished manuscripts and the cost of publishing became quite enormous for the publication committee of the Historical Society of Nigeria to handle. Using AP's imprint, *the Journal of the Historical Society* and *Tarikh* were reinvigorated and published more regularly and distributed widely.[548] Thus, while rendering this altruistic service to the discipline of Nigerian history, AP, being a commercial enterprise, is promoted. Subsequently, the company expanded its scope of production into book publishing. The number of titles published so far stands at over 120 titles with not less than three reprints every year. Some of its major publications include biographies of prominent Middle Belt activists and societies: *A History of the People of Benue State* by Yakubu Ochefu; *The History of Tiv Textile*; *Colonialism and the Transformation of Authority in Tivland* by B. Dzeremo; *Benue Politics and the Idoma*

[547] Oyedeji Olukoju, "The Crisis of Research and Academic Publishing in Nigerian Universities: the Twentieth Century and Beyond," paper presented at the 28th Annual Spring Symposium, "African Universities in the Twenty-First Century," University of Illinois/CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, (25-27 April 2002), 1.

[548] In 2012, fifty academic journals were selected by the Education Trust Fund (now Tertiary Education Trust Fund) for funding. The Historical Society of Nigeria received the sum of 5 million Naira, which was used in the production of the accumulated manuscripts. 300 copies of JHSN were bought by ETF and distributed worldwide.

Question by J.U. Okpoju; *The Tiv Woman* by A.A Torkula; and Paul Unongo's *The Intelligentsia and the Politics of Development* among others.

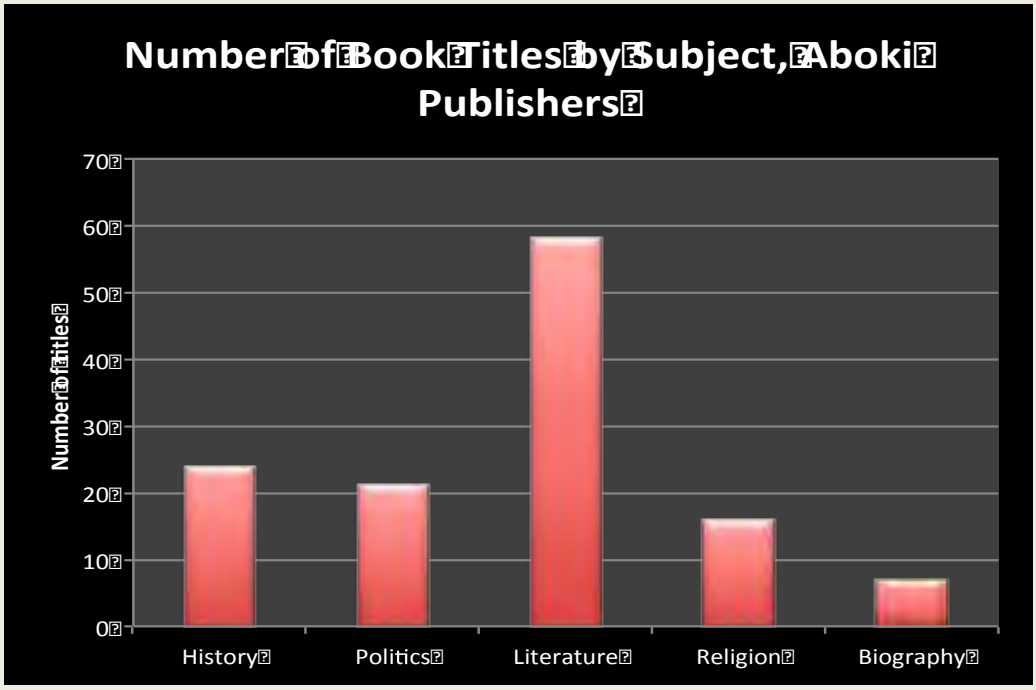


Figure 7: Number of book titles by Aboki Publishers.

This is in addition to 13 other academic journals published regularly. Prominent among these are journals centered in History Departments in the Middle Belt: *Benue Valley Journal of Humanities*, *Lapai Journal of Central Nigerian Studies*, and *African Journal of Economy and Society*.

The dynamics of journal production in Nigeria reflect ethnic and regional allegiances of different communities of knowledge production. This is reflected even in titles of academic journals. All History departments in the Middle Belt have established their journals, and some of these are entirely dedicated to the Middle Belt in terms of focus. There is the *Mandyeng*[549] journal of Central Nigerian Studies published by History Department, University of Jos. The *Mandyeng* was originally intended to have roots in the locality of Jos so that it would stand unique from other

[549] Mandyeng is a Berom word meaning annual cultural festival.

journals of Middle Belt studies.[550] The journal, however, expanded its focus to cover a broad spectrum of issues in the Middle Belt with specific emphasis on intensive local research. For example, out of 80 articles published between 2000 and 2012, 50 focused on various themes of Middle Belt historiography: mainly political, religious, social and economic histories. It is interesting to note that the Middle Belt focus of the early volumes of the *Mandyeng*, was stressed thus: "the journal is meant to cover whole spectrum of the polities of Central Nigeria or Middle Belt Region".[551] However, the subsequent issues (from 2008 to 2012) discarded the Central Nigerian/Middle Belt aphorism for the less convoluted term, North Central.[552] While historians from Jos and Benue are aware of the intricacies of the term Middle Belt, they have a strong conviction about what it means to them. The Chief Editor of the journal, John Nengel notes that this change does not signify anything serious. The History Department at Benue State University and Aboki Publishers jointly publish another journal, *Benue Valley Journal of Humanities*. Although the journal is not entirely devoted to Middle Belt histories, the contributors to the journal are mainly Middle Belt historians, understandably because journal production in most Nigerian universities reflects the political dynamics of knowledge production.

The *Lapai Journal of Central Nigerian Studies* was founded in 2007 and published biannually by the Department of History and Archaeology, Ibrahim Babangida University. This journal, like the Benue Valley periodical, is published under the imprint of Aboki publishers. And like *Mandyeng*, the primary focus of the *Lapai Journal of Central Nigerian Studies* is the Middle Belt.

Moreover, some Middle Belt organizations have ventured into self-publishing by designing their own imprint. In 1996, the League for Human Rights was founded

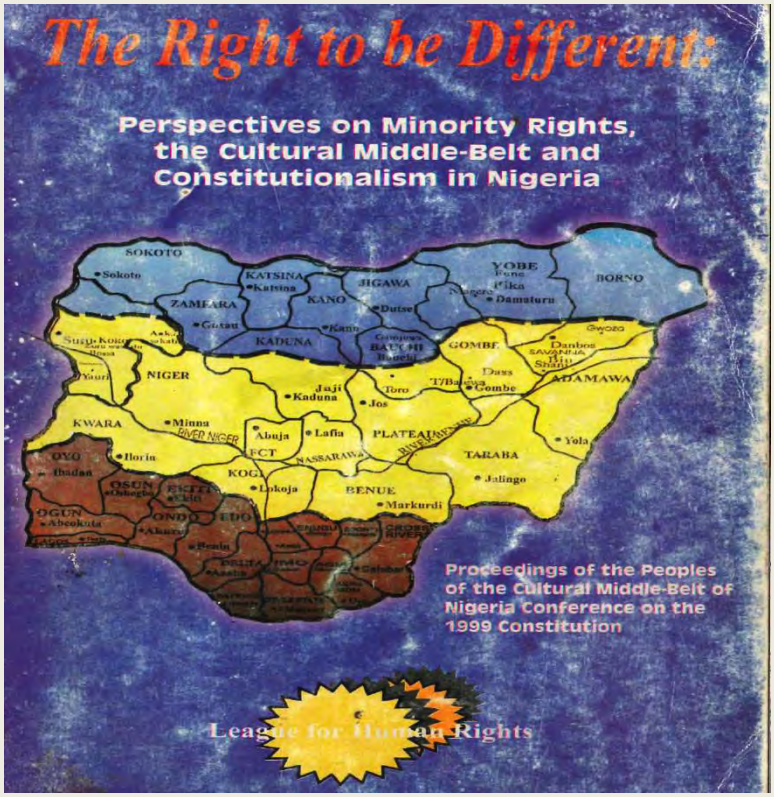
---

[550] There are other journals in other disciplines that are primarily devoted to Middle Belt issues such as *The Middle Belt Journal of Library Science*, *The Belt Journal of Education* and *Jos Journal of Minority Studies*.

[551] The term Middle Belt is used interchangeably with Central Nigeria.

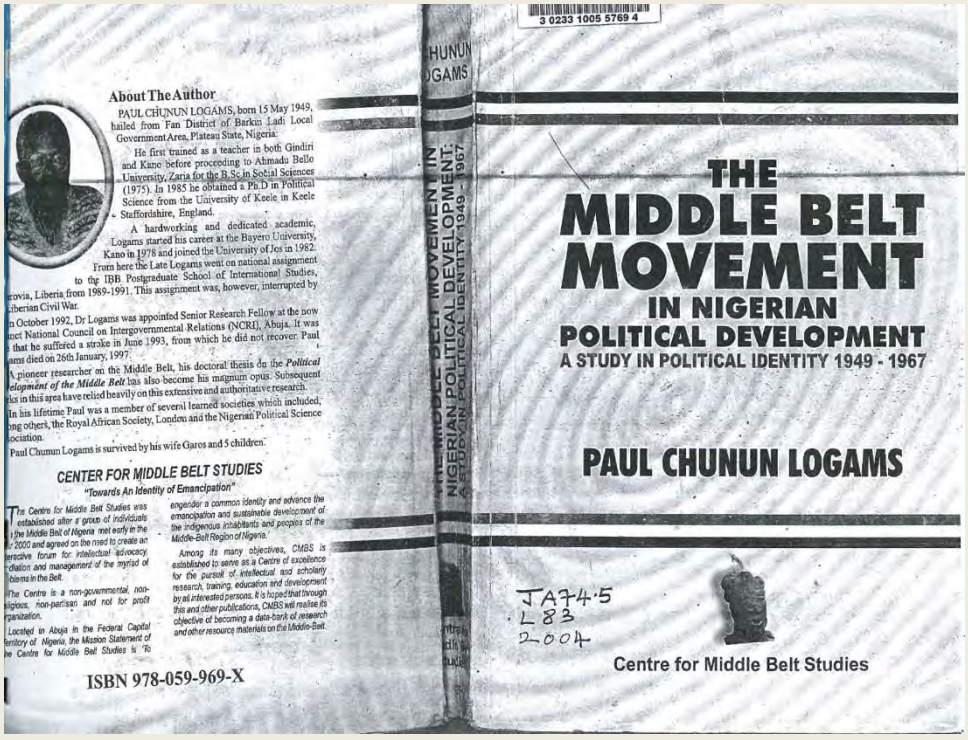
[552] In contemporary Nigerian political vocabulary North Central denotes a geopolitical entity comprising the States: Benue, Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger and Kwara. The term is, however, inimical to most Middle Belters because of its toponymic affiliation to northern Nigeria. This is one of the paradoxes of the Middle Belt discourse. While the term Middle Belt is widely used in political and academic circles, it is not constitutionally recognized as a geographical entity; and is nowhere on the map of Nigeria.

in Jos as a non-governmental organization. Although its objectives and activities are notionally national in outlook, the League's specific focus is the "cultural middle belt". The organization has published two major books on minority politics: *The Right to be Different* (which we have assessed in chapter three) and *Linguistic Minorities and Inequality in Nigeria*.

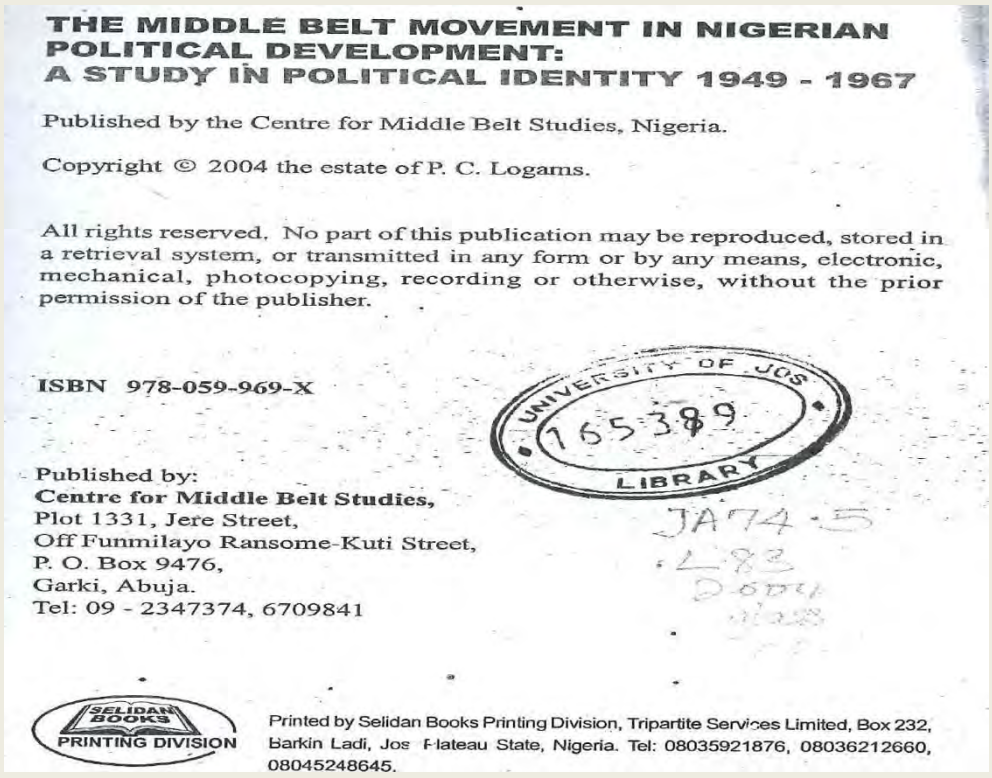


Picture 9: Cover page of a book published by the League for Human Rights.

In 2000, the Centre for Middle belt Studies was founded in Abuja. This Centre was established after a Middle Belt think-tank met and agreed to create an interactive forum for intellectual advocacy and management of Middle Belt problems. The objectives of the Centre were: to establish a databank for Middle Belt research; engender common identity; and the emancipation of the indigenous inhabitants and peoples of Middle Belt. One of the major contributions of this center to the making of Middle Belt historiography was the publication in 2004 of Paul Logams's monograph, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigeria*, which we have discussed in chapter three.



Picture 10: Cover page of *The Middle Belt in Nigeria*…



Picture 11: Colophon.

In as much as academic books and journals serve to demarcate the frontiers of academic history, the writing of history is not the exclusive prerogative of

professional historians. Thus, our interpretation of publishing dynamics in relation to Middle Belt historiography would be deficient without considering the role of "vanity publishers" and the writings of amateur historians.

"Publish or Print": Vanity Press, History and Amateur Historians

The proliferation of self-publishing and amateur printing houses, fostered by the swift advances, and ever more accessible information and computer technology, further deregulated the publishing industry and opened up fresh discursive leakages within the history machine. The more the national history institutions are decentralized, the more the Middle Belt history machine waxes stronger. By 1998 there were 66 registered publishing houses, 72 registered bookshops and 832 government libraries spread across Nigeria.[553] In Jos and Makurdi alone there are over 200 so-called "vanity" presses currently in operation. They are businesses where anybody can have a book published as long as he/she pays the production costs. In other words, a "vanity" press is a strictly business venture, not primarily concerned with research standards, peer reviewing, or post-publication reviews in either the scholarly or the mass media.

It is important at this juncture to draw a succinct distinction between printing and publishing. Anyone can write a manuscript and submit it to a printer. The printer "gives it a nice font, add a pretty cover, and make it available for purchase. That is not a published book".[554] All that is required to establish a "vanity publishing" venture is some printing machines, a few computer operators and a signboard of a printing press. Publishing in Nigeria nowadays is often thought of as a single individual with a computer and printer and little else besides.[555] Printers openly pose as printers and

---

[553] Chukwuemeka Ike, *Directory of Nigerian Book Development*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1998), 144-194. "The 1980 UNESCO statistical yearbook showed that Nigeria's publishing output of 1175 titles in 1978 was second to Egypt's 1472 in the preceding year, and by 1989 the official titles output by Nigeria was put at 2040". See, Christian O. Enyia, "The Role of Nigerian Publisher in National Development," *International Library Review* (1991), 204.

[554] "Book Marketing Makeover: the Difference between Book Publishing and Book Printing," December 2012. Available at: http://blog.bookmarket.com/2011/12/book-marketing-makeover-difference.html.

[555] Jeremy Weate, "How to kill the Nigerian Publishing Industry," Available at: http://africasacountry.com/how-to-kill-the-nigerian-publishing-industry/.

distributors of ephemeral materials such as wedding invitation cards, letterheads, almanacs, but "covertly" indulge in the business of book production and reproduction of books in high demand, with no regard to copyright laws.[556] In vanity publishing, the author of the manuscript usually pays the cost of the printing.

Conversely, true publishing requires and involves considerable expertise and knowledge of the practices in humanities and social sciences, and must engage the services of competent editorial staff to work on manuscripts. In other words, a good publisher must be in a position to assess the scholarly merits and profitability of manuscripts.[557] Given his knowledge of the book market and network with writing communities, a publisher could identify good scholarly works that can sell in the marketplace; the publisher also pays the printing cost and markets the book.

The pioneer generation of Nigerian historians published few, but well researched, scholarly monographs that have stood the test of time since they were preoccupied more with institution building and setting the standards of rigorous scholarship: collecting sources, building archives and museums and training young historians for the rapidly expanding departments of history in the country.

By 1980s, the "publish or perish" mentality began to creep into historical practice, becoming the ultimate standard for measuring scholarly productivity as well as endangering class differences.[558] Within the ranks of academic historians there occurred a shift of emphasis from research, teaching, and supervision of students' theses, to publication. Paradoxically, rather than stimulating historical research and scholarship, the "intense pressure to publish resulted in perverse inflation of publications, in which dissertations are cannibalized and what matters most is not quality but quantity".[559] As a consequence, we saw the "perishing" of the scholarly

---

[556] Ken M.C. Nweke, "Problems of the Availability of Books in Nigeria," 28. See also Olumuyiwa Ayodele, "The Book Culture in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives," *The Bookworm* 4, (1990), 6-11.

[557] Phillip G. Altbach, *The Knowledge Context: comparative Perspectives on the Distribution of Knowledge* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 11.

[558] Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies*, 45.

[559] Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies*, 45.

and institution-building traditions initiated by the early generations of historians.[560] The state of scholarly publishing in Nigeria and the Middle Belt in particular has been succinctly summed up by one of the doyens of Middle Belt historiography, Monday Mangwvat:

> The kinds of books that are coming out, whether they are on Middle Belt or other regions, are really not peer reviewed. But they are better than nothing. Editors work in terms of correcting certain grammar, but the authenticity of research, conceptual framework and philosophy are hardly taken into consideration. But this is larger problem. We use to have the university presses, which published good theses. But these have died down because of lack of government support. What you find in the universities now are huge buildings, lecture halls and computer labs, which cannot replace real paperwork.[561]

The tradition of scholarly publishing in which manuscripts pass through rigorous peer reviewing processes before going to press has waned considerably. To be sure, academic monographs in Nigerian universities contain "a wealth of local empirical data, yet rarely are they indexed in major databases, nor do they feature much in the international literature." [562]

Although very few doctoral dissertations are revised and arrived at a publisher's printing company in Nigeria, a new publishing practice called "print-on-demand" or what is usually dubbed "author mills" based in Europe and America, is gradually wooing Nigerian authors into "publishing" their dissertations, through a dubious process. Such "publishing houses merely prepare a camera-ready copy of the manuscript, prints and mails a free author's copy of the book, and waits for orders".[563] A growing number of historians have "published" their Masters and PhD theses with these author mills. The problem of this type of publishing is that the publisher does

[560] Some of the seminal works of early Nigerian historians have erected a kind of historiographical quality barrier which subsequent historians find somewhat difficult to transcend.

[561] Interview with Professor Monday Mangwvat, Jos, 2013.

[562] Darko-Ampem, "Scholarly Publishing in Africa," 4.

[563] Farooq Kperogi, "Print-on-demand Scams and Nigerian Universities," Saturday May, 26, (2012), Available at: http://www.farooqkperogi.com/2012/05/print-on-demand-book-scams-and-nigerian.html.

not make the books available to bookstores or libraries and there is no peer reviewing, or any serious proofreading, media publicity, no advertising, no marketing, and no critical reviews in scholarly journals.[564]

The fundamental challenge of publishing has always been to produce manuscripts that will stand the rigors of critical analysis of peers. And there is, of course, the challenge of getting the funds to do so. Journals have hardly survived for a long period of time because of lack of funding. The attitude of the publishers to history in Nigeria also limits the conditions of historical production since the marketability of a field is very central. The market for history book Nigeria is generally unattractive. There is nothing that captures this official disdain for history than a recent newspaper editorial titled, "History Ends in Nigeria". This was following a decision by government under the auspices of the Ministry of Education to scrap the teaching of history entirely from secondary school curriculum on the pretext that students are avoiding it, a dearth of history teachers as well as jobs for history graduates.[565] It should be reiterated here that history has long disappeared from primary and junior school curricula when it was replaced with Social Studies. Because of this unfavorable state of history as a subject, quite a number of publishers will not publish it because it is not marketable.[566] The paradox, however, is that the proliferation of vanity publishers has resulted in the production of all kinds of books.

The point we are getting at is that what has happened in the context of historical production in Nigeria was not the "publishing or perishing" dilemma. Those who could not publish must not perish! Rather, the "perishing" option for historians who could not publish, due to limited access to good publishing networks, was to print. Although there are certain institutional frameworks such as the Nigerian Publishers Association and Nigerian Book Foundation that exist to regulate publishing in the country, it has been extremely difficult to control what is being published. The administration of copyright laws has been ineffective. Membership of

[564] Kperogi, "Print-on-demand Scams and Nigerian Universities".

[565] "History Ends in Nigeria," Vanguard, March 12 2014, Available at: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/03/history-ends-nigeria/#sthash.ggmFwA8L.dpuf. See also Farooq A. Kperogi, "Nigeria's Curricular Institutionalization of Mass Amnesia," ***Weekly Trust***, March 22 2014. Available at: http://dailytrust.com.ng/weekly/index.php/notes-from-atlanta/15997-nigeria-s-curricular-institutionalization-of-mass-amnesia.

[566] Interview with Professor I.L. Bashir, Jos 2013.

the Nigerian Publishers Association is not essentially required to operate a commercial publishing venture. The current membership of the association stands at 176,[567] but as we pointed out previously, there are more than 200 of these printing factories operating under the guise of publishing houses in Jos alone.

In view of the proliferation of printing presses and increase in book production, for example, it is difficult to sustain the idea that book famine is a feature of contemporary intellectual life in northern Nigeria,[568] and the Middle Belt axis in particular. Of course, university and other public libraries no longer place regular orders for new titles or even subscribes to international journals. Yet the informal communities of readers of Nigerian history are flooded with enormous history books written mainly by amateurs and churned out through vanity publishing.

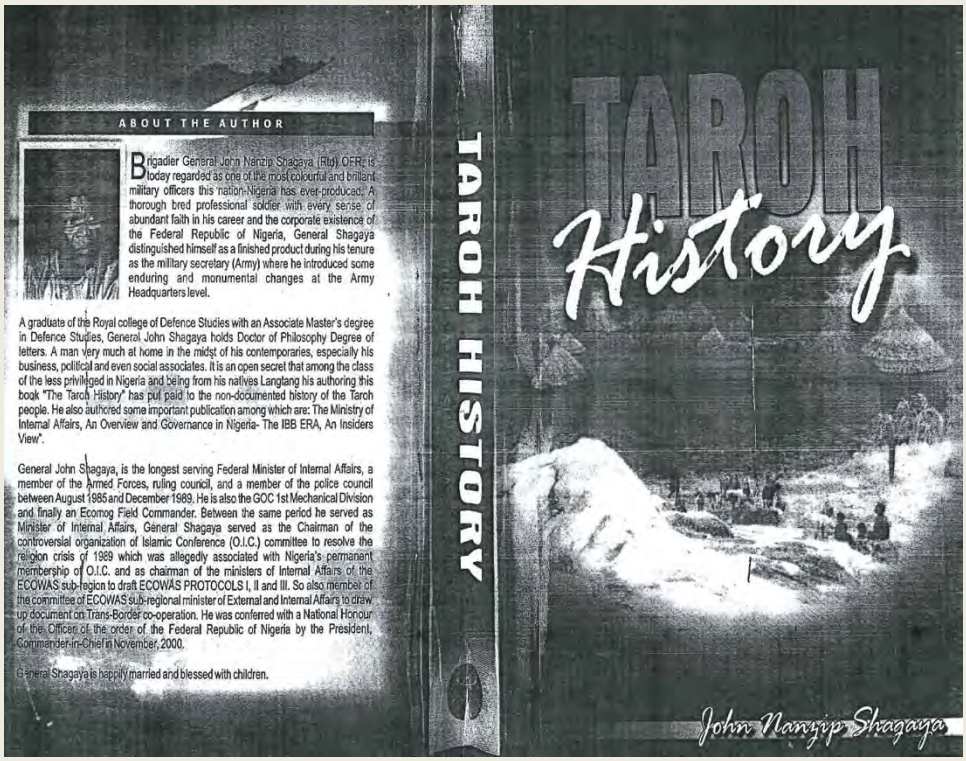
Many dilettantes have ventured into the art of historical writing, leading to the manufacturing of "amateur histories" on various Middle Belt communities. The amateurs find history most attractive, and perhaps more receptive to their social imaginaries. A professor of history at the University of Jos, Sati Fwatshak, disparages the way in which history is being usurped by both politicians and amateurs for extra-academic motives.[569] This genre of history writing, often driven by political and profit-making motives rather than advancing historical debates, comes in the form of community histories and biographies of prominent Middle Belt politicians and ex-military chiefs. One interesting issue emerging from the encounter between academic and amateur history is whether the academic historians are losing control over the production of history to amateurs. To be sure, these amateur histories are mostly self-published, often without publisher, and some time showing the imprint of some obscure printers, and copyrighted to the authors. However, the ideological and narrative framework of the amateur histories remains the Middle Belt ethno-

[567] The Nigerian Publishers Association is affiliated to various agencies within the publishing industry such as: Association of Nigerian Printers; Nigerian Booksellers Association; Christian Booksellers Association of Nigeria; Association of Nigeria Authors; Nigerian Book Foundation; Nigerian Library Association; and Reading Association of Nigeria.

[568] Last, "The Book and the Nature of Knowledge," 175.

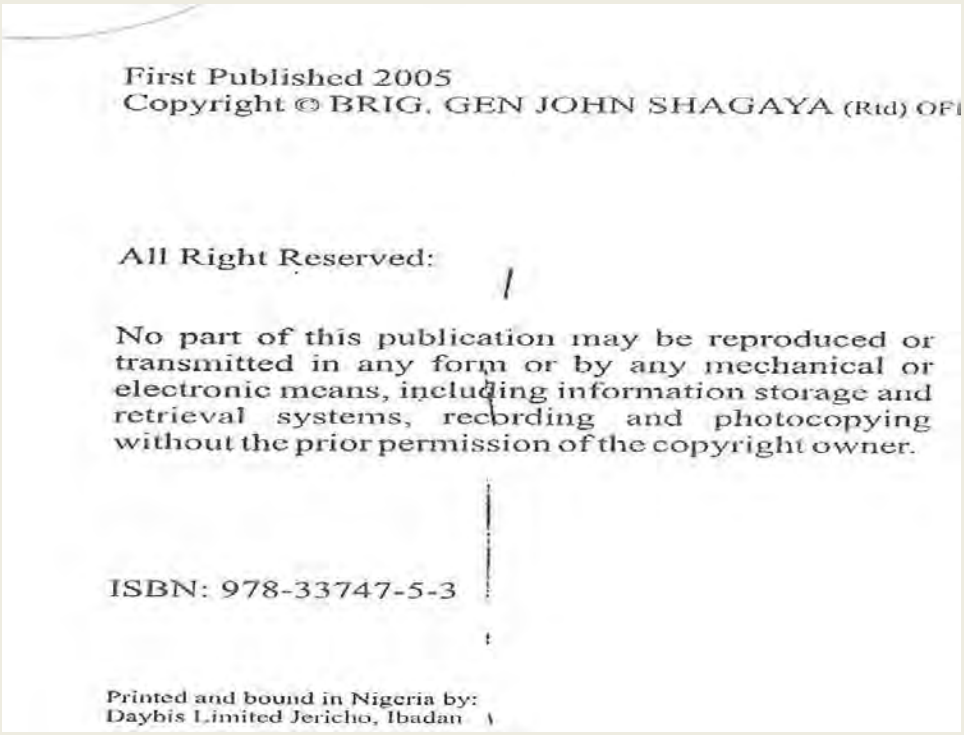
[569] Interview with Professor Sati Fwatshak, Jos, 2013. Apart from the objective of disseminating knowledge in local histories, there is a growing culture of book launch in many parts of Nigeria. It is very common to see adverts on national dailies, announcing book launch with wealthy politicians and businessmen as chief launchers.

nationalism. For example, in his history of the Tarok community in Plateau, a retired Brigadier General, John Nanzip Shagaya, asserts that in the history textbooks used in Nigerian schools, the Middle Belt areas are scarcely mentioned, thereby attempting to produce a national history without the middle section of the country,[570] the Middle Belt region.



Picture 12: Cover page of *Taroh History*.

[570] John Nanzip Shagaya, *Taroh History*, (2005), vii. Other examples of books in this genre include: Nasoh F. Lakai, *An introduction to Tarok History* (1998); Anthony Goyol and Elisha Dimka, *Punsung: Ngas Festival of Arts and Culture* (1999); Stephen Mallo, *The History of Ron* (Jos: Acon, nd). Another good recent example of this genre in Middle Belt historiography is a book titled *Moses of the Middle Belt*, which chronicles the life of one of the champions of the middle belt movement. The book is authored by one of the subject's grandsons, Gyang Nyam Shom Pwajok, a Senator representing Plateau North.



Picture 13: Colophon.

Even churches participate in this communal art of history-making in the Middle Belt, particularly in Jos. This is evident in the numerous publications, funded, and some time, published by the church institutions. The participation of churches in the writing of history is not surprising, considering the strong connection between Christianity and Middle Belt consciousness.[571] Churches, representing the religious wing of the struggle for Middle Belt identity, have established publishing houses not only for proselytization, but also the articulation of the religious histories of Middle Belt Christian communities within the discursive framework of marginalization.[572] According to Zakaria Goshit, the involvement of churches in the production of local histories is strongly connected to the "invisible war" they are fighting with Islam.[573] Besides the publication of journals and magazines such as *Jos Studies* and *Todays*

[571] See, for instance, Andrew E. Barnes, "The Middle Belt Movement and the Formation of Christian Consciousness in Colonial Northern Nigeria," *Church History* 76, no. 3 (2007), 591-610; Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: a Study in Middle Belt Christianity*; Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development*, 155-224.

[572] It should be noted that there is a considerable Muslim population in most parts of the areas considered as Middle Belt such as Jos, Nasarawa, Adamawa and Taraba.

[573] Interview with Professor Zakaria Goshit, Jos 2013.

Challenge, they also sponsor the production of books on the histories of Christianity among Middle Belt communities. *Jos Studies*, for instance, is owned and published by St. Augustine's Major Seminary in Jos. Sometimes these religious histories of Middle Belt communities are sponsored by community organizations; at other times the churches directly sponsor the publications. The churches usually employ the services of professional historians to provide data, edit drafts of manuscripts or write prefaces for the books. In his preface to the *History of the Church of Christ in Nigeria Plateau Central* (COCIN), Monday Mangwvat writes:

> This book focused on church history. But the issues which it perforcedly [sic] handled and executed go far beyond religious history… this book is a significant addition to the growing stock of publications on various aspects of Plateau history, economy and politics.[574]

"Pressing" History: Print Media, Mafia Theorists and Middle Belt Historiography

If churches entered the field of history publishing to proselytize, the entrance of journalists resulted in sensationalizing history in popular print. In postcolonial Nigeria, newspapers have become "exponents of ethnic opinions and guardians of their patrons' ethno-regional interests."[575] According to Bala Takaya, Secretary of the Middle Belt Forum, what prompted the emergence of Middle Belt print culture was the fact that the Middle Belt communities were not well served by the mainstream, especially print media in northern Nigeria. This, for Takaya, was the gap that intellectuals and columnists are trying fill by producing local histories in journals, magazines and pamphlets.[576] Recently, the National Youth Leader of the Middle Belt

[574] Monday Mangwvat, Preface to *History of the Church of Christ n Nigeria Plateau Central: Provincial Church Council Kabwir 1900-2010*, in eds. Daniel N. Wambutda and Zakariya Goshit (Kaduna: Baraka Press, 2010), xx.

[575] Stephen O. Bamiduro, "Press and Politics in Nigeria's first republic 1960-1966," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 11, no. 3/4 (1982-1983), 117.

[576] Interview with Bala Takaya, Jos, 2013.

Forum blamed the media for forcing "the majority status on the Hausa-Fulani when talking about the North".

By the 1980s, Middle Belt agitation has assumed a new height as newspapers and magazines featured stories about it. The Jos based *Nigerian Standard* had a running battle with the pro-northern newspapers such as *Hotline Magazine* and *New Nigerian*. While the *Nigerian Standard* rebuked the idea of a shared history of Northern Nigeria, the others endorsed and promoted a monolithic view of history of the northern Region. The readers of these Middle Belt publications were mobilized around some of the dreaded historical idioms in Middle Belt discourse: Sokoto caliphate; Hausa-Fulani domination; Jihad; Sharia; Hausa-Fulani hegemony and the Kaduna mafia.[577] These idioms are premised on a view of history whereby Hausa-Fulani Muslims are seen as the architects of the Middle Belt's inferior status in northern Nigeria. The northern history machine, constructed around institutions such as NHRS, Arewa House, Gaskiya Corporations and other media institutions, was seen in the Middle Belt as an epistemic instrument in the hands of Hausa-Fulani for dominating the minorities. The print media encouraged and helped transmit this intellectual disposition among Middle belt scholars.

By the 1990s, the mafia narrative had gained wider discursive momentum in Middle Belt print journalism. Newspapers were founded solely to expose the Mafia phenomenon and Hausa-Fulani cultural and political hegemony.[578] The first in the series of local newspapers was the *Middle Belt Herald*, which was published by the Amalgamated Press at Jos. The paper, published in both Hausa and English language, became the first mouthpiece for the minorities in northern Nigeria. Most importantly, the *Nigerian Standard*, published by the Plateau Printing Press galvanized the Middle Belt community. The paper offered a common discursive forum and alternative voice around which Middle Belt ideas were boiling. The Middle Belt Muslims were patronizing *Alfjr*, a local Ajami newspaper. There were young journalists such as Goerge Ohemu, Danko Makama and Joel Paul who were bubbling with ideas. They

[577] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 193.

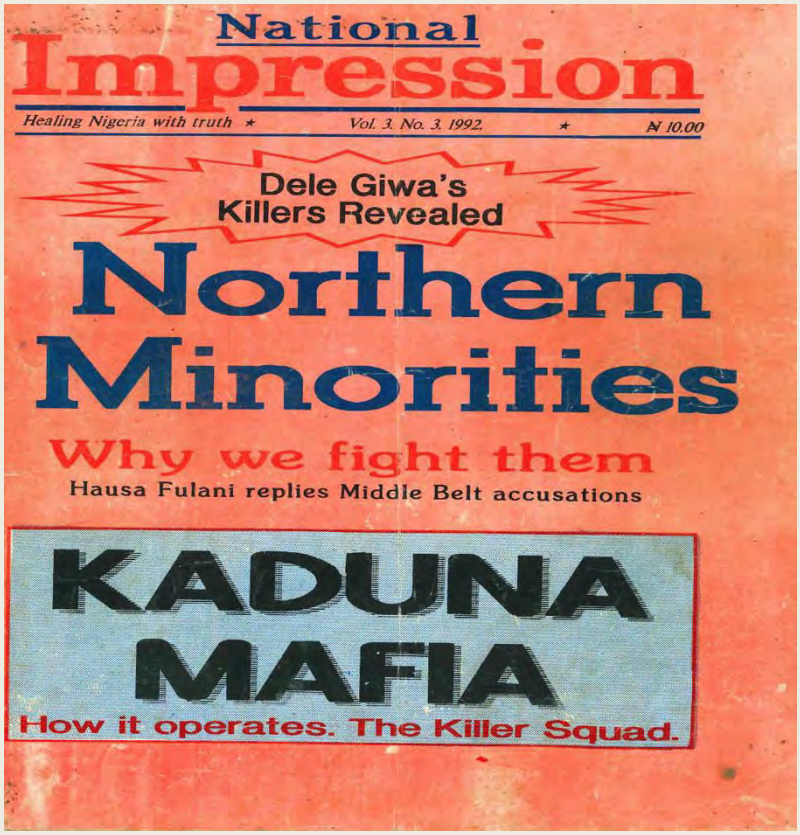
[578] Some of this media publication outfits include: The *National Impression*, *Free Nation*, *Northern Nigeria in Perspective*, and *Todays Challenge*. These newspapers emerged as in-house publication to control the perception of the Middle Belt peoples especially against national dailies such as *New Nigerian* and *Hotline magazine*.

were reporting local events according to the feelings of the local peoples of the Middle Belt, and correspondents were posted all over the country, but most especially within the Middle Belt. The government of Solomon Lar in Plateau State introduced a four-page weekend column in Hausa, called Yancin dan Adam (human freedom) along his Middle Belt emancipation ideology.[579] The *National Impression*, another Middle Belt publication, hardly issued an edition without featuring headlines such as "northern minorities", "Kaduna Mafia" and "Hausa-Fulani violence". The commitment to Middle Belt "liberation" was the premise of their editorial policy. In one particular edition, for example, it explicitly stated that:

> We are very convinced that our aim s misunderstood. As much as we don't owe anybody apology for publishing our views, we are in no way attacking all Hausa-Fulani as a tribe. What we print is rather the view of Northern minorities who are opposed to a chosen few Hausa-Fulani who have constituted themselves into a pressure group tagged Kaduna Mafia. It was this class that brought about violence in Nigeria.[580]

[579] Interview with Professor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2013. Unfortunately these Publications have died down. Nigerian Standard somehow keeps on publishing, but it is not catching the attention of even people in government house, let alone plateau, let alone other parts of the Middle Belt.

[580] *National Impression* 3, no3, (1992).



Picture 14: Front cover of one of the editions of National Impression.

With this kind of journalism, which is still widely practiced in Nigeria, the term Middle Belt was gradually introduced into popular and academic discourse in Nigeria. Despite academic historians' awkward, if not antipathetic, disposition to amateur historical and journalistic writings, the entry of journalists into the Middle Belt debate heightened "public mood which in turn provides historians with the key issues warranting more attention".[581] Journalism, particularly popular print is implicated in the history machine in two ways: first by furnishing historians with raw materials via on the spot reportage; and secondly by engendering and popularizing group sentiments as laudable objects of historical production. This way, members of the academy exploited and appropriated the media discourse as a subtle instrument of intellectual conversation. This is especially true of the Mafia theorists, the cultural producers of the specter of Hausa-Fulani domination. Thus, in order to explicate better the role of print media in the production of Middle Belt histories, there is a need

[581] David Lowe, "The Journalist as an Historian," May 15, 2012. Available at: http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/stories/2012/05/15/the-journalist-as-an-historian.

to examine, albeit briefly, the mafia theory and the ways in which it has engendered a specter of Hausa-Fulani hegemony in academic discourses.

The idea of the mafia as a class of northern Nigerian Muslim elites was originally articulated through the print media. Mvendaga Jibo, a Middle Belt journalist, was said to have first coined the term Kaduna Mafia. Between 1980 and 1990 many newspapers published major editorials featuring the question of the Kaduna Mafia.[582] The mafia theory is premised on what has been described as "paranoid history". The paranoid style of historical thought among the Middle Belters is a "manifestation of their basic view of the driving forces in northern Nigerian history".[583] Most of the contemporary conflicts in Jos and other parts of the Middle Belt, for instance, are viewed as carryovers of the 19th century Jihad wars. The Hausa-Fulani Muslims, on the other hand, allege a plot by non-Muslims to eradicate them from the predominantly Christian parts of the Middle Belt region. Thus, the Mafia theory feeds on this paranoid view of history, which is typical of the thriving culture of conspiracy theories in Nigeria. As a knowledge production instrument, the mafia narrative has acquired certain discursive properties with which historians historicize the grievances of the ethnic minorities. Although the theory is not based on any deductive logic, archival research, or sound social theory, it has succeeded in manufacturing a spectre of "Hausa-Fulani hegemony"[584] in northern Nigeria, a tendency, which is being resisted at all levels of the Middle Belt consciousness, including historical writing.

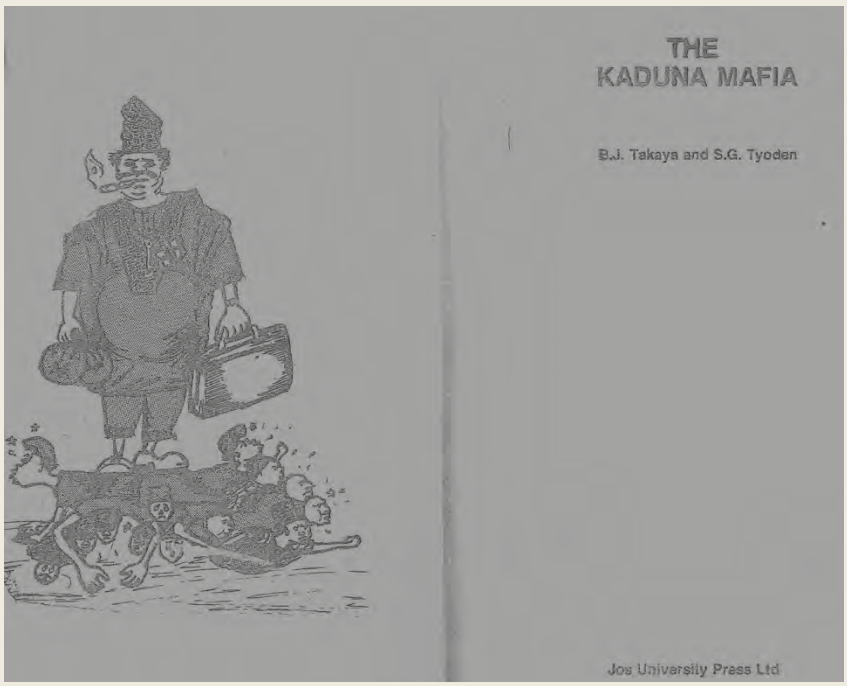
The first attempt at historicizing the Mafia theory and "Hausa-Fulani Hegemony" was made in ***The Kaduna Mafia***. Published by the University of Jos Press in 1987, this book was the result of a corporate venture by a group of Middle Belt

[582] Examples of some of these editorials include: Rufa'i Ibrahim, "Of the Mafia, Awo and the Race," ***The Triumph***, (1983); "Babangida, Beware of the Kaduna Mafia," ***Sunday New Nigerian***, (1985); Upah Benson, "Kaduna mafia: another Dimension," ***The Sunday Voice***, (1985); Ujudud Shariff, "The Myth of Kaduna Mafia," ***The Triumph***, (1985); Jonathan Zangina, "The Other myth of Kaduna Mafia," ***Sunday Concord***, (1986); "The Invisible Government: Kaduna Mafia in Nigeria's Power-Sweepstakes," ***The African Guardian*** 1, no.3 (1986).

[583] Kastfelt, "The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria," 13.

[584] This term denotes, among the mafia theorists, the pre-eminence of the political elite of the Muslim northern Nigeria in Nigerian politics.

social theorists at the University of Jos. The scholars felt they "owe it a responsibility, as intellectuals, to observe the trend and bring it out for public consumption".[585] Initially, Fourth Dimension, a major publishing house based in Enugu turned down the manuscript on the pretext that it was too controversial and polemical for public consumption. The University of Jos eventually published *The Kaduna Mafia* after the authors were made to edit out some of the things that could lead to litigation for libel.[586] The book became very popular among proponents of the Middle Belt. One of the fundamental theses running through this publication is that the Kaduna Mafia is not "a product of exaggerated imagination of the northern minorities, or 'an invented bogey of "Southern (Nigerian) speculative journalism".[587]



Picture 16: Title page and Frontispiece of *The Kaduna Mafia*, symbolically depicting a caricature of a Hausa man on top of the minorities – as an emblem of oppression.

[585] Interview with Professor Bala Takaya, Jos, 2012. Takaya reports that they (the authors) have received a bashing from the Kaduna Mafia, alleging they (the mafia) are still after them.

[586] Interview with Bala Takaya, Jos 2013. Another titles on middle Belt under the University of Jos Press imprint is Ibrahim James's *The Ham and their Neighbours in History* (Jos: Jos University Press, 1986).

[587] Sonny G. Tyoden, "The Kaduna Mafia as a Faction of the Nigerian Bourgeoisie," *The Kaduna Mafia*, 60.

Although premised on a conspiracy theory, *The Kaduna Mafia* has had seminal epistemological implications on the direction of Middle Belt historiography. For the first time in academic discourse, the work brought to the fore a view of history in which the 19th century Sokoto Jihad was used in the interpretation of events in the Middle Belt. For instance, in his chapter in The Kaduna Mafia, Paul Logams argues that:

> The new generation of Fulani leaders in the period between 1940s and 1950s and in the post-independence era had socio-religious and political linkages with previously established leadership under dan Fodio… After independence in 1960, Sardauna had conceived of the attainment of self-government by Northern Nigeria on 15th March 1959, as the recreation of the Fulani Empire of dan Fodio.[588]

This approach to the history of the Sokoto Jihad underlies most of the Middle Belt monographs, particularly the polemical ones.[589] The writings of the mafia theorists encouraged the politics of marginality and offered both academic historians and amateurs the ideological framework for legitimating memories of exclusion and violence. The implicit premise, which informs a number of recent collaborative works by Middle Belt historians, as previously alluded to, has been the narrative of marginalization and the discourse of a Hausa-Fulani-Caliphate hegemony. For example, in their introduction to *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, the editors posit that the reaction of the Middle Belt peoples to both the Sokoto Jihad and British conquests of the region have been written from the perspectives of British colonialists, the Jihadists and those of their descendants.[590] The decolonization of the historiography of the Middle Belt, according to Olayemi Akinwumi, has progressed since the publication of this volume.[591] Similarly, Moses Ochonu posits that "British-

---

[588] Paul Chunnun Lagams, "Traditional and Colonial Forces and the Emergence of the Kaduna mafia," *The Kaduna Mafia*, 46.

[589] See, for example, Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*; Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*; Ochonu's Moses Ochonu's *Colonialism by Proxy*.

[590] Aleeyu Idris and Yakubu Ochefu, Introduction to *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, xxii.

[591] Olayemi Akinwumi, "Foreword," *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria*, VII.

supervised Hausa-Fulani colonization in the Middle Belt has a long scattered, but recoverable history. He further describes what he calls Hausa-Fulani subcolonialism as a "colonial template of Anglo-Caliphate rule".[592] With all these glaring cases of inter-textual linkages between media discourse and historiography, one can see a process through which journalistic resistance has reinforced the textual resistance of Middle Belt historiography against its supposed Others, Nigerian and Hausa-Fulani-centered historiographies.

We are not, however, assuming that the Middle Belt history machine equals a monolithic intellectual venture, as there are local frictions within the Middle Belt community of writers itself. The Middle Belt history machine, like its Nigerian and Hausa-Fulani-centered machines, is encumbered by a multiplicity of ethnicities and sub-regional agendas, making the production of a shared Middle Belt history increasingly difficult. Despite the dogged attempt at building a pan-regional history machine, more recent experiences reveal a cultural rupture, or at least, a deferment, of the Middle Belt pan-regional agenda. A region, seeking regional emancipation from the Hausa-Fulani has recently turned into a space for inter-group contestations and violent ethnic cleansing. Paradoxically, "minorities" have turned against smaller "minorities", resulting in a vicious cycle of identity politics.[593]

In 1995 two Plateau scholars engaged in a heated debate on Ngas history, accusing each other of distortion and misinterpretation. These two scholars were Ngolar Ngochal and Rotgak Gofwen from the English and Sociology departments of the University of Jos respectively. The debate was sparked off when Gofwen published a review of a book titled *A Look at Shik Ngas*, written by Ngochal. In his book the latter posits the view that the hill Ngas were the first settlers of Ngas land, and not the plain Ngas as most historians claim. The former responded in his book, *Christian Influence and Culture Change among the Ngas People*, in which he accused Ngochal of distorting the history of the plain Ngas. These accusations led to claims and counterclaims on the pages of the *Nigerian Standard* newspaper, leading to the

[592] Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*, 22.

[593] Ogoh Alubo, "Citizenship and Nation Making in Nigeria: new Challenges and Contestations," *Identity, Culture and Politics* 5, nos.1 & 2, (2004), 143.

intervention of Ngas Youth Movement. In fact, a reconciliation committee had to be established to settle the issue, which was already becoming confrontational.[594]

Similarly, there is a history of struggle between the Tiv and Idoma on the one hand, Igede, Tiv, Idoma and other communities on the other hand in Benue State. Sometimes the government pretends to manage the problem, but it has remained resilient even in the context of historical writing. The expatriate historian, Charles Jacobs, was even accused by an Igede historian of collecting massive archival documents and grooming Tiv historians to further the course of the Tiv community in this contestation.[595]

Notwithstanding the local contestations among Middle Belt writers, the struggle for emancipation through historical discourse continues in various platforms. The latest manifestation of this is particularly evident in electronic media. The advent of digital communication technologies further widened the landscape of the Nigerian history machine. Developments in time-space collapsing media technologies have created electronic channels for reproducing the histories of historiographically disenchanted ethnic minorities, thereby accelerating the making of both "imagined" and "virtual" communities.[596] The expression of ethno-nationalism and contours of Middle Belt resistance historiography through digital technologies is too recent a phenomenon to map out here. But different Middle Belt communities are increasingly taking their campaigns online. For example, there are over 60 Middle Belt Forums on Facebook alone, seeking to promote the histories and cultures of Middle Belt region. Individual ethnic communities such as Idoma, Tiv, Tarok, Berom and Igede have also established their own Facebook pages for the purpose of promoting their local histories.

---

[594] Zkariya Goshit, "Review of issues and Perspectives in the History of the Ngas, Plateau State," in *History Research and Methodology in Africa*, 229-230.

[595] Interview with Professor Silas Okita, Makurdi, 2013.

[596] Simon Cottle, "Introduction: Media Research and Ethnic Minorities: mapping the Field," in *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: changing Cultural Boundaries*, ed. Simon Cottle (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2000), 3.

Conclusion

The emergence of local, especially commercial publishing houses and printing presses created unprecedented opportunities for the growth, expansion and circulation of Middle Belt historiography. The advantages enjoyed by Muslim northern Nigeria, in terms of pre-existing literary history, communication networks and other technologies of knowledge production, were gradually usurped, especially in the wake of administrative devolution, and the proliferation of publishing and printing institutions in the Middle Belt. These developments opened up new epistemic linkages and networks of writers and institutions for the production of knowledge on the margins of hegemonic history machines. The struggle for an autonomous Middle Belt history machine was abetted by printing presses, and the penchant for a shared past eventually disrupted and constricted by cultural heterogeneity within the Middle Belt. The capacity of the history machine of processing various discrete historical sources and experiences into a history with capital H is inherently limited. Nonetheless, the power of scholarly publishing and print media in popularizing Middle Belt histories, as manifested within the broader landscape of the Nigerian history machine, has been quite profound. Even more than the History Departments in Benue State University and the University of Jos or the National Archives and Museums, the establishment of local printing presses, newspapers and magazines offered the minorities a discursive space where Middle Belt resistance to Hausa-Fulani is mobilized, historicized and widely articulated.

Conclusion

Scholarship on the making of Nigerian historiography has tended to focus exclusively on historical texts thereby sidestepping important institutions where historical knowledge is produced. Scholars from Nigeria and from outside have focused on books about the past and their authors, articles in research journals, and debates between authors, in other words a fairly strict and conventional concern with texts and perhaps their contexts. Historiography has been about a professional discipline, a field rather closed to the world and certainly kept within the precincts of the university. Everyone, ranging from policy-makers to historians, archaeologists, archivists, museum curators and publishers speak about Nigerian history, but no one has attempted to explore the contexts and conditions of its production in concrete institutions, as well as the variety of discourses proliferating within the field since 1960. This thesis has attempted to make a conceptual and empirical departure from the established reading of Nigerian historiography. I posit that the making of Nigerian history involves a conscious process through which the past is processed into historical knowledge and deployed as a resource for nation building; this process has been described as the "Nigerian history machine". The phrase Nigerian history machine denotes the conceptual approach developed in this dissertation while the Middle Belt historiography of resistance forms the subject or case considered. While challenging the established view of Nigerian history as a solely textual practice that is confined to history departments, this project brings to the fore the centrality of history in archival and museum discourse. Taking very seriously the import of these institutions including the publishing industry, without which the formation of the discipline of Nigerian history would have been impossible, the making of the field has been represented here as a corporate venture – the nuances of which the participants themselves are largely oblivious of. The linkages between academic history and the sites where historical knowledge is produced such as archives, museums and the publishing houses are more complex and multifarious than usually thought. Arising from this discussion, it should be clear that the discipline of Nigerian history is not the monopoly of academic historians. History, whether pursued in history departments, archives, museums, or performed on the streets of Jos, is contingent on the transfiguration of certain objects into knowledge about past human activity.

The Nigerian history machine was originally envisaged by the Federal Government as a hegemonic epistemic edifice for the production of a national narrative through various institutional regimes such as the National Archives of Nigeria, National Commission for Museums and Monuments, and the National Universities Commission. Alas, the "noble dream" of aggregating discrete community histories through practices of historical writing, archival documentation and museum exhibition confronted enormous challenges. To be sure, there was considerable investment in historical production during the last decade of colonial rule due largely to the intellectual exigencies of decolonization; History Departments, National Archives and National Museums were founded to accelerate the production of Nigerian history. Although regional tendencies were manifest during the decolonization struggles, the penchant for a glorious past to buttress the clamor for independence allowed for a momentary national history project, which broke down into a multitude of regional history schemes following the attainment of political independence. The history machine has been weakened institutionally, and instead of leading to more national "consensus", Nigerian history, it begot competing regional research agendas like the Northern Nigerian History Research Scheme, which in turn precipitated the emergence of the Middle Belt minority history project and its discourse of resistance.

Therefore, this work has alerted us to the epistemological difficulties and tensions associated with the political instrumentalisation of history in nation building projects. The tensions and contradictions between the government's and Middle Belt's perception of Nigerian history have been revealed in the context of national history institutions. The resounding friction between national and local history agendas is evident throughout the pages of this dissertation. The regimentation of the history machine by the Nigerian state was more pronounced in the archival and museum sectors of the history machine. Although the National Universities Commission ostensibly governs the curriculum of history departments, this thesis shows that the National Archives and National Museums are more prone to bureaucracy and regimentation.

The story of Nigerian historiography, as told by previous writers, says nothing about the Middle Belt as a wider regional historiographical enterprise even from a textual perspective, not to talk of the concrete institutional circumstances of its production. During my first encounter with Monday Mangwvat, a doyen of Middle

Belt historiography and a former Vice Chancellor of University of Jos, he noted with exhilaration that my project would help a great deal in synthesizing the scholarship they have been producing on various communities of the Middle Belt region. In as much as the inspiration for this thesis was not a response to this plea, the initial excitement with which the Middle Belt writers had greeted the project somehow buttressed its novelty. The plethora of writings on the Middle Belt approached it variously as a human geographical region,[597] a cultural entity,[598] as a political movement[599] and a consciousness.[600] My approach departs markedly from these, in that I view the Middle Belt as a discourse community that transcends its geographical, political and cultural boundaries. In this respect, the burdens that geographical and cultural complications place on the definition of this imagined community are reasonably circumvented. Nonetheless, seeing the Middle Belt as a discourse community does not preclude my focus on the situatedness and contextual dimensions of the histories as they were produced in concrete sites.

The institutional approach deployed in this thesis does not deny the importance of the conventional textual approach to the making of history. Therefore, one major deduction that emerges from this thesis is that the textual tradition of the Middle Belt historiography was motivated by the politics of marginality, retribution and resistance, suggesting an intimate connection between history-making and politics. The narrative of marginality and resistance was inspired originally by a group Middle Belt activists and clergy in the course of the nationalist struggle against British colonial rule. With the emergence of universities in the region between 1970s and 1990s, these ideas were subtly transmitted into scholarly texts, heralding the Middle Belt discourse of resistance. The academic production of the Middle Belt historiography was originally inspired by the Plateau and Benue History Projects under the auspices of the History Departments at the University of Jos and Benue state University.

---

[597] Agboola S. A, "The Middle Belt of Nigeria: the Basis of its Geographical Unity".

[598]Nankin Bagudu and Dakas C.J. Dakas, *The Right to be different: perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria*.

[599]Paul Chunun Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement*…

[600] Moses Ochonu, *Colonialism by Proxy*…

The Middle Belt appears to be in the business of creating its own autonomous history machine but this is pursued largely within the contexts of cultural institutions owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria, which means that the discourse of resistance is subject to the constraints of a national cultural policy regime designed to promote nation building. However, because state regulation of the publishing industry in Nigeria is less rigorous compared to archival and heritage production, the manufacturing of Middle Belt histories has been bolstered considerably by the proliferation of publishers and printers in various parts of the region. Through a survey of institutional practices, the history of Middle Belt resistance against epistemic transgressions in textual, archival, museum and publishing contexts has been laid bare in this dissertation. In other words, this thesis has revealed a friction between the Nigerian and northern regional history machines on the one hand, which seeks to appropriate minority histories, and the Middle Belt discourse of resistance, which seeks emancipation and discursive autonomy.

It should be stressed that the institutions of history covered in this work represent only a fraction of the complex epistemic grid that is the history machine. It will be interesting to explore the ways in which non-formal institutions such as family and chieftaincy institutions shape the direction of historical discourse. The role of cultural policy, broadly speaking, on the direction of Nigerian history constitutes another significant area. There are other newer institutions in the Middle Belt that have not produced much scholarship that can be juxtaposed with what the University of Jos and the Benue State University have been doing in the last three decades or so. For example, it would be interesting to see the historiographical pathways, which the emerging universities such as Nasarawa and Adamawa States Universities would tread. Similarly, it is envisaged that the approach that animates this dissertation can be replicated in other regional contexts such as the Niger Delta, Muslim northern Nigeria, or the Yoruba land. The issues raised here not only speak to the political instrumentalisation of history and historiography in the making of identity, but also provide valuable insights into a range of mutually engaged intellectual and aesthetic debates and trends in the making of local histories in Nigeria, and perhaps even Africa or history more generally. It is hoped that the modest intervention here pushes the frontiers of the multidisciplinary conversation between history, archival science, museum studies and book history, and provides a justification for a more pragmatic

collaboration among diverse practitioners and institutions in the business of history-making.

A study of how historical knowledge is produced without taking into account how the knowledge is consumed would remain incomplete. While this thesis sheds light on how searchers at the National Archives Kaduna and visitors to National Museums of Jos, Makurdi and Kaduna engage with history in these institutions, the ways in which readers engage with history texts remains a promising research area. It would be interesting, for example, to explore what history texts are catalogued in public and institutional libraries across Nigeria and to decipher the circuits and frequency of their consumption by different community of readers.

List of Sources

I. INTERVIEWS

I.1. Interviews in Jos City

- Professor Monday Mangwvat, March 23, 2013.
- Professor Lawal Bashir, March 22, 2013.
- Professor John Nengel, March 19, 2013.
- Professor Bala Takaya, April 7, 2013.
- Professor Joseph Jemkur, March 25, 2013.
- Professor Zakaria Goshit, April 3, 2013.
- Professor Baba Thomas Bingel, March 20, 2013.
- Professor Sati Fwatshak, March 19, 2013.
- Carolyn Nnanusa Ezeokeke, March 3, 2013.
- Musa Usman, March 27, 2013.
- Simon Kuben, April 4, 2013.
- Sunday Ogbeh, March 26, 2013.
- Jibril Mohammed Bukuru, March 28, 2103.
- Patrick Kevin, April 3, 2013.
- Eneche James, April 3, 2013.
- Eunice Marminas, March 26, 2013.

I.2. Interviews in Makurdi City

- Professor Silas Okita, October 29, 2013.
- Professor Toryina Varvar, October 28, 2013.
- Professor Okpeh Okpeh, October 29, 2013.
- S.G. Nyityo, October 30, 2013.
- Yashim Isa Bitiyong, October 31, 2013.
- Sunday Banke, October 31, 2013.

I.3. Interviews in Kaduna City

- Professor Ibrahim James, December 17, 2013.
- Professor Abdullahi Ashafa, November 18, 2103.
- Jafaru Dauda, October 8, 2013.
- Irimiya Samson, October 26-27, 2013.
- Sunday Kantiyok, October 10, 2013.
- Eke Nneka Amadi, October 24, 2013.
- Salahuddeen Olatunji, October 10, 2013.
- Yakubu Isah, October 8, 2013.
- Emmanuel Ayorinde, October 23, 2013.

1.4. Interviews in Kano City

- Professor Murray Last, May 29, 2009.
- Professor Ibrahim Bello-Kano, March 23, 2013.

I.5. Interviews in Abuja

- Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, January 25, 2013.

II. INSTITUTIONAL SOURCES

II.1. National Archives Kaduna

Enwere, J.C. 1963. "An Inventory of the Records of the Secretariat of Northern Provinces", National Archives Kaduna.

_____1962. "Provisional Guide to Official Publications at the National Archives Kaduna", National Archives Kaduna.

KADMINEDU M. 7/37, "Minutes of the 8th Council Meeting of the Historical Society of Nigeria" held on 26th April (1958).

KADMINEDU M. 7/37 "The Historical Of Nigeria", *Bulletin of News*, Vol. II, No 3, December (1957).

NAK KADMINEDU/ EXA/69/HIS/ Vol. 1, "The Concept of History Syllabuses in Northern Nigeria in the Early Colonial Period", (nd).

National Archives of Nigeria, 1970. "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives in Nigeria", Vol. II.

National Archives of Nigeria 1970. "A Memorandum on the Organization and Management of Archives in Nigeria", Vol. I.

National Archives of Nigeria, 1962. "Archive Memoranda", No. 13.

National Archives of Nigeria, 1992. "National Archives Decree", No. 30.

National Archives of Nigeria, 1977. "National Archives Decree", No. 197.

Minutes of meeting of the Interim Management Committee of The Society of Nigerian Archivists, held at National Archives Zonal Office, Ibadan, 23rd September 2010.

National Archives of Nigeria, 1995. *Guide to Sources of Nigerian History*, Lagos.

National Archives Nigeria, "Archive Memorandum No. 5, Repository Services (2)".

II.2. Arewa House Archives Kaduna

1/1/1 - John E. Lavers Collection

I- The Historical Society of Nigeria Correspondence Letters of Annual General Meeting.

II- Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 1972.

III- The Historical Society of Nigeria Bulleting of New, 1973.

Arewa House Centre of Historical Documentation and Research, *Brochure*.

II. 3. National Commission for Museums and Monuments

Federal Antiquities Department, 1974. *Antiquities Decree*, No. 9.

Federal Department of Antiquities, 1978. *25 Years of Jos Museum*.

Federal Department of Antiquities, *Guide to the National Museum Kaduna*, (nd).

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, "List of Declared National Monuments" *Newsletter*, , January.

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 1993. *Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2004. *Annual Report.*

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2005. *Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2011. *Annual Report.*

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 2012. *Newsletter*, Vol. 3 No. 42.

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, *Newsletter*, Vol. 1, NOs. 9 & 10.

National Museum Jos, "Visitors Guestbook", 1985-2012.

National Museum Kaduna, "Museum Audience Research for Adult", (nd).

National Museum, Makurdi, 2014. "Visitors Guestbook".

II.4. History Departments

- Research Project Files, Department of History, University of Jos, (1975-2009).

- Research Project Files, Department of History, Benue State University, (1998-2012).

- University of Jos Postgraduate Prospectus, 2009-2013.

- Revised Student Handbook, Department of History, Benue State University, (2010-2015).

- Research Project Files, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

- Department of History, Bayero University Kano, Minutes of the first meeting of a study group on "History and Social Engineering in Nigeria", held on 20th of April, 2010, at Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Research and Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University, Kano.

II.5. Northern History Research Scheme

Northern History Research Scheme, 1966. *First Interim Report*, Zaria.

Northern History Research Scheme, 1975. Third Interim Report (1967-1971) Zaria.

Northern History Research Scheme, 1977. Fourth Interim Report, (1971-1976) Zaria.

Northern History Research Scheme, 1987. Sixth Report, (1979-1981) Zaria.

Raudat al-Akfar, NHRS library, ABU Zaria.

II.6. Aboki Publishers

Aboki Publishers "Company Profile", (nd).

III. GOVERNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, 2012. Circular SGE 32/S 47/01, 26th July.

The Federal Ministry of Information, 2013. "Concept Document for the Nigeria Centenary", February 7.

IV. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Albada, J.V. 1989. "Records Management and National Archives in Nigeria", UNESCO.

Colonial Office, Nigeria, 1958. *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into fears of minorities and Means of Allying them*, presented to the Parliament by Secretary of State for the Colonies by Commands of Her Majesty.

Dike, K.O. 1954. *Report on the Preservation and Administration of Historical Records and the Establishment of Public Record Office in Nigeria*, Government Printer, Lagos.

Federal Government of Nigeria, 1981. *Report of the Presidential Commission on Salary and Conditions of Service of University Staff* , National Assembly Press.

Federal Government of Nigeria, 1990. "National Commission for Museums and Monuments Act Chapter 242", *Laws of the Federation of Nigeria*.

Federal Ministry of Information, 1964. *Decisions of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the Report of the National Universities Commissions*, Lagos.

Federal Government of Nigeria, 1963. *Report of National Universities Commission*, Lagos.

Federal Ministry of Information, 2009. "National Archives Act", *Nigeria Laws of Information and Communication*, Vol. 1, Bologi Nigeria Limited, Abuja.

National Universities Commission, 2011. *Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Postgraduate Programs in Arts in Nigerian Universities*, Abuja.

National Universities Commission, 2007. *Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Undergraduate Programs in Arts in Nigerian Universities*, Abuja.

National Universities Commission, 2012. *Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Academic Programs in Nigerian Universities*, Abuja.

Lugard, F. 1916. *Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative, 1913-1918*, London: Waterlow.

Society for Nigerian Archivists, 1990. *Constitution.*

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

V.1. Books

Abraham, R.C. 1940. *Dictionary of the Tiv Language*, London: Crown Agents for the Colonies.

_____1940. *The Tiv People*, London: Crown Agents for the Colonies.

Altbach, P.G. 1987. *The Knowledge Context: comparative Perspectives on the Distribution of Knowledge*, New York: New York University Press.

Amin, S. 1997. *Capitalism in the Age of globalization,* New York: Zed Press.

Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.

Arnold, T. and Swai B. 1981, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique,* London: Zed Books.

Bagudu, N. & Dakasa, C.J. 2001. *The Right to be Different: Perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt and Constitutional change in Nigeria*, Jos: League for Human Rights.

Barber, K. 2007. *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bargery, G. P. 1951. *A Hausa-English Dictionary and English Hausa Vocabulary*, London: Oxford University Press.

Barth, H. 1857. *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, Vol. II, New York.

Bohannan, L.P. 1954. *Tiv Farm and Settlement*, London.

_____ 1969. *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London: International African Institute.

Bouquet, M. 2012. *Museums: a Visual Anthropology*, London: Berg, p.121.

Bourdieu, P. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Canagaraja, S. 2002. *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Certeau, M. 1988. *The Writing of History*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: University of Princeton Press.

Cohen, D. 1995. *The Combing of History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, J.J. 2003. *Medieval Identity Machines*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Coleman, J. 1965. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J.L. 2012. *Theory from the South, or How Euro-America is evolving towards Africa*, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.

Deleuze, G. 2000. *Proust and Signs*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1972. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

_____1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dudley, B.J. 1968. *Party Politics in Northern Nigeria*, Cass.

Falola, T. & Aderinto, S. 2010. *Nigeria, Nationalism and Writing History,* University of Rochester Press.

Forde, D. 1956. *Peoples of the Plateau Area of Northern Nigeria Part 7*, London: International African Institute.

Foucault, M. 2005. 2005. *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge.

_____1972. *The Archaeology of knowledge*, New York: Pantheon Books.

Freund, B. 1980. *The Making of Contemporary Africa*, Lynne Rienner.

Gonet, N.D. 2013. *The Rudiments of Kingship in Yil-Nga*s, Jos: Willota Press.

Goyol, A. & Dimka, E. 1999. *Pusdung: Ngas Festival of Arts and Culture*, Jos.

Gunn, S. 2006. *History and Cultural Theory*, Harlow: Pearson.

Gwom, S.L. 1992. *The Berom Tribe of Plateau State Nigeria*.

_____1994. *History of Wase Local Government Council of Plateau State of Nigeria*.

_____1995. *History of Jos and Political Development of Nigeria*; *The Berom and religion: Practices and prospects*.

Hamman, M. 2007. *The Middle-Benue Region and the Sokoto Jihad 1812-1869, the Establishment of the Emirate of Muri*, Kaduna: Arewa House.

Hodgkin, T. 1975. *Nigerian Perspectives: an Anthology*, London: Oxford University Press.

Ike, C. 1998. *Directory of Nigerian Book Development*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension.

James, I. 1986. *The Ham and their Neighbors in History*, Jos: Jos University Press.

Karp, I. 2006. *et al*., *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Kukah, M.H. 1993. *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria,* Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Kwanashe, G.A. 2002. *The Making of the North in Nigeria-1900-1965,* Kaduna: Arewa House.

Lakai, N.F. 1998. *An introduction to Tarok History*.

Last, M. 1967. *The Sokoto Caliphate*, London: Longman.

Logams, P.C. 2004. *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development*: *A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967*, Abuja: Centre for Middle Belt Studies.

Maishanu, H.M. 2008. *Five Hundred years of Historical Writings in Borno and Hausaland*, Ibadan: Macmillan.

Mallo, Stephen, *The History of Ron*, Jos: Acon, (nd).

Mamdani, M. 2012. *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mangwvat, M. 2013. *A History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1902–1960: the Genesis of a Ruling Class*, Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Mohammed, A.R. 2014. *History of the Spread of Islam in the Niger-Benue Confluence Area, Igalaland, Egbirraland and Lokoja C. 1900-1960*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Nye, A.M. 1988. *The Afizere (Jarawa) People of Nigeria*, Jos: National Museum Press.

Ochonu, M. 2014. *Colonialism by Proxy*: *Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness*, Indiana: University of Indiana Press.

Okeke, O. *Hausa-Fulani Hegemony: the Domination of the Muslim North in Contemporary Politics*, Acena Publishers, Lagos.

Okpeh O. O. & Ugbegili, S.I. 2013. *Themes on Nigerian History: peoples and Cultures*, Ibadan: Vast Publishers.

Okpu, U. 1977. *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics: 1960-1965*, Uppsala.

Osokoya, I.O. 2010. *Teaching and Researching History in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Laurel.

Paden, J. 1986. *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*, Zaria: Hudahuda.

Perham, M. 1937. *Native Administration in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press.

Peter, S. 2005. "Presenting the Past: a Framework", Gerard Corsane, ed, *Heritage, Museums and Galleries*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Reppy, J. 1999. *Secrecy and Knowledge Production*, Cornell University.

Sai, A. 1939. Akiga *Story*: *the Tiv Tribe as seen by one of its Members*, (London: Oxford University Press.

Schechner, R. 1988. *Performative Theory*, London: Routledge.

Shagaya, J.N. 2005. *Taroh History*.

Stark, U. 2007. *An Empire of Books: the Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Takaya, B. & Tyoden, S. 1987. *The Kaduna Mafia*, Jos: University of Jos Press.

Tilmas, K. *et al*., 2010. *Performing the Past: History, Memory and Identity in Modern Europe*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Trimingham, J.S. 1959. *Islam in West Africa*, London: University of Oxford Press.

Trouillot, R. 1995. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History,* Boston: Beacon Press.

Vansina, J. 1972. *Oral Tradition: a Study in Historical Methodology*, Translated from French by H. M. Wright, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Walsh, K. 1992. *The Representation of the Pas*: *museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World*, London: Routledge.

Zeleza, P.I. 1997, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises*, CODESRIA, Dakar.

V.2. Articles in Journals

Acland, G. 1991. "Archivists – Keeper, Undertaker or Auditor?", *Archives and Manuscripts,* Vol. 19, pp. 9-14.

Adesina, O. 2006. "Teaching History in Twentieth Century Nigeria: the Challenges of Change", *History in Africa*, Vol. 33, pp. 17-37.

Agboola, S. A, 1961. "The Middle Belt of Nigeria: the Basis of its Geographical Unity", *Nigerian Geographical Journal*, Vol. 4, No 1., pp. 41-46.

Akanbiemu, M.O. 1995. "The Development of Museums in Nigeria", *Nigerian Heritage*, Vol. 4, pp.127-128.

Alexander, P. & Pessek, E. 1988. "Archives in Emergent Nations: the Anglophone Experience", *The American Archivist*, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 120-132.

Alubo, O. 2004. "Citizenship and Nation Making in Nigeria: new Challenges and Contestations", *Identity, Culture and Politics*, Vol. 5, Nos.1 & 2, pp. 135-161.

Appadurai, A. 1981. "The Past as a Scarce Resource", *Man, New Series*, pp. 201–219.

Atanda, J.A. 1980. "The Historian and the Problems of Origins of Peoples in Nigerian Society", *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 63-77.

Atwood, R. 2011. "The Nok of Nigeria", *Archaeology*, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 34-38.

Ayandele, E.A. 1979. "The Task before he Nigerian Historian Today", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 9. No. 4, pp. 1-13.

Bala, S. 2012. "A Short Description of the Jos Museum Collection of Arabic Manuscripts in Northern Nigeria", in *Annual Review of Islam*, no. 11, pp. 85-91.

Ballard, J. A. 1971. "Historical Inferences from the Linguistic Geography of the Nigerian Middle Belt", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 294-305.

Bamiduro, S.O. 1982-1983. “Press and Politics in Nigeria's first republic 1960-1966”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4, pp. 107-129.

Barnes, A.E. 2007. “The Middle Belt Movement and the Formation of Christian Consciousness in Colonial Northern Nigeria”, *Church History*, Vol. 76, No. 3, pp. 591-610.

Berger, S. 2013. “The Role of National Archives in Constructing National Master Narratives in Europe”, *Archival Science*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, pp. 1-22.

Buchanan, K. 1953. “The Northern Region of Nigeria: the Geographical Background of Its Political Duality”, *Geographical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 4., pp. 451-473.

Chris, L. 1999. “Comparative Historiography: Problems and Perspectives” *History and Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 25-39.

Crane, S. 1997. “Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum”, *History and Theory*, 36, no. 4, pp. 44-63.

Derrida, J. 1995. “Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression”, *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 9-63.

Drake C. 1957. “Some Observations on Interethnic Conflict as One Type of Intergroup Conflict”, *Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 155-178.

Enyia, C.O. 1991. “The Role of Nigerian Publisher in National Development”, *International Library Review*, pp. 201-214.

Fardon, R. 1983. “Review: Plateau Studies”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 386-387.

Fwatshak, S. 2005-2006. “Reconstructing the Origins of the Peoples of Plateau State: questioning the "we are all settlers" Theory”, *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 16, pp. 122-140.

Gbasha, T. 2004. Review of Aliyu A. Idrees and Yakubu A. Ochefu eds., *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria area*”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 370-373.

Ihonvbere, J.O. 1991. “A Critical Evaluation of the Failed 1990 Coup in Nigeria”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 601-626.

Isichei, E. 1981. “The Mwahavul, Mupun, Njak and Ngas: An Introduction to their Oral History”, *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts*, Peter J. Yearwood ed., Vol. 1, pp. i-Liii.

Isichei, E. 1991. "On Being Invisible: An Historical Perspective of the Anaguta and Their Neighbors", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 513-556.

Jewsiewicki, B.& Mudimbe, V. Y. 1993. "Africans' Memories and Contemporary History of Africa", *History and Theory*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 1-11.

Johnston, J. 1999. "Machinic Vision", *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn, No. 26, pp. 27- 48.

Kerri, H.O. 1994. "Developing Museums: the Nigerian Experience", *Nigerian Heritage*, Vol. 3, pp. 59-68.

Lamp, F.J. 2011. "Ancient Terracotta Figures from Northern Nigeria", *Art Gallery Bulletin*, Yale University, pp. 48-57.

Lavers, J. 1971. "Islam in the Bornu Caliphate". *Odu*, 5, pp. 27-53.

Momoh, A. 1989. "Archives and the Liberalization of Access", *The Nigerian Archivist*, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 14-27.

Moser, S. 2010. "The Devil is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge", *Museum Anthropology*, Vol. 33, 1, pp. 22-32.

Nweke, K.M. 1993. "Problems of the Availability of Books in Nigeria", *Journal of Library and information Science*, pp. 23-32.

Obayemi, A. & Emeagwali, G. 1980. "Methodology in Nigerian Historiography", *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, 10, no. 3, pp. 132-137.

Ogbogbo, C.B.N. 2011. "Beyond Nomenclature: Current Challenges of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria", *The Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 20, pp. 166-178.

Olayiwola, R.O. 1991. "Political Communications: Press and Politics in Nigeria's Second Republic", *Africa Media Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 31-45.

Omer-Cooper, J.D. 1980. "The Contribution of the University of Ibadan to the Spread of the Study and Teaching of African History within Africa", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria.*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 23-31.

Pullan, R. A. 1962. " The Concept of the Middle Belt: a Climatic Definition", *Nigerian Geographical Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 39-52.

Shaw, T. 1989. "African Archaeology: looking back and Looking Forward", *The African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 7, pp. 3-31.

Smith, A 1961. "A Neglected Theme of West African History: the Islamic Revolutions of the 19th Century", *The Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 2, No. 2, PP. 169-185.

Spencer, T.T. 1982-1983. "The Archivist as a Historian: towards a Broader Definition", *Archivaria*, No. 17, pp.296-300.

Spiegel, G.M. 2007. "Revising the Past/Revisiting the Present: how Change Happen s in Historiography", *History and Theory,* Vol. 46, No. 4, pp. 1- 19.

Stoddard, R.E. 1987. "Morphology and the Book from an American Perspective", *Printing History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 2-14.

Stoler, A.L. 2002. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance", *Archival Science*, Vol. 2, No. 87, pp. 87-109.

Tambo, D. 1978. "The Hill Refugees of the Jos PlateuauPlateau: a Historiographical Examination", *History in Africa*, Vol. 5, pp. 201-223.

Tambo, D. 1981. "The Pre-colonial tin Industry in Northern Nigeria", *Jos Oral History and Literature Texts*, Elizabeth Isichei ed., Vol. 2, pp. 1-31.

Vansina, J. 1974. "The Power of Systematic Doubt in Historical Inquiry", *History Africa*, Vol. 1, pp. 109-127.

Ward, J.C. 1971. "The Expatriate Academic and the African University", *Africa Today*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 32-39.

V.3. Chapters in Edited Books

Abdulkadir, M.S. 2006. "The Effects of Extension of the Sokoto Caliphate on the Igala Kingdom", Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, eds., *The Sokoto Caliphate*: *History and Legacies*, Vol. I, Kaduna: Arewa House, pp. 53-64.

Abubakar, S. 2008. "The Challenges of Nation- Building: Nigeria, Which Way Forward", C.B.N. Ogbogbo and Okpeh O. Okpeh eds, *Interrogating Contemporary Africa, Dike Memorial Lectures*, *1999-2007*, The Historical Society of Nigeria, pp. 21-38.

Aderinto, S. & Osifodunrin P. 2012. "Third Wave of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria", eds., *The Third Wave of Historical Scholarship in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ayodeji Olukoju*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 2-21.

Afigbo, A. 1985. "The Museum as Historical Record", Afigbo, A & and Okita, S. eds., *The Museum and Nation Building*, Owerri: New Africa Publishing, pp. 97-109.

_____2006. "History as Statecraft", *Myths, History and Society, the Collected Works of Adiele Afigbo*, Africa World Press, pp. 368-369.

_____2006. "Some Thoughts on the Teaching of History in Nigeria", ***Myths, History and Society, the Collected Works of Adiele Afigbo***, Africa World Press, pp. 203-238.

Ajayi, A. 2008. "History and Society", C.B.N. Ogbogbo and Okpeh Okpeh, eds., ***Interrogating Africa, Dike Memorial Lectures, 1999-2007,*** Historical Society of Nigeria, pp. 38-50.

Alpers, S. 1991. "The Museum as a Way of Seeing", Ivan Karp and D. Lavine eds., ***Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display***,. Washington: Smithsonian Institution press, pp. 1-32.

Appadurai, A. 1986. "Introduction: commodities and the Politics of Value", Appadurai A. ed., ***The Social Life of Things***, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-5.

Apter, A. & Derby, L. eds., 2010. ***Activating the Past: History and Memory in the Black Atlantic World***, London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. xiv-xxxii.

Bawa, B.F. 2002. "Origins, Migrations and Early History of the Lowland Communities of Plateau State", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. eds., ***Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area***, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 71-91.

Benue State University, 2012. Introduction to ***Benue State University at 20: achievements, Challenges and Prospects*** Oga Ajene, Mathieu A. Adejo and Member George-Genyi eds., Makurdi: Benue State University Press, pp. 1-11.

Bingel, B.T. 2002. "Population, Environment and Economic Development in the Central Nigeria Area", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. ***Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area***, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 35-50.

Cottle, S. 2000. "Introduction: Media Research and Ethnic Minorities: mapping the Field", Cottle, S. ed., ***Ethnic Minorities and the Media: changing Cultural Boundaries***, Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 2-30.

Dabup, P.L. 1999. "The Political Economy of Resistance in the Cultural Middle Belt", Bagudu, N & Dakas C.J. eds., ***The Right to be different: perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria***, Jos: League for Human Rights, pp. 127-128.

East, R. 1991. "Historical Perspectives on Gaskiya Corporation", Hayatu, H. ed., ***50 Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria***, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, pp. 1-8.

Etannibi E.O. Alemika, 1999. "Ethnic Minorities in Nigeria: Constitutional Democratic Framework for Autonomy and Local Self-Governance", Bagudu, N & Dakas C.J. eds., ***The Right to be different: perspectives on***

Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria, Jos: League for Human Rights, pp. 97-111.

Falola, T. 2005. "Mission and Colonial Documents", ***Writing African History***, New York: University of Rochester Press, pp. 266-283.

Fatunsin, A. 1997. "Nigeria: the Case of Jos Museum", ed. Claude Daniel Ardoun, *Museums and Archaeology in Africa*, The Smithsonian Institution pp. 68-76.

Filane, k. 2003. "Museums in Nigeria, Historical Antecedents and Current Practice", *Art, Minorities, Majorities*, Dakar: CODESRIA, pp. 1-8.

Foucault, M. 1981. "The Order of Discourse", Inaugural lecture at the College de France, Robert Young ed., *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Boston: Routledge and Kegan, pp. 48-78.

_____2001. "Truth and Power", in Michael P. Lynch ed., *The Nature of Truth, Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, pp. 317-319.

Frijhoff, W. 1999. "Foucault Reformed by Certeau: Historical Strategies of Discipline and Everyday Tactics of Appropriation", John Neubauer ed., *Cultural History After Foucault*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, pp. 83-99.

Fwatshak, S. 2002. "The Origins of the Chadic Speaking Groups in Central Nigerian Area: a Reassessment of the Bornoan Tradition", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. eds., *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp.51-69.

Goshit, Z. "Review *of* issues and Perspectives in the History of the Ngas, Plateau State", Odey, M.O. & Okpeh O. O. eds., *History Research and Methodology in Africa: essays in Honor of Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, p. 229-230.

Hayatu, H. 1991. "NORLA and the Establishment of Publishing in the Former Northern Nigeria: an Overview from the Colonial Times to the Present", Hayatu H. ed., *50 Years of Truth: The Story of Gaskiya Corporation Zaria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, p. 55-68.

Henige, D. 2006. "Oral Tradition as a Means of Reconstructing the Past", ***Writing African History***, New York: University of Rochester Press, pp. 169-190.

Igirgi, A.D. 2002. "Emerging Perspectives of Nigeria's Early History as Inferred from Archaeological Research in the Middle Benue Valley", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 24-25.

Ikime, O. 1980. Introduction to *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Heinemann, pp. 1-3.

Isichei, E. 1982. Preface to Isichei, E. ed., *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*, London: Macmillan, p. xi.

Iyo, J. 2002. "The Origins, Early Migrations and Settlement Pattern of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley of Nigeria c. 1475- 1900 A.D.", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. eds., *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 119-132.

James, I. 1998. "Integration and Delayed Integration in the Middle Belt of Nigeria", Bala Takaya ed, *The Settler Phenomenon in the Middle Belt and the Problem of National Integration in Nigeria*, Jos: Midland Press, pp. 144-66.

Jega, A. 2000. " The State and Identity Transformation under Structural Adjustment Program", Attahiru Jega ed., *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment Program in Nigeria*, Kano: Centre for Research and Documentation, pp. 26-44.

Jeppie, S. 2004. "Introduction: New History?", *Toward New Histories for South Africa: on the Place of the Past in our Present*, Shamil Jeppie ed., Cape Town: Juta Gariep, pp. 1-15.

Kaju, M. 2003. "How Hausa Gobbles up Minority Languages", *Linguistic Minorities and Inequality in Nigeria*, Jos: League for Human Rights, pp. 123-137.

Ki-Zerbo J. 1981. General Introduction to Ki-zerbo, J., ed., *General History of Africa*, Vol. I, California: Heinemann, pp. 1-23.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. 2007. "Exhibitionary Complexes", in Karp, I. & Lavine, S.D., eds., Ivan Karp *et al*. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 35-42.

Lagams, P.C. 1987. "Traditional and Colonial Forces and the Emergence of the Kaduna mafia", Takaya, B. & Tyoden, S.G. eds., *The Kaduna Mafia*, Jos: University of Jos Press, p. 46-59.

Last, M. 2004. "Innovation in the Sokoto Caliphate", Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, eds., *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies,* Vol. II, Kaduna: Arewa House, pp. 328-247.

Last, M. 2008. "The Book in Sokoto Caliphate", *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Jeppie, S. & Diagne, S.B. eds., Cape Town: HRSC Press, pp. 135-163.

Lovejoy, P. 1993. "The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics", Toyin Falola ed, *African Historiography, Essays in Honor of Jacobs Ade Ajayi*, Lagos: Longman, pp. 195-202.

Mangwvat, M. 2010. Foreword to *The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconception about the Recurrent Jos Conflicts*, Jos: Dan-SiL Press, pp.

Mangwvat, M. 2010. Preface to Wambutda, D.N. & Goshit, Z. eds., *History of the Church of Christ n Nigeria Plateau Central: Provincial Church Council Kabwir 1900-2010*, Kaduna: Baraka Press, pp. xxi-xxiii.

Mangwvat,M. 2011. Foreword to Sale Akila eds, *Towards a Mwaghavul History: an Exploration*, Xlibris Corporation, pp. 11-13.

McIntosh, S.K. 2005. "Archaeology and the Reconstruction of the African Past", *Writing African History*, New York: University of Rochester Press, pp.51- 85.

Morphy, H. 1992. "Sites of Persuasion: Yingapungapu at the National Museum of Australia", Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine eds., *Museums and communities*: *The Politics of Public Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, pp. 469-499.

Nengel, J.G. 2006. "Echoes of the Sokoto Jihad and its Legacies on the Societies of the Jos PlateuauPlateau", Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, eds., *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804-2004*, Vol. II, Kaduna: Arewa House, pp. 181-194.

Nwideeduh, S.B. 2003. "The Development and Administration of Nigerian Universities, 1948-1993: an Overview", *Trends and Issues in Managing Universities in Nigeria*, Owerri: Springfields, pp. 10-11.

Obayemi, A. 2002. "Tsoede, Etsuzhi and Nupe History before 1800", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 167-195.

Odey, M.O. & Okpeh, O. O. 2007. "Immortalizing Professor Charles Cremwell Jacobs", Odey, M.O. & Okpeh O. O. eds., *History Research and Methodology in Africa: essays in Honor of Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, pp. 1-5.

Olumuyiwa Ayodele , 1990. "The Book Culture in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives", *The Bookworm*, Vol. 4, pp. 6-11.

Okpeh, O.O. 2002. "The Pre-colonial Political Organization of the Idoma People", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. eds., *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 145-166.

Olayemi Akinwumi, 2007. Foreword to Okpeh O. Okpeh and Sati Fwatshak eds., *The Middle Belt in the Shadow of Nigeria*, Makurdi: Oracle Press, pp.VIII.

Patrick, D. 2002. "Aspects of the Geography of Central Nigeria Area", Idrees, A.A. & Ochefu, Y.A. eds., *Studies in the History of Central Nigeria*, Lagos: CSS Press, pp. 3-17.

Peckam, R.S. 2008. "The Politics of Heritage and Public Culture", Peckam, R.S. ed., *Rethinking Heritage: Cultures and Politics in Europe*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 1-13.

Seixas, P. 2004. Introduction to Peter Seixas ed., *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 3-20.

Smith A. 1987. "Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausa land", *A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, pp. 59-77.

Suleiman, D. 1999. "The Peoples of the Cultural Middle belt: A Cultural Perspective", Bagudu, N & Dakas C.J. eds., *The Right to be different: perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria*, Jos: League for Human Rights, pp. 154-165.

Suleiman, M.D. 2006. "The Sokoto Jihad, Sharia and the Minorities in Northern Nigeria", Hamid Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, eds., *The Sokoto Caliphate*: *History and Legacies*, Vol. II., Kaduna: Arewa House, pp. 221-241.

Takaya, B. 1999. "The Question for Sovereign National Conference: Practicalities and Challenges in the Nigerian Federation", Bagudu, N & Dakas C.J. eds., *The Right to be different: perspectives on Minority Rights, the Cultural Middle Belt Constitutionalism in Nigeria*, Jos: League for Human Rights, pp. 112-123..

Tyoden, S.G. 1987. "The Kaduna Mafia as a Faction of the Nigerian Bourgeoisie", Takaya, B. & Tyoden, S.G. eds., *The Kaduna Mafia*, Jos: University of Jos Press, pp. 60-67.

Usman, Y.B. 2006. "The Historicity of the Peoples and Polities of Nigeria: observations on Historical Consciousness and Historiography", *Beyond Fairy Tales: selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman*, Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre, pp. 123-142.

_____2006. "The Problem of Ethnic Categories in the Study of the Historical Development of the Central Sudan: A Critique of M.G. Smith and Others", *Beyond Fairy Tales: Selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman*, Vol. I, Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research and Documentation, pp. 23-38.

Uya, O.E. 2008. "The Historian as a Citizen: The K.O. Dike Challenge", C.B.N. Ogbogbo and Okpeh Okpeh, eds, *Interrogating Africa, Dike Memorial Lectures, 1999-2007,* Historical Society of Nigeria, pp.

Vansina, J. 1981. "Oral Tradition and its Methodology", Ki-Zerbo ed, *General History of Africa I*, California: Heinemann, pp. 143-165.

Zinn, H. 1973. "What is Radical History", Blanche Wiesen Cook, Alice Kessler Harris, Ronal Radosh eds., *Past Imperfect: alternative Essays in American*

History from Reconstruction to the Present, Vol. II, New York: Alfred Knopf, pp.

V.4. Articles in Newspapers and Magazines

"IBB, Danjuma donate to Tarok Museum Project.", *Daily Trust* 24 August (2013).

"Major Orkar's Manifesto". 1990. *Free Nation*, vol. 3 No. 1.

Augustine, A. & Egwu, S. 2013. "Nigeria: Centenary Celebrations – Kogi, Niger Feud over Amalgamation House", *Leadership*, October 26.

Bagu, C. 2010. "Ethno-religious Violence in Northern Nigeria and Reparations", text of a lecture delivered at the public presentation the book Boko Haram: how Religious Intolerance Threatens Nigeria by John Isiyaku, *Sunday Standard*, August 8.

Fashola, B.T. 2014. "Why I Faulted FG's Centenary Celebration", *Vanguard*, March 15.

Haruna, M. 2013. "Nwabueze's Distortions of Nigeria's History", *The Nation*, October 30.

National Impression, Vol. 3, No3, (1992).

Nwabueze, B.O. 2013. "The North-South Divide as an Obstacle to the Creation of a Nation and National Front", *The Guardian*, August 23.

Shehu, L. 1990. "After Orkar, what Next?", *Free Nation*, vol. 3 No. 4.

Usman, Y.B. & Jimada, S. "We are all Settlers", *Analysis*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

V.5. Dissertations

Hess, R. 1972. "Perspectives of Nigerian Historiography, the Historians of Modern Nigeria", PhD, Dissertation, Howard University.

Bingel, B.T. 1991. "Historical Demography of the Nigerian Middle Belt A.D. 100-1900: An explanation of the Role of Historical and Environmental Factors in shaping the Population of Niger Province", PhD, ABU

Filaba, M. 1994. "A History of Karu, Kurape and Kurudu Kingdoms: A Study of Economic, Social and Political Changes among the Gbayi of Central Nigeria in 18th and 19th Centuries", ABU Zaria.

Kapteijns, L. 1997. "African Historiography written by Africans: The Nigerian Case", PhD, Leiden.

Longkat, J. 1994. "The Economic and Political Relations of the Peoples of Southern-Western Foothills of the Jos PlateuauPlateau Region to 1900 A.D.", ABU Zaria.

Okita, S. 1974. "Emergence and Role of Public Museums in Nigeria", MPhil. Dissertation, University of Leicester.

Okpeh, O. O. 1994. "The Idoma and Minority Group Politics in northern Nigeria 1944-1960: a Study in an Aspect of National Question", M.A. Thesis, University of Jos.

Smith, M.P. 2004. "Northern Identity and the Politics of Culture in Nigeria, 1945-1966", PhD. Dissertation, University of London.

Suleiman, S. 2010. "Yusufu Bala Usman as a Historian: an Inquiry into his Writings and Historical Methodology", M.A. Dissertation, Bayero University Kano.

Turaki, Y. 1982. "The Institutionalization of the Inferior Status and Socio-Political Role of he Non-Muslim Groups in the Colonial Hierarchical Structure of the Northern Nigerian Region: a Socio-Ethical Analysis of the Colonial Legacy", PhD. Dissertation, Th.B, Igbaja Theological Seminary.

V.6. Unpublished Papers

Brigaglia, A. 2014. "Is the 'North' a mere Rhetorical Tool? Reflections on the Disintegration of Northern Nigeria from the First Republic to Boko Haram", paper presented on Nigeria Study Day, held at the Institute of Humanities Research in Africa, University of Cape Town, August.

Christen, K. 2007. "The Politics of Search: Archival Accountability in Aboriginal Australia", a paper presented at Media in Transition 5 Conference.

Cross, M. 1994. "Changing Frontiers of Academic Discourse: knowledge, Power and the Production of History in South Africa", Democracy: Popular Precedents, Practice, Culture, University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, 13-15 July.

Dike, K.O. 1980. "African History Twenty-five Years Ago and Today", a Keynote Address on the Occasion of the Silver Jubilee of The Historical Society of Nigeria, September.

Fwatshak, S. 2005. "Vistas in Post-Cold War Historical Scholarship in Nigeria", a paper presented at the 50th Anniversary of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ibadan.

Goshit, Z, 2005. "Trends and Patterns in Historical Research and Writing among Undergraduates in the Nigerian Universities: Case Study of the Department of History, University of Jos, Nigeria", paper presented to at the

50th Annual Conference of the Conference of Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Ikime, O. 1977. "History and the Historian in the Developing Countries of Africa".

Kastfelt, N. 2006. "The Politics of History in Northern Nigeria", Paper presented to the Research Seminar of the African Studies Centre, Leiden, 27 April.

Kwanashe, G.A. & Abba, A. 1994. "The Crisis of Relevance and the Teaching of History in Nigerian Universities", a paper presented at the 38h Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Mangwvat, M. 2011. "Historical Insights on Plateau Indigene-Settler Syndrome, 1902-2011", paper presented at a Workshop on Citizenship and Indigeneity Conflicts in Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development and Development, Abuja.

Obayemi, A "Some Observations on the History of Nigerian Middle Belt", a paper present at the Annual Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria, (nd).

Ololajulo, B. 2010. "Whose Past?: Unity Museums, Memory Production and the Quest for National Identity in Nigeria", a paper presented at the 13th session of Factory of Ideas held in Federal University of Bahia.

Olukoju, O. 2002. "The Crisis of Research and Academic Publishing in Nigerian Universities: the Twentieth Century and Beyond", a paper presented at the 28th Annual Spring Symposium, "African Universities in the Twenty-First Century," University of Illinois/CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, April 25-27.

Tukur, M. 1982. "The Role of Intellectuals in the African, Asian, and Latin-American Imperialist Struggles", a paper written in commemoration of Walter Rodney's birthday March 23.

Usman, Y.B. 1992. "Nigerian Unity and Nigerian History: beyond Fairy Tales", paper delivered at the First Annual Dialogue organized by the Citizens Magazine, Abuja, 20th August.

Usman, Y.B. 1993. "Nation Building and Primary Historical Source material", a paper delivered at the Convention of the Society for Nigerian Archivists, Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar.

Varvar, T.A. 2005. "In Search of a Defining National Ideology: The Predicament of the Historical Discipline in Nigeria in the Age of Globalization" a paper presented at the Golden Jubilee anniversary/annual Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Ibadan.

Yahya, D. 2009. "Zazzau: the Bridge between the Hausa and Banza Bakwai: an Assessment", a paper present at conference organized by organized by Axis Research Agency and Zazzau Emirate Council on "History of Zazzau from Pre-Jihad Period to Date" at Arewa House, Kaduna, December.

V.7. Internet publications

"Book Marketing Makeover: the Difference between Book Publishing and Book Printing", 2012. Available at: http://blog.bookmarket.com/2011/12/book-marketing-makeover-difference.html.

"History Ends in Nigeria", 2014, *Vanguard*, March 12, Available at: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/03/history-ends-nigeria/#sthash.ggmFwA8L.dpuf.

Ashley, S. 2006. "Heritage, Resistance and Praxis", in *Canadian Journal of Communication*,31,No.3.Availableat:http://www.cjconline.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1746/1860

Central Intelligence Agency, The World Fact book, Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html

Darko-Ampem, K.O. 2003. "Scholarly Publishing in Africa: A Case Study of the Policies and Practices of African University Presses", PhD. Dissertation, University of Stirling. Available at: https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/71/8/Title%20page,%20etc.pdf

David Lowe, 2012. "The Journalist as an Historian", May 15, Available at: http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/stories/2012/05/15/the-journalist-as-an-historian.

Ekeh, P. "The Mischief of History: Bala Usman's Unmaking of Nigerian History", and Ben Naanen's "Bala Usman, History and the Niger Delta", available at: www.waado.org

Farooq A. Kperogi, 2014. "Nigeria's Curricula Institutionalization of Mass Amnesia", *Weekly Trust*, March 22, Available at: http://dailytrust.com.ng/weekly/index.php/notes-from-atlanta/15997-nigeria-s-curricula-institutionalization-of-mass-amnesia.

Farooq Kperogi, 2012. "Print-on-demand Scams and Nigerian Universities", Available at: http://www.farooqkperogi.com/2012/05/print-on-demand-book-scams-and-nigerian.html.

Howarth, C. & Andreouli, E. "Has multiculturalism failed? The importance of lay knowledge and everyday practice", Available at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/socialPsychology/faculty/caroline_howarth/Howarth-and-Andreouli-paper-FINAL.pdf

Ochonu, M. 2008. "Colonialism within Colonialism: The Hausa-Caliphate Imaginary and the British Colonial Administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt", *African Studies Quarterly,* Volume 10, Issues 2 & 3, pp.111. Available at: https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/71/8/Title%20page,%20etc.pdf.

Idegu, Y.A. 2014. "Jos Cultural Feast defies Security", *The Nation*, May 27, Available at: http://thenationonlineng.net/new/jos-cultural-feast-defies-insecurity/

Jeremy Weate, "How to kill the Nigerian Publishing Industry", Available at: http://africasacountry.com/how-to-kill-the-nigerian-publishing-industry/.

John Phillip Reid, 1993. "Law and History", *Law Review*, Available at: http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/Vol.27/iss1/9

Kwame Anthony Appia, 2006. "Who's Culture is it?" *New York Review of Books*, 53, No.2, Available at: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2006/feb/09/whose-culture-is-it/

Nok Terracota pictures available at: http://www.pinterest.com/pin/530298924847133529/

http://asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/Ochonu-Vol10Issue23.pdf

Patrick J. Darling, 2006. "The Rape of Nok and Kwatartkwashi: the Crisis in Nigerian Antiquities", Culture without Context. Available at: http://www2.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/iarc/culturewithoutcontext/issue6/darling.htm

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1972. *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Available at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002. *Memory of the World General Guidelines*, revised edition. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001256/125637e.pdf

Zacharys Anger Gundu, 2013. "The Nok Frankfurt Exhibition: Matters Arising"; see also "Nigerian Archaeologists Protest German Exhibition of Looted Arts", 2013. Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/201311181614.html